From Amuq to Glastonbury: Situating the apocalypticism of Shaykh Nazim and the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya

Submitted by Rhiannon Conner to the University of Exeter

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

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Abstract

The Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya are one of the most well known and researched *tariqas* in the West. Until May 2014 the leader of the *tariqa* was Shaykh Nazim Adil al-Qubrusi al-Haqqani (1922-1914) who somewhat unusually among modern Sunni Sufi shaykhs taught consistently that the world is in its last days and approaching a global apocalyptic change. It is these apocalyptic teachings, primarily articulated by Shaykh Nazim, that are the focus of this thesis.

While an element of Shaykh Nazim's teachings that has been noted by a number of scholars, there has been little in the way of comprehensive research on the apocalyptic teachings past the year 2000 or on how Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse compares to those found either in wider Islamic thought or other religious traditions. By utilising sources produced until Shaykh Nazim's death in 2014 this thesis thus aims to make a distinct contribution to the knowledge by identifying what characterises the apocalypticism of Shaykh Nazim and the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya, how this compares to other Muslim apocalypses, whether its form can be accounted for, and how *murids* in one branch of the *tariqa* interpret teachings in the post-millennial period. This thesis argues that it is important we come to a better understanding of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse not just to further our understanding the Naqshbandiyya, but to address an imbalance in contemporary apocalyptic studies on how Islamic apocalyptic belief is presented.

The thesis presents a new phenomenological dimensional approach to apocalyptic belief which forms the structure of the investigation. It begins by outlining broad trends in Islamic apocalyptic thought in order to provide a comparative base for the rest of the work. This is followed by an examination of where Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse converges and diverges from these broad trends. The following chapters seek to account for the distinctive form of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse by discussing firstly whether they might be presented to appeal to Westerners, whether they might be seen as a way of addressing modernity, and if they act as a theodicy. These chapters are then followed by a discussion on authorities used to legitimise the apocalyptic teachings and how they are interpreted by a small group of *murids* in the Glastonbury branch of the *tariqa*.

This thesis concludes by arguing Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is distinctive in many respects, particularly in regards his absolute millenarian vision. Ultimately this millenarian vision is made necessary by a need to cleanse the world of satanic influence in a way not possible by reform. It also argues the apocalyptic teachings remained an important part of Shaykh Nazim's teachings post the millennium and that there are a number of strategies employed by *murids* to make sense of living in the end of times. It argues future research should monitor changes in apocalyptic emphasis given the new leadership of the *tariqa* and wider attention be paid to apocalyptic belief in Islam in general.

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Finally, this thesis is dedicated in loving memory to Zero, without whom it is safe to say it wouldn't exist. Thank you for your endless support and kindness. Rest peacefully.

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Introduction

On May 7th 2014, Muhammad Nazim Adil al-Qubrusi al-Haqqani (1922-1914), the head of the Naqshbani-Haqqaniyya *tariqa*, died in Cyprus aged 92. The death of Shaykh Nazim, as he was known to his many followers throughout the world, marked the end of a remarkable spiritual career which had driven the spread of a modern form of Naqshbandi Sufism throughout the world. While Shaykh Nazim spoke of love, servanthood, and the path to God in the modern world, he also spoke repeatedly of an imminent and unique apocalyptic vision for the world which appears an expression of classical Muslim apocalyptic expectation, but which is very much grounded in the contemporary period. It is these apocalyptic teachings as expressed primarily by Shaykh Nazim, and their interpretation by Naqshbandi *murids*, that is the focus of this thesis.

As this introduction and subsequent literature review will demonstrate, this is an aspect of Naqshbandi teaching and belief that is often noted in research, yet which is lacking in systematic analysis. However, the study of a Sufi apocalypse has a particular timely importance.

The rise of the militant jihadist group The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (also known as, ISIS, ISIL or Islamic State) has prompted waves of analyses by both Western politicians and media. Among those terms used in the press to describe the group are millenarian (Gray, 2014) and apocalyptic (Ackerman, 2014). While some preliminary data suggests elements of the group may be increasingly drawing on apocalyptic imagery (McCants, 2014) their motivations for doing so remain far from certain. However, it is not unusual to see jihadist, Islamist, or militant Islamic groups described in this way in apocalyptic studies.

Prior to the emergence of ISIL, a number of prominent scholars of apocalyptic thought argued contemporary Islamist groups could be seen as millennial or even apocalyptic.[1] The well known scholar of apocalyptic studies Professor Richard Landes (2004: 338), for example, argues 'at present, the most

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[1] Chapter One of this thesis analyses some of the terms commonly used in this area such as millennial, millenarian, and apocalyptic. In general, millennial refers to a period of time in which the world is transformed into a new era of prosperity, or as Wessinger (1997: 48) describes 'millennialismin its most general definition refers to the expectation of an imminent and collective earthly salvation accomplished according to a divine or supernatural plan'.

widespread and dangerous millennial activity in the world comes from Islam'. Landes bases this assertion on this reading of Islamist motivations: 'various elements of a largely anti-modern resurgence (Islamism) have renewed the early vision of Islam as a battle of true believers fighting to extend the world of submission to Islam: Dar al-Islam – the realm of submission/peace vs. Dar al-Harb – the realm of the sword/war'. This he argues, is millennial, as Islamists are seeking the total reworking of the world to a new system where Islam, and thus justice, dominates.

This idea is troubling for many reasons, not least because there is little evidence to suggest Islamists expect anything like a millennial state of peace and harmony, nor are they monolithic in their aims and motivations. Landes (2011: 424) further confuses the situation by describing contemporary jihadist groups as apocalyptic, arguing for example, 'the beginning of the twenty-first century marks the stunning advances of an Islamic apocalyptic millennial movement, global jihad.'

Landes is by no means the only scholar to present Islamist groups as millennialist. Kenney (2011: 691) likewise argues the Muslim Brotherhood may be considered as millennial in their hope for 'the recreation of a pre-Muslim society, one that demonstrated the successful characteristics of secular political and economic systems, and that protected Muslim identity and culture from the ravages of modernity'. Kenney further argues Osama bin Laden used millennial imagery such as the restoration of a caliphate, and the 're-ordering of world history and the reestablishment of perfect rule' (2011: 708).[2]

While an argument could be made that an Islamist group such as al-Qaeda are apocalyptic in seeking the destruction of the current world order, associating them with indiscriminate global change, or even destruction normally associated with apocalypse, does little to aid our understanding of these groups or end time belief in the contemporary world.

Hall (2009: 173-183), in slight contrast, analyses whether global militant Islamism can be seen as following the same patterns of apocalyptic sects. He concludes they can, due to their utopian ideology and use of martyrdom, their

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[2] These arguments are likewise mentioned in Wessinger's (2014) recent article on apocalypse and violence.

charismatic authority structure, and their counter culture opposition. He thus concludes 'in terms of these three dimensions – ideology, organisation, and milieu – al-Qaeda and allied Islamist movements are quintessentially warring sects that operate in strategic time in order to precipitate the apocalyptic shift to a millennial age' (Hall, 2009: 174).

Hall's argument is sophisticated and certainly has value in helping us understand the distinctive patterns of global radical Islam.[3] However, I would suggest that, in general, we should be careful in applying terms which are used to refer to quite specific patterns of belief in other religions to groups who have little to no disernable interest in identifying apocalyptic signs or bringing about events expected to herald end time events, as outlined in tradition and scripture.

Islam has a rich history and tradition of end time thought, and to identify Islamist groups as the contemporary manifestation of 'apocalyptic Islam' distracts us from gaining a more nuanced understanding of this facet of Islamic thought and belief. As such, it limits both our understanding of apocalyptic beliefs and contemporary Islam as a whole.

Indeed, our understanding of contemporary Islamic thought is, on the whole, limited. As the literature review will outline, there has been work on apocalyptic writers based primarily in the Middle East who envision a coming apocalypse that destroys the West and leaves Islam triumphant. Yet we know little about what apocalyptic beliefs Muslims hold, or whether there is a far greater variety of apocalyptic thought than is currently understood.

The idea of apocalyptically-minded violent Muslims threatening the security of the West itself feeds apocalyptic fantasies. While there may be relatively little apocalyptic belief or thought among Muslims worldwide, we should nonetheless seek to demonstrate the diversity of such belief where it does exist.[4] Just as the apocalypticism of David Koresh is not representative of thousands of

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[3] Hall argues, for example, 'taken together, the apocalyptic elements undergird collective violence as sacred action in relation to a wider sacred cause, and they thus intensify the attraction of the movement to potential recruits willing to undergo death to previous lives and rebirth of total dedication to the sacred struggle, including willingness to die for the cause'. This intense attraction and the sacredness of the struggle is all the more potent and potentially dangerous, for the remoteness of the goal of apocalyptic war which may be ill-defined and so radically revolutionary as to be all but unreachable (Hall, 2009: 182-183).

[4] Even if apocalyptic belief is not strong in contemporary Islam, given the prevalence of apocalyptic imagery worldwide, it would be interesting to consider why this is.

dispensationalist Christians, nor should a vision of apocalyptic Islam automatically be associated with terror.[5] It is thus with the aim of challenging this dominant association of Islam, apocalypse and millennialism, and violent threat, that this thesis proposes an in depth study of a Muslim group who use Islamic apocalyptic symbols. As a Sufi who has spoken out against the type of Islam described above as apocalyptic, Shaykh Nazim makes a particularly interesting case study.

<u>Aims</u>

Using a phenomenological approach to Naqshbandi-Haqqani texts, complemented by fieldwork with one branch of the *tariqa* in the United Kingdom, this thesis aims to provide a fuller analysis of the apocalyptic dimension of Shaykh Nazim's teaching and Haqqani belief than has previously been seen. It aims firstly to identify key phenomena that make up Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse including identifying constructions of time and end time expectation, interpretations of the modern world, elements of theodicy and how this apocalypse functions in terms of its authority basis and subsequent interpretation by *murids*.

In making this identification, this thesis aims, secondly, to compare Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse to broad trends in classical and contemporary Muslim apocalypticism. This will thus facilitate our understanding of whether Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is in any way unusual, raising the question of whether we might speak of a Sufi apocalypse, as well as broadening our understanding of the varieties of contemporary Muslim apocalypticism. In order to extend the analysis of this aim, this thesis will also attempt to account for the form of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic vision, with particular emphasis on its unusual aspects. This will thus not only increase our understanding of the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya but also contemporary global apocalyptic trends and apocalypse in

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[5] David Koresh, also known as Vernon Howell (1959-1993) was the leader of an American group of Branch Davidians based in Waco, Texas. Koresh and 79 members of his group were killed in a fire while their centre was under siege by the FBI. The group were driven by a distinctive apocalyptic vision of the world in which the events of the Book of Revelation in the Bible were seen to be already unfolding. The group considered themselves to be on the side of God and the U.S state as an agent of the forces of evil. An apocalyptic confrontation between the two, predicted to take place in 1995, was to inaugurate the Kingdom of God (Anthony and Palmer, 1997: 272-273).

the West. As a broad aim, this thesis also aims to provide a new phenomenological approach to apocalyptic belief.

Furthermore, it aims to investigate the significance of apocalyptic thought among a small group of *murids* primarily based in Glastonbury, a small town in the South West of England, in order to better understand the process of interpretation, authority and the relative importance of this 'controversial' element of Shaykh Nazim's teachings in the *tariqa*.

While not an ethnographic study the inclusion of *murid* interpretation is important. Between 2012 and 2014 I regularly attended *zikrs* with *murids* connected with the Glastonbury *tariqa*. During this time I found taking the role of a true detached observer to be all but impossible as I was called upon to give my own interpretation of events, spirituality and Shaykh Nazim's teachings. Moreover, I found studying this section of Shaykh Nazim's teachings to be quite personally challenging. While not a *murid* myself, a number of times I found myself reflecting quite seriously on whether there may be some truth in what he was saying.

This experience, particularly seeing how easy it is to find meaning in world events if looking for specific patterns, combined with spending this valuable time with *murids* therefore supported me greatly in my practice of empathy and being sensitive to the inside perspective required by the phenomenological approach. As I argue in the methodology chapter, this is a valuable approach to the study apocalyptic belief for a number of reasons, not least because it seeks to avoid over simplification and unfounded assumption about the nature of End Time thoughts and hopes. Spending time with those who hold apocalyptic beliefs, being challenged and asked to reflect, facilitates this process considerably.

Research Questions

There are three primary research questions for this study.

1) What characterises the apocalypticism of Shaykh Nazim and the Naqshbandi Haqqanis?
    - How does this apocalyptic narrative compare with broad trends observed in classical and contemporary Islamic apocalypticism? Is

there anything 'Sufi' about this apocalypse? Can Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic vision be accounted for?[6]

By identifying key aspects of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic belief, and comparing it with other Muslim apocalypses, this research question and its sub-questions will lead to both a fuller understanding of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic thought and demonstrate the diversity of Muslim apocalyptic thought.

2) Is Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse comparable to patterns of thought and belief found in the Western apocalyptic tradition?

While this thesis does not present a detailed comparison between Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism it does draw on previous research that has analysed and identified broad trends in Western Christian apocalyptic thought, in order to better address research question one. Thus, while any comparisons drawn may be reasonably preliminary, I suggest there is value in undertaking a comparative analysis. By identifying similarities and differences with non-Muslim apocalyptic thought we might better appreciate both the diversity of end time belief and go some way to identifying whether some contemporary apocalyptic concerns might transcend individual religions.

3) How do *murids* in the Glastonbury branch of the *tariqa* interpret the teachings?
   - How is prophetic 'failure' such as the millennium prophecies rationalised?

This is essentially an extension of the first research question in that it considers characteristics of apocalyptic thought in the Haqqaniyya at the level of *murids*. This is an interesting question to consider in the context of the Haqqaniyya for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the Haqqaniyya are not primarily an apocalyptic movement as end of the world teachings are by no means the central part of Shaykh Nazim's overall narrative. It is therefore interesting to consider how

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[6] To an extent, this is a question which cannot be definitively answered. As will be outlined in the methodology chapter, psychological explanations for the appeal of end time belief are put to one side. Perhaps more importantly for a study of Sufism, it might be argued from an insider's point of view that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is as it is because of his privileged esoteric knowledge. However, unlike some apocalyptic speakers Shaykh Nazim does not act as a channel for divine messages, but rather takes on a role of a warner, an interpreter of the contemporary situation. As such, the apocalyptic narrative appears to me at least, to be of his authoring, and thus open to study in the manner proposed above.

murids make sense of teachings which are relatively uncommon in the contemporary world, and which can be the object of ridicule. Secondly, Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic teachings are unusually long lived and have gone through a number of apparent failures, most notably around the millennium. Given this, addressing how these teachings have been reconciled is an important part of developing our understanding of the Haqqaniyya, and how groups with apocalyptic beliefs function in general.

The Haqqaniyya are a large and diverse *tariqa* and there is considerable variation between the branches, as has been demonstrated by Nielsen, Draper and Yemelianova (2006). The Glastonbury branch of the *tariqa* in particular cannot be considered representative of the *tariqa* as a whole and the sections of this thesis which make reference to it, primarily in the final chapter, may therefore be seen as a case study of a hermeneutic of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic narratives.

While unusual, this group do provide an interesting example of such a hermeneutic not least because the group has considerable exposure to Western patterns of esoteric and thus potentially apocalyptic belief. In a number of ways my background as a Westener interested in these spiritual themes made it possible to find common ground with the *murids*, facilitating the building of trust and friendly relationships.

Contribution

As has been outlined above and will be further elaborated upon in the literature review, contemporary literature within apocalyptic studies is dominated by research focussed on violent groups, or Muslim apocalyptic literature from the Middle East. Our understanding of Muslims who actually hold apocalyptic beliefs is limited. This thesis thus aims to contribute to the field of apocalyptic studies by providing a comprehensive study of a detailed apocalyptic vision which is neither violent nor actively revolutionary and which, significantly, is from a Sufi figure with well established links to the Western context. In doing so, it provides a phenomenological framework which can be adapted to the comparative study of apocalyptic religious groups.

The literature review which follows this introduction outlines with breadth of work that has already been undertaken on the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya. However, this thesis will also provide a distinct contribution to the field of Naqshbandi studies by providing an analysis of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse that, rather than focussing on the millennium, utilizes sources produced by the *tariqa* until the Shaykh's death in 2014. While previous research has sketched Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic vision and considered its function in the *tariqa*, this thesis goes further by comparing Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse with other Muslim apocalypses, Western apocalyptic thought, and attempting to account for the form of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, thus providing a greater understanding of where his apocalypse may be positioned relative to other apocalypses past and present, and wider responses of religion to the forces of modernity as a whole.

Moreover, since the millennium, there has been little in the way of analysis on Haqqani apocalyptic thought. This thesis will thus demonstrate that the apocalyptic teachings remained an important part of Shaykh Nazim's teachings, how they were interpreted by Western *murids*, and how they are expressed in new ways by the Haqqani shaykh Shaykh Hisham.

Wider relevance

Beyond addressing gaps in Naqshbandi studies and improving our understanding of the varieties of apocalyptic belief in the modern world, there are wider reasons to undertake this study. The context of modernity has radically challenged traditional religious structures, particularly around authority, individuality and textual interpretation (Woodhead, 2002: 2, 9-10). Modernity could, theoretically, be challenging for classical apocalyptic belief, which makes particular demands of its believers that seem particularly removed from the modern Western, scientific and rationalistic outlook. Followers of charismatic apocalyptic speakers are required to believe that the cause of visions is not madness, but divine, and accept that invisible forces are not only real, but dramatically active in the world.

Yet apocalyptic thought persists in the modern world. New authority for the individual provides flexibility in interpreting text and the potential to provide an apocalyptic reading of the world previously reliant on charismatic or institutional authority. Why it persists is intriguing. It may, for example, provide certainty in

the face of postmodern uncertainty (Aho, 1997: 66-69). As such, any work which addresses contemporary apocalyptic groups can be used not only to position these groups in relation to others but to calculate a wider appreciation of the many and varied ways in which religion functions in relation to the wider trends of modernity.

Thesis outline

This introduction is followed by two further introductory chapters which provide the setting for this thesis. Following this introduction I provide an extended literature review which covers the three principal areas this thesis is concerned with: end time belief in Islamic Studies, studies of Sufism with special attention to the West, and studies of the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya. This latter section is particularly necessary to define what research has previously been undertaken in this area and thus elaborate on how this thesis makes a distinctive contribution.

In the subsequent methodology chapter I outline the rationale for choosing a phenomenological approach to the study of apocalypticism in the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya. Noting the weaknesses of some conventional approaches to the study of apocalypse, I propose that with its aims of impartiality, comparison, and values of empathy, phenomenology presents a good methodological approach to apocalyptic belief. However, I acknowledge that phenomenology is a rather loose methodology and thus in order to provide a framework for this and for future work I propose a new dimensional approach for the study of apocalyptic belief.

Chapter One begins with a discussion of the terminology used in apocalyptic studies and discusses the application of these to the study of Islam. This section is then followed by an overview of end time symbols available in Islam as found in the Qur'an and *hadith*, and the influence these have had in history with particular reference to Sufism. This chapter concludes with a discussion of what is currently known about contemporary Muslim apocalyptic belief and argues Shaykh Nazim's interest in the apocalypse may be considered somewhat unusual. As one of the research questions is concerned with assessing how Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse compares with other Muslim end

time beliefs, this chapter thus provides a comparative base that will be used throughout the rest of this thesis.

Following an introduction to Shaykh Nazim and the Naqshbandiyya, Chapter Two presents an outline of Shaykh Nazim's most consistent apocalyptic narrative. This is then analysed with reference to a conventional definition of millenarianism and is found to fit this definition well. This chapter thus argues that while Shaykh Nazim undoubtedly draws on traditional Islamic end time ideas, the strong millenarian dimension of his apocalypse is actually quite unusual in being utterly catastrophic.

After establishing the elements of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse which are unusual, Chapter Three moves to discuss whether Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic interest can be explained by asking whether they might be placed to appeal to his Western audience. In doing so it establishes Shaykh Nazim's relationship with Western spiritualities and the extent to which there seems to be a deliberate engagement with these beliefs. It argues that while there is some evidence for this, ultimately Shaykh Nazim's new apocalyptic form can be understood as reflecting global apocalyptic concerns.

Chapter Four thus continues the theme of tracing distinctive elements of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse by considering it in the context of a response to the challenges of modernity. This chapter argues that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse can be very much linked to dissatisfaction with the current world and that this apocalypse thus has a strong moral dimension, revealed through references to purification and global punishment. In this way, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse follows a pattern also seen in contemporary Christian apocalypticism.

Chapter Five returns to the question of what characterises Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism to consider whether the apocalyptic narrative can be seen as a theodicy and a way of providing hope in difficult times. It argues that Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic theodicy, while subtle, is nonetheless evident, and that his apocalypse follows a 'triple act drama' previously observed in Judaism and Christianity. Within this drama is revealed how to survive Armageddon and through this, Shaykh Nazim's relationship with other Muslim groups. This chapter argues this is likewise seen in the *tariqa* beyond Shaykh Nazim's teachings, as Shaykh Hisham uses the apocalypse both to berate Muslims

whom the Haqqaniyya disapprove of and reinforce the authority of the *tariqa*. With these themes noted, this chapter concludes with a discussion of whether the apocalypse is significant to Naqshbandi identity.

The exploration of identity reveals the importance of Shaykh Nazim in the apocalypticism of the Haqqaniyya. Chapter Six thus moves to explore the authoritative basis for the end time teachings in the *tariqa*. After discussing constructions of Shaykh Nazim's authority in general it argues that the legitimacy of the apocalypse is made not just through Shaykh Nazim's charismatic knowledge but through an appeal to a variety of other authorities. Knowledge of the apocalypse nonetheless is only made possible through the Shaykh, and thus serves to reinforce his authority. This chapter concludes by addressing an alternative strategy to give apocalyptic possibility legitimacy to an audience outside of the *tariqa*.

This theme of authority is continued in the final chapter of this thesis which explores how a group of *murids* in the Glastonbury branch of the *tariqa* interpret these teachings. This chapter thus explores how the apocalypse is made sense of, its relative importance to the spiritual life, and how past apocalyptic failures are rationalised. It concludes with some thoughts for what this contributes to our understanding of contemporary apocalyptic belief in the Western world.

Overall it is hoped this thesis will provide a comprehensive account of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic vision, how it is interpreted in Britain, and where it can be positioned in relation to other patterns of apocalyptic belief in Islamic and Western traditions.

Literature Review

<u>Introduction</u>

This thesis touches on three principle areas of study: Naqshbandi, and in particular Haqqani studies, contemporary Sufism in the West, and apocalyptic studies. This literature review aims to establish the academic context in which this thesis takes place by evaluating previous research and identifying gaps in the literature in these areas. As such, a thematic approach has been taken, with the review split into three key areas: Eschatology and Apocalypticism in Islamic Studies, the study of Sufism with attention to work on its Western manifestations, and works on the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, with additional focus on studies which explore their apocalyptic dimension. As some areas, particularly Naqshbandi Studies and Western Sufism, have been the focus of many article studies, a number of which are not directly relevant to this study, a general overview of key themes in research is provided. Conversely, detailed analysis has been reserved for those studies which are either key-stone works or have findings that have direct implications for my own research.

This review is limited to English language research that is concerned with Sunnis, as the Haqqanis are a Sunni Sufi *tariqa*, and it has omitted works that would have analytical value in making sense of themes such as authority and identity. Significant previous study in these areas will thus be given in subsequent relevant chapters when appropriate. Likewise, the general study of apocalypse in religion is not discussed here, as some key works and themes, as well as their limitations, are more appropriately discussed in the subsequent methodology section. Studies of apocalypse in Islamic studies, however, are discussed.

<u>The end of the world in Islamic Studies</u>

Beliefs surrounding the end of human existence may be considered to fall into two overlapping categories. Eschatology in the Abrahamic religions considers the theology of the end of material existence and time, as well as what lies beyond, both in terms of judgement and eternal life. Apocalypticism on the other hand, consists of speculation on the nearness of the end of time, and as such,

the state of the temporal world.[7] Within the Abrahamic religions, apocalypticism and eschatology overlap in their expectation that the end of the world and time will be preceded by events in the terrestrial world. As these events are part of the narrative of the end of the world they may be considered eschatological. However, as they are terrestrial and take place within human time and herald the end of the world, they may also be considered apocalyptic.

As this thesis is concerned with what can be described as primarily apocalyptic belief, rather than eschatological theology, this section prioritises research which is concerned with expectation of the end of the world and its realisation in history. The close relationship between eschatology and apocalypse, however, means this distinction is by no means absolute, and within the literature it is not uncommon to see what this thesis will describe as apocalyptic belief considered as a subpart of Islamic eschatology.

One notable example of this is in the essential work on Islamic end time belief *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (Smith and Haddad, 1981). This study serves as an introduction to Islamic eschatology, seeking 'to give as broad an overview as possible of the Islamic eschatological narrative' (Smith and Haddad, 1981: vii). In attempting to synthesise the material to make a coherent eschatological narrative, Smith and Haddad draw directly from the Qur'an, *hadith*, and manuals of eschatology by influential Sunni thinkers, such as Abu-Hamid al-Ghazali (C.E. 1058-1111), which discuss, interpret and elaborate on the eschatological imagery of the Qur'an and *hadith*. As such their work is foremost a descriptive survey of the primary literature.

Their work focuses on two aspects of death and resurrection in Islam: those issues relating to an individual's death and the time in the grave until the Day of Resurrection, and the events of the End Times themselves such as signs of the Hour, the events of the Hour and speculation into the nature of the afterlife. In order to demonstrate how eschatological themes have developed, Smith and Haddad analyse interpretations of these two themes in both the classical and modern periods. The authors find that in contrast to classical interpretations that were primarily concerned with discussing the logic and plausibility of events to take place, modern commentators appear to be reflexive when discussing

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[7] In Chapter One I discuss in more detail the differences between eschatology and apocalypticism, as well as further terminology used in studies in the end of the world.

eschatology, using it to discuss what it is to be a Muslim in the modern world and to present 'a holistic picture of man's place and duty in God's overall plan for His creation' (Smith and Haddad, 1981: 27).[8]

There is much for students of Islam and comparative religion to draw from this work. As an introductory text it does, however, have limitations, many of which are acknowledged by the authors. The study is limited to Sunni thought and likewise does not explore interpretations given by Sufi thinkers.[9] While some consideration is given to how some ideas developed over time, this is by no means total, but is perhaps a limitation of providing a synchronised overview rather than a historical analysis. Most useful, however, would have been more time given to what position these eschatological texts held in society; whether they had any influence on practice and belief, and how they are positioned in relation to wider Islamic thought.

In addition to Smith and Haddad's study there are a number of introductory articles describing the basic tenets of Islamic eschatology. Typically, secondary literature is introductory, concerned with descriptions given by the sacred texts and their interpretations in early Islam (see for example Hermansen, 2008, Waldman, 1987 and Meir 1971). While in general *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* is an invaluable resource for students of Islam, in regards eschatology and apocalypticism it follows this pattern. There is no single comprehensive article which addresses the Islamic eschatological narrative, its position in Islamic thought, and its application in apocalypticism, whether literary or in historical movements. Rather, individual articles cover some eschatological figures and themes, with varying levels of comprehensiveness.

The article on Munkar and Nakir (Wensinck: 2012b), for example, is short and provides only a couple of examples of *hadith* commentary from the eighth and ninth centuries which questioned whether the angels are literal or metaphorical.

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[8] Frequently, for example, there is a stress on ethics and accountability, as all humanity will be ultimately held responsible for their actions. They also note that signs of the Hour and their relationship to the moral state of the world have been used as means of political critique (Smith and Haddad, 1981: 128-129).

[9] Indeed, Chittick (2008: 132, 149) notes a general neglect of thinkers post al-Gazzali such as Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) and Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) whom he argues 'opened up new interpretive strategies that came to predominate in many circles during the later period' as well as contemporary commentators.

Likewise, the articles on the apocalyptic figure *al-Dajjal* are similarly brief.[10] Abel's (2012) article is rather unhelpful, providing some descriptions of what *al-Dajjal* will look like and do, but is otherwise lacking in detail. An exploration of how he was seen by apocalyptic writers is lacking, as is reference to the contemporary period. Abel also makes a curious reference to the legend of Prometheus, without any serious analysis or suggestion of the significance of this. Cook's (2013b) article in the third edition is an improvement, providing clearer descriptions of his appearance and activities. This article does not look beyond *hadith* and provides no analysis of *al-Dajjal* in history beyond a sentence on the contemporary period.

In contrast, van Donzel and Ott's (2012) article on Yajuj and Majuj is particularly comprehensive, as rather than limiting itself to analysis of the Qur'an and *hadith*, it provides a thorough examination of etymology and the commentary Yajuj and Majuj have provoked. This includes speculation into where the barrier is and which peoples are actually being referred to. Here, apocalyptic images are used to justify society's view of others. Most valuably it provides an exploration of their symbolic use in poetry and literature, something which is frequently lacking in other similar articles. Contemporary interpretations are, however, missing.

Madelung's (2012) contribution on the Mahdi is likewise fairly comprehensive, providing the history and development of this belief primarily in the Umayyad age through to the Abbasid period, but with references to developments in the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries and even to Ibn Arabi. If it does not explore political Mahdi movements, then at least the author acknowledges this limitation.

The third edition of the encyclopaedia contains an article entitled 'Apocalypse' (Cook, 2013a) which explores apocalyptic writing as a genre, its form, dating, and context, and which also attempts to move beyond articles which describe single aspects of the eschatological and apocalyptic narratives and their sources. Instead, it seeks to explore apocalyptic narratives in the context of the purpose apocalyptic narratives have in the religious life. This wider view is a

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[10] This literature review refers to a number of Islamic eschatological and apocalyptic figures. For descriptions of these figures, and their place in the Islamic apocalyptic narrative, see Chapter One of this thesis.

considerable step forward. The article is weakened, however, by a lack of clarity on terminology[11], a lack of insight into the significance of apocalyptic writing in society, and a lack of exploration of Shi'ism and the contemporary situation.

With the growing interest in apocalyptic thought we have seen increasing attention given to Muslim end time belief. Within Islamic Studies, this is driven by a few prolific authors who argue that the significance of apocalyptic thought in Islamic history has been underestimated. Arjomand, for example, provides an overview of Islamic apocalypticism in the classical period that he argues highlights a subject he considers to have been neglected in Western scholarship (Arjomand, 2003: 380). Arjomand clearly traces the development of key apocalyptic ideas such as the Mahdi, as well as notes the context in which these apocalyptic traditions developed and their influence on historical events and movements.

Covering a vast area of Muslim history from the Abbasid revolution to messianic movements in the fifteenth century, Arjomand's survey makes for a compelling read in regards the importance of apocalyptic ideas in Muslim history. However, despite the variety of examples he stops before discussing why apocalyptic ideas developed and what role they had for the people who believed in them.[12]

Perhaps the most prolific writer on the End Times is David Cook. In his first book *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (2002) Cook explores the development of various dimensions of apocalyptic writings from the classical period in an attempt to identify key features of Islamic apocalypticism. His chapters thus include an analysis of how historical events were interpreted in an apocalyptic framework, the messianic and moral dimensions of the apocalypse, how eschatological figures such as *al-Dajjal* and Isa were pictured, characteristics of Shi'i apocalyptic, and the position of apocalyptic themes in the Qur'an and their interpretations within *tafsir*. This latter chapter is particularly valuable as it provides a catalogue of major *tafsir* commentators and how they approached (or chose to ignore) apocalyptic verses in the Qur'an. Cook finds that, while not ignored completely, apocalyptic in the Qur'an was not exposited with particular enthusiasm by commentators (Cook, 2002: 298).

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[11] Apocalypse is referred to as revealing hidden knowledge which is not incorrect but nonetheless must be separated from end time thought.

[12] Arjomand published a similar article in *Imagining the End* (Amanat and Bernhardsson, 2002).

Cook's exploration of the use of the Qur'an for apocalyptic writings yields further interesting results. For example, Cook finds that there is 'no Qur'anic apocalyptic tradition universally accepted by Sunnis and Shi'is' (Cook, 2002: 300). Only a very small number of verses are accepted as having apocalyptic significance to both traditions. More intriguing is Cook's assertion that the Qur'an was not often cited directly by Muslim apocalyptists in support of their narratives for a large period of time. Indeed, he argues 'The most that one can say in conclusion to Qur'anic apocalyptic is that it is quite undeveloped and that there is a decisive break between the eschatological style of the Qur'an and the corpus of Muslim apocalyptic as a whole'. Rather, much of the apocalyptic vocabulary is foreign in nature, typically Hebrew or Syriac in origin (Cook, 2002: 274; 299). The question of why verses that 'are clearly apocalyptic in nature' should be ignored by apocalyptcists is not entirely satisfactorily resolved (Cook, 2002: 301).

However, while acknowledging the difference between the language of the Qur'an and apocalyptic writings is certainly valuable, Cook is sometimes unclear in his use of terminology. He repeatedly refers to the Qur'an as eschatological as it sets its focus on the Day of Judgement. In comparison, Muslim apocalyptic is more 'earthbound and historical' (Cook, 2002: 299). However, not clarifying what he means by eschatological and how this relates to apocalypticism makes Cook's suggestion that perhaps the Qur'an is 'an eschatological book and not an apocalyptic book' rather confusing (2002: 301). Indeed, it is difficult to support based on *suras* such as 54:1, 33:63, and 42:17-18 which warn of the nearness of the Hour and which would thus be considered apocalyptic by many conventional definitions and indeed Cook's own use of the word apocalyptic in the above quote. Moreover, this stress on the eschatological character of the Qur'an brings further questions to mind as Cook does not give insight into why an eschatological text would inspire apocalyptic speculation.

Nonetheless, Cook's study is an invaluable resource for anyone seeking to gain grounding in Islamic apocalypticism. Some key themes and insights include an establishment of justice particularly in the messianic age, a concern with the hidden becoming apparent, particularly in regards aesthetics reflecting moral positioning (the good will be beautiful, the evil will be ugly, Cook, 2002: 17) and

a meticulous categorisation of signs of the Hour, providing a useful resource for those who wish to compare how these signs have developed into the contemporary period.

While Cook's study represents the most comprehensive study of apocalyptic *hadith* and texts, there is a growing body of literature concerning an area associated with Muslim apocalypse or eschatology – Mahdi movements. As shall be expanded on in Chapter One, the Mahdi is a non-Qur'anic figure expected to appear before the end of time. While Mahdi belief is particularly associated with Shi'ism, Mahdi movements have been an important part of Sunni history.

Mahdi movements have been the subject of numerous articles and the Mahdi is perhaps most closely synonymous with Muslim end time belief. Despite initial appearances, the relationship between Mahdism and apocalypticism is not clear. While the Mahdi is undoubtedly an end time figure, the extent to which Mahdis saw themselves associated with the end of the world does not seem to be particularly likely. Rather, Mahdism became a way of expressing desire for reform as has been demonstrated by both Furnish (2005) and García-Arenal (2006). More work is thus required in Muslim history to understand non-Mahdi end time belief.

As I have noted in the introduction, it is not uncommon to see an association made between militant jihadism, apocalypse and millennialism. While these groups may fit the broad definition of these categories (although I stress the need for more research) it seems curious to focus on this without questioning why Muslim apocalyptic symbols from *hadith* are not more widely used. Three texts which do discuss contemporary Muslim apocalyptic belief are provided by Cook (2005), Furnish (2005) and Filiu (2011).

In *Contemporary Muslim Apocalyptic Literature* (2005) Cook explores the relatively recent phenomena of Muslim apocalyptic literature that has emerged over the past two decades, primarily in print media and on the internet in the Arabic speaking Middle East. Cook's analysis is largely thematic and rather than exploring socio-economic or environmental reasons for the development of this contemporary apocalyptic genre, Cook instead defends the study of

apocalypticism as a valuable way to gain insight into the self image of apocalyptic writers and their perceptions of others.

Cook's study makes for an interesting read, both for students of Islam and those with an interest in contemporary religious trends across all traditions. Cook provides thematic chapters on the Mahdi, the role of the United States and Afghanistan in the last days, and the Anti-Christ, and identifies three schools of apocalyptic writers, outlined in Chapter One of this thesis.

Cook's analysis raises a number of interesting issues that appear recurrent across many traditions when contextualising apocalypticism in modernity. Of particular interest is exploring the relationship between authority and modernity and how this relationship engenders contemporary apocalypticism to take place. Cook notes, for example, that this new apocalyptic exegesis can only take place because modern printing provides easy access to once restricted texts and because authority in who can interpret texts has changed (Cook, 2005: 214).

Cook also notes a dominant anti-Semitic tone in these narratives which is conspiratorial in nature: Jews control the world and are agents of the anti-Christ. Like many conspiracy narratives, this narrative rewrites and reads history selectively and is impossible to logically disprove.

Two other notable monographs that analyse contemporary Muslim apocalyptic thought are provided by Furnish (2005) and Filiu (2011), both of which draw on similar resources to Cook. Of all three texts, Filiu's covers the broadest subject matter, outlining classical Muslim apocalypses from Ibn Arabi, al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir, and early Mahdi claimants, to provide context for the contemporary manifestation of apocalyptic thought. Following this, he provides an analysis of contemporary apocalyptic literature, noting like Cook key themes in apocalyptic narratives and how current events are interpreted in the apocalyptic context. Valuably, he extends his observations to apocalyptic thought beyond the Arabic speaking Middle East to include brief surveys of apocalyptic interest in the West, Harun Yahya Multinational, apocalypse in South Asia and the Nation of Islam.

Filiu concludes 'It is striking that the millenarian anxiety to which this impulse gives voice is very much less pronounced in Muslim lands lying beyond its epicentre in the Middle East, no matter that the Internet now makes it possible to transmit the wildest conjecture to the ends of the earth in an instant' (2011: 183). However, he does not elaborate in any detail why this might be.

In his final analysis of contemporary Muslim apocalyptic belief, Filiu chooses to focus on the dangers apocalyptic belief might hold for the world if it is taken up by militant *jihadi* groups. He writes, for example:

> Up until now, the jihadist fuse has not been brought into contact with an explosive millenarian change...and yet, coming after the gold of the Euphrates, widely interpreted in the wake of the American invasion of Iraq as a sign of the Hour, a fire in Hijaz may be all that is needed to set in motion a new cycle of eschatological tension, inaugurating an age of widespread fear and expectation that the end of the world is at hand. If an inflammatory and incandescent event of this sort were to occur, the chance that global *jihad* might undergo an apocalyptic mutation would give grounds for genuine apprehension (Filiu, 2011: 193).

This tendency is likewise notable in Cook (2005) and Furnish (2005). Despite acknowledging there is no discernable link between Islamic militantism and apocalyptic writings, all three writers seem determined to speculate on the catastrophic consequences should the relationship develop or apocalyptic texts have more social impact. Cook (2005) for example notes that these texts may provide a communication barrier, particularly due to the intensely anti-Semitic and Islamic-supremacist narrative which not only stops any desire of dialogue with Jews but also challenges the tolerance of Western audiences (Cook, 2005: 217, 223). Likewise, Furnish (2005) speculates extensively on the role of Osama bin Laden as the world's leading candidate for a Mahdi figure.

However, the extent to which these apocalyptic texts are read, and importantly how and why they are read by those who read them is very unclear.[13] Research

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[13] Undertaking an analysis of who reads apocalyptic texts and why would be a fascinating area of future research, particularly if done in a comparative context. Research in this area has already begun in the Christian context. In her study of readers of the popular apocalyptic novel series *Left Behind*, Frykholm (2004: 178-179) argues that rather than passive receivers of an unpleasant, divisive narrative, readers of *Left Behind* are active agents in making sense of the text in the light of social circumstances. The books serve to express fears and anxieties about 'self, nation and world' but also encourage connection building between individuals. For many readers, the books help strengthen their faith and provide hope in difficult times (Frykholm, 2004: 180-181).

is needed into the relationship between these texts and violence and the questions of whether there is apocalyptic belief and if not, the question of why there doesn't seem to be more apocalyptic belief, particularly among jihadists, needs to be addressed. Moreover, this focus on violent apocalypse may not be truly representative of Muslim end time thought. Like some Christians, it may be that some Muslims do speculate on the end of time but in a way which has very little resemblance to the Middle East apocalyptic texts.[14]

Here, a study of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism would be a valuable contribution to the literature because, as we will see, it is apocalyptic belief that is quite different to the Middle East writers, and which is interpreted, and in some cases believed, by people living in the UK, something quite unusual in apocalyptic studies in general.

Sufism

As the 'mystical' branch of Islam, Sufism has received a great deal of attention in Western scholarship, if not always of a consistent standard. While the orientalist history of Sufi studies is well known[15], it is nonetheless worth sketching, if only as a reflexive activity.

Much early Western interest in Sufism was text based, concerned with the writings of individuals who lived many hundreds of years ago that expressed the inexpressible: *fana*, the intensity of divine love, and the hidden secrets of the cosmos. The social dimension of Sufism, its insights into the spiritual lives of ordinary Muslims as mediated through the *tariqas*, was neglected. Indeed, for many scholars, the formation of the *tariqas* was the beginning of the decline of Sufism. A J Arberry is explicit in this concern, finding: 'the age of Ibn Farid, Ibn Arabi and Rumi represents the climax of Sufi achievement, both theoretically and artistically. Thereafter, although the numerous and ever multiplying Religious Orders the influence of Sufi thought and practice became more

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[14] This is not to say there is no relationship, only that the relationship may not be one of correlation. Cook, for example, provides interesting speculation on this idea, finding 'It cannot be a coincidence that the rise of radical apocalyptic writers has been concurrent with the rise of radical Islam'. However, he continues 'there is no evidence of actual interdependence, other than the fact that radical apocalyptic writers feed off the events and trends that radical Muslims have either generated or benefited from, and interpret in terms of their apocalyptic framework' (Cook, 2005: 15). Sadly, Cook does not pursue this point which would have been valuable for evaluating whether we can meaningfully speak of a relationship between apocalypticism and the phenomena that can very broadly be called fundamentalism.

[15] See for example, Ernst (1997: 130-132), Weismann (2007b: 6-9), Geaves (2000: 2-6).

widespread...the signs of decay appear more and more clearly, and abuse and scandal assail and threaten to destroy its fair reputation' (cited by Weismann, 2007b: 6).

While valuable in attempting to refocus thought on *tariqas*, Trimingham's landmark *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (1998 [originally published 1971]) likewise reflects this framework of an early high period, followed by a period of decline. Trimingham's threefold schema of Sufi history begins with the golden age of Sufism (1998: 103) characterised by individual piety and devotion under a master, after which Sufism gradually became more institutionalized until, in its third *tai'fa* stage, it stops innovating and stagnates. Indeed, in this stage he finds the 'orders had now attained their final forms and organization and spiritual exercises...No further development was possible and no further mystical insight which could mark a new point of departure in either doctrine or practice was to make its appearance' (1998: 104).

The attack on Sufism as being stagnant has been extended to argue that the *tariqas* were responsible for a decline in Islam in general. This argument was particularly supported by reformers who, influenced by Western rationalism, sought to prove that Islam was rational and could succeed in the modern world, but must first extract itself from Sufism (Weismann, 2007b: 8). Even oft lauded thinkers like Ibn Arabi have been attacked as contributing to the decline of Islam by being mystically inward looking and contemplative, opposed to action (Schimmel, 1975: 274).

Recent scholarship, however, has challenged this paradigm of decline and demonstrated that Sufism has been, and continues to be, a lively and active dimension of the Islamic religious life. Again, Trimingham's conclusions have come under scrutiny, this time because of his argument that *tariqas* may provide a refuge for those seeking to escape the modern world (1998: 257). The prediction of the decline of traditional religion was of course not uncommon during the period of the early 1970s when Trimingham was writing. It has nonetheless been shown to be incorrect across many traditions, including Sufism, where *tariqas* have adapted and engaged with modernity, with some even thriving.

This is aptly demonstrated by works such as the volume *Sufism and the Modern in Islam* (van Bruinessen, 2007) which demonstrates the ways in which Sufism has adapted to modernity throughout the world. The authors describe social innovation, adaptation to nationhood, resistance, and the continuing appeal of Sufism to modern, city dwelling Muslims as well as the ways authority, legitimacy and Sufism's social role have changed. While there has been a general trend to focus on the socio-political role of the *tariqas*, more work is continuously appearing that both seeks to understand the role organised Sufism plays in society and in the spiritual lives of individuals (see for example Abun-Nasr, 2007 and Werbner, 2003).

However, work is by no means complete in Sufi studies. The formation, history, and teachings of major *tariqas* such as the Qadiriyya, Dhahbiyya, and Shadhiliya still await extensive and comprehensive study. The major exception to this trend in Sufi studies is the attention paid to the Naqshbandiyya. Indeed, the literature in this area is so vast that to produce a comprehensive literature review would be a considerable project in itself. As much of what has been written is not directly relevant to this study, the following provides only a very small snapshot of the general state of Naqshbandi studies.

The most prolific scholar of the Naqshbandis is Hamid Algar who has not only written extensively on this *tariqa* but has encouraged others to do likewise. An early example of his work is given in his article 'The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Study of Its History and Significance' (1976), in which he provides an introduction to the *tariqa* by discussing key figures of the *silsila* (such as ad-Din Naqshband, Abd al-Khaliq and Sirihindi) and what distinctive elements they gave to the Naqshbandi legacy. He also provides an outline of the expansion of the Naqshbandis into various regions and some examples of the role the *tariqa* played in politics.

Algar presents a similar article in the most significant volume that has been presented on the Naqshbandiyya: *Naqshbandis: Historical Developments and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order* (Gaborieau, Popovic, and Zarcone, 1990). This vast volume covers many aspects of Naqshbandi history, but is particularly valuable in demonstrating the variety of contexts in which the Naqshbandis operate. Focus is given to their activities in Indonesia, Eastern

Europe, the Middle East, China, Afghanistan, India, and Kurdistan, demonstrating how truly global this *tariqa* is. Curiously, there is less on their presence in Turkey, or indeed focus on biographies and hagiographies and devotional practices. I would venture to suggest this latter topic is still not given as much attention in Naqshbandi studies in comparison to sociology, biography, and political history.

Following this volume and its call for more research, there have been numerous articles and books dedicated to the Naqshbandiyya and their various branches. Another important volume is *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia* (Ozdalga, 1999), in which the authors examine how the Naqshbandiyya have faced the challenges of modernity and as such the role of traditional religions and cultures in the modern period. The exploration of charisma and sainthood is a popular topic in Naqshbandi studies, as may be seen in *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet* (Buehler 1998) and *Pilgrims of Love* (Werbner, 2003).[16]

In response to this vast amount of new literature, Itzchak Weismann (2007b) has taken on the not inconsiderable task of attempting to synthesise this material into a coherent historical analysis. This analysis extends to the contemporary period, where Weismann argues the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis have been successful because of the Shaykh Nazim's flexibility and tolerance that help him reach out to Westerners. As we shall see, Weismann is by no means the only scholar to have noted this. While not exhaustive, he provides a useful introduction to the field, including an extensive bibliography of works on the Naqshbandiyya.

Sufism in the West

The past few decades have seen an increased interest in studying Islam and its manifestations outside of the Arab world. In the study of Sufism, an area in which much work has been done, work produced in the years since 2000 has

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[16] This latter study is an especially interesting contribution, not just to the field of Naqshbandi studies, but Sufi studies. As an anthropological study primarily focused on transnational nature of the contemporary branch of the Naqshbandis headed by the saint known as Zindapir, Werbner explores many interesting anthropological issues such as pilgrimage, authority, charisma, and the establishment of sacred space. However, she does not neglect the textual dimension of this branch, and as such also provides an insight into Zindapir's cosmology and thought. She therefore hopes to challenge the notion of Sufism as incompatible with the modern world and typologies such as Trimingham (1998) which seek broad patterns to kunderstand *tariqas*, arguing instead for a more individualistic approach.

contributed much to our understanding of Sufism in Europe and North America. Increasingly, detailed studies of *tariqas* are emerging. However, much of the most accessible material on Sufism comes from multi-contributor volumes including *Sufism in the West* (Malik and Hinnels, 2006)*, Sufis in Western Society* (Geaves, Dressler, and Klinkhammer, 2009) *Sufism in Europe and North America* (Westerlund, 2004), and *Sufism Today* (Raudvere and Stenberg, 2009).

In general, these volumes are based on anthropological work, and discuss the adaptations of Sufism to the modern Western context, revealing recurrent themes of identity building, new ways in which religious authority functions, and more recently, the search for an authentic expression of Islam. Frequently, researchers have noted that Sufism is becoming no longer tied to specific geographical spaces or ethnicity.

One manifestation of this is in studies of a particularly Western type of Sufism. Indeed, while a reasonably neglected area in Sufi studies, there is a growing body of literature concerned with what Hermansen (2006: 28) describes as 'perrenialist' – those in the West who practice Sufism in a way which emphasizes universal spirituality, but de-emphasizes Sufism's roots in historical Islam, and which in many ways has similarities with Sixties spiritual culture.[17]

Perhaps a more common research area, however, is on the adaptations *tariqas* with a long history have made to the Western context as their traditions have made their way into the West through immigration. As we will see, the Naqshbandiyya have been the focus of a number of these studies, yet they are not the only *tariqa* to have made adaptations to the challenges of modernity and the Western context.

However, as more research is undertaken, it is becoming apparent that Sufism in the West continues to develop and change demonstrating the need for continuous research. The internet is a hugely significant new area for the functioning of Sufism, as Geaves (2014: 46) illustrates: 'the *tariqas* have become more aware of the need to draw upon the transnational and transcultural nature of globalized membership and to articulate the narratives of

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[17] See for example, Hammer (2004), Jackson (2014), Taji-Farouki (2007) and Sedgwick (2004).

tasawwuf and traditional Islamic sciences in an intellectual environment, addressing both Muslims and non-Muslims in the lingua franca'.

Here, Geaves highlights one of the most interesting developments in modern Sufism, the articulation of Sufism online which is aimed at Western Muslims not necessarily in *tariqas*, and which sees Sufism as an authentic expression of Islam in response to reformist critiques.[18] As Geaves further explains, 'the online presence of traditional Muslim *tasawwuf* does not advertise itself as Sufism or even rally behind the epithet of *Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a*, but rather prefers to speak of itself as representing traditional Islam and the teachings of the four *madhhabs*. The websites originate in Spain, Britain and North America and address themselves specifically to Muslims in the West'. This Sufism is thus rooted in Islam but not tied to traditional authority structures or ethnicities. Such developments thus represent the need for ongoing research in the field and the need to re-asses structures and models proposed only a few years previously.

Thus, there is almost endless scope for new research. While a number of studies provide short introductions to a particular *tariqa* (typically its activities, history, and structure), in depth studies are relatively rare, with some *tariqas* lacking even introductory study. Moreover, research is lacking on Sufi groups who do not strive to make such adaptations and how Sufi groups function within immigrant communities. Likewise, research into the relationships between Sufism and young people, particularly in the light of the above would be welcome, as would further research on Sufism and its practice by women. Even with Naqshbandi studies, women are relatively little studied due to access restrictions. While this study does not target specific ethnic groups or ages, it nonetheless seeks female participants as much as is possible.

Sufism in Britain

As with studies in Western Sufism, Sufism in Britain is still relatively little studied. Indeed, even in the excellent volume *Muslims in Britain: An Introduction* (Gilliat-Ray, 2010), Sufism is given little in the way of systematic analysis.

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[18] See also Hamid (2014).

Ron Geaves is in general the most significant contributor to the study of British Sufism. *The Sufis of Britain* (Geaves, 2000) is the only monograph devoted exclusively to a general survey of Sufism in Britain. The study is somewhat introductory, and provides a historical overview of how Sufism was established in Britain and some of the challenges it has faced. Geaves provides case studies on prominent *tariqas* in the UK but acknowledges that he cannot cover all Sufi groups. He is particularly interested in identity and the relationship between ethnicity and religion. As one of what will hopefully be many studies there are many other avenues that could be explored. Geaves gives little insight into female Sufi identity and a post 9/11 update would be interesting in the light of negotiating Islamic identity and media. The Haqqaniyya, for example, have used their Sufi identity to promote an image of being the 'true' representatives of Islam.

Geaves's methodology is primarily phenomenological, a choice which is justified by his observations that it allows him to explore a wide range of practitioners who self-identify as Sufis, as it does not exclude those who would otherwise be so based on a more narrow classification, such as 'universalist' Sufis. Further in regards to methodology, Geaves shows considerable sensitivity to the experiential dimension of religion. Rather than seeking to explain a phenomenon like conversion in sociological or psychological terms, Geaves proposes we must also look at the power of internal religious experiences (2000: 157). While not necessarily concerned with conversion, my own research is likewise influenced by this perspective.

Most recently, Geaves with Theodore Gabriel (2014) has edited a volume dedicated to the new way Sufism is manifesting in Britain. To the growing body of literature on Sufism in the West, this volume provides an important focus for researchers on the specific challenges for Sufism in the British context. It thus provides a history of the development of Sufism in Britain as well as recent developments and manifestations both within and outside of formal *tariqas*.

Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya

As one of the most publicly vocal and popular *tariqas* in the Western world, the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya have been the focus of a number of studies, particularly in the field of anthropology. In order to place my research in the

context of what has come before and to make the gaps in the literature clear, the following presents an examination of some key research projects on the Haqqaniyya, with special attention given to interpretations of their apocalyptic dimension. The following section then explores studies who have an explicit interest in this apocalyptic dimension.

One of the earliest in depth studies on Shaykh Nazim was undertaken by Daphne Habibis (1985). Habibis undertook fieldwork with the Haqqaniyya in Lebanon, where Shaykh Nazim was based, between 1980 and 1981, and observed community relations in the group, constructions of Shaykh Nazim's authority, and ritual practices. Habibis also devotes considerable attention to the apocalyptic teachings of Shaykh Nazim.[19]

In terms of apocalyptic focus, her analysis is valuable for a number of reasons. Firstly, she provides an excellent account of Shaykh Nazim's basic apocalyptic narrative which, when compared with Haqqani publications in the years since, shows a reasonably consistent message. Secondly, Habibis suggests that Shaykh Nazim's teachings regarding the Mahdi have a value in instructing followers in how to live a good life. She argues that because followers must be constantly ready for the coming of the Mahdi and Isa they must be careful to not become attached to the current world (Habibis, 1985: 179). In short, they must be prepared for the world as we know it to end at any time.

Finally, in her general analysis, Habibis draws a distinction between *murids* and *muhibbis.*[20] *Murids* are 'those who display a level of commitment to Sufism which is manifested by constant association with the Shaykh and the fulfilment of Sufi practices' (1990: 605) and as such, may be analogous to Nielsen, Draper and Yemelianova's (2006) idea of an 'inner circle' in the Haqqaniyya. It is among this group that Habibis found belief in the Mahdi is strongest (Habibis, 1985: 606).

To explain this, Habibis looks for social and psychological factors that might cause an individual to take refuge in Mahdi beliefs. She argues *murids* are normally highly conservative Muslims at odds with a society becoming

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[19] Her insights are also published in an article: 'Mahdism in a Branch of a Contemporary Naqshabandi Order in Lebanon' (Habibis, 1990).
[20] In line with how my participants use the term, I refer to *murids* as those who have given *ba'ya* to the Shaykh.

increasingly westernised. Importantly, she argues they feel powerless in the world, feelings of which are amplified by the unstable political situation in Lebanon at that time. She thus argues, 'For these people belief in the Mahdi provides a way of explaining Islam's apparent defeat and of giving meaning to an otherwise meaningless world' (Habibis, 1985: 608). In contrast, the *muhibbis* are a much more diverse group, less inclined towards hostility to the West and less inclined to feel at odds with their world. Subsequently, they are less likely to be as invested in the prophecies.

However, the approach Habibis takes to Shaykh Nazim and a number of her observations and conclusions can be questioned.[21] To begin, despite describing in some detail both classical Islamic *hadith* and Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, Habibis does not provide any insight or analysis into the distinct differences between the two, nor does she compare Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse to the form of apocalyptic/messianic belief in either contemporary or classic Muslim movements. We are given no indication of whether Shaykh Nazim is unusual or where he can be positioned in the variety of Muslim apocalyptic belief.

Indeed, Habibis even implies his belief is typical. She argues 'Mahdism remains an important factor in Islam today. The departure from traditional modes of religious expression, the fragmentation of the *umma*, and the growth of communism, socialism and secular nationalism are all regarded as indicators that humankind is living in the Last Days referred to in the Qur'an and *Hadith*' (Habibis, 1985: 163), referring to Mahdi beliefs in Nigeria and the attack on the Grand Mosque in Saudi Arabia by a group claiming to be of the Mahdi. However, she provides no reflection on whether these Mahdi beliefs are at all comparable to Shaykh Nazim's end time beliefs and as I have similarly noted above, it seems an exaggeration to state Mahdi or end time beliefs are important to the global Muslim community without much more evidence.

Moreover, Habibis to my mind is unfairly dismissive of the nature of the apocalyptic teachings, showing little appreciation of the complexity of

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[21] While Habibis presents a substantial thesis which much valuable information, a few of her observations do seem to be challenged by subsequent research. For example, she argues Shaykh Nazim felt none of his followers had truly embraced the Sufi path (Habibis, 1985:195), that Shaykh Hisham and Shaykh Adnan, Shaykh Nazim's son-in-laws, doubted Shaykh Nazim, and that Shaykh Nazim failed to criticise people and get away with it (Habibis, 1985: 196). These observations may well have been accurate at the time but they nonetheless demonstrate the continuing need for ongoing research into the *tariqa*.

apocalyptic belief. Habibis argues 'the almost marginal nature of the beliefs is evident from the fact that if Sheikh Nazim no longer referred to them there would be virtually no change in his behaviour and it is unlikely that his following would be drastically affected. All of his *muridun*, without exception, stated that their adherence to Sheikh Nazim is independent of his prophecies and if the *Mahdi* never comes they will still follow him' (Habibis, 1985: 171).

While I would agree the apocalyptic teachings are by no means the central element of Shaykh Nazim's thought, they cannot be dismissed as marginal. As Melton (1985) has demonstrated, apocalyptic beliefs are seldom the central focus of any group with end time belief, but rather exist in a complex web of theology and world view. Indeed, further research on the Haqqaniyya demonstrated apocalyptic teachings had a role to play in identity building (Atay, 1994: 121, 220) and that they did become significant around the millennium, with some *murids* dramatically changing their lives in preparation for Armageddon.[22]

On the need for further research, it is important to note Habibis's work is situated in one time and one locality, and naturally her interpretation of the role of the apocalyptic teachings is based on this context. Habibis argues that in Lebanon, the hope of the Mahdi provides a hope of being safe from war, a way to explain the destruction of traditional Islam and a means of protest in a system where ordinary people felt they had no political voice (Habibis, 1985: 174-177).

While I believe Habibis places too much emphasis on the political dimension of apocalyptic thought (Habibis, 1985: 173), for the situation, her analysis may not be inaccurate. However this analysis makes little sense for apocalyptic interpretation in the West and in the global context in which the Haqqaniyya have been operating for some time. Contemporary Naqshbandis face different challenges to Habibis's participants. A convert living in Glastonbury cannot be assumed to have the same motivation for believing in the coming Mahdi as a 'highly conservative' Muslim in Lebanon seeking to come to terms with Western dominance and explaining a perceived decline of Islam in the world.

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[22] This is evident from even my small participant pool. See also Nielsen, Draper and Yemelianova (2006: 109).

Moreover, Habibis (1985: 166) argues Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic teachings are broadly the same as Shaykh Daghestani, his own shaykh, and largely inherited. This may have been the case at the time but when looking at Haqqani publications it is apparent Shaykh Nazim developed a distinct apocalyptic voice that diverged from what we know of Shaykh Daghestani's predictions. It is therefore appropriate to provide a new analysis of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism with focus on the new symbols and new dissatisfactions, beyond 1980s Lebanon.

After almost a decade, two more doctoral theses were presented which discussed Shaykh Nazim and the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in the very different setting of London. Köse's thesis *Conversion to Islam: a study of native British converts* (1994) included a large section on conversion through Sufism, with a chapter given to converts in the Haqqaniyya. Köse argues the appeal of Shaykh Nazim to Westeners can be accounted for by his message of rejecting materialism, which was harmonious with the religious counter culture of the Sixties – a background of many converts, his message of tolerance towards new Muslims, that he did not call for a withdrawal from society and that Shaykh Nazim spoke in a way which made him approachable.

Köse thus concludes that the Haqqaniyya provide a new social identity and a sense of belonging, invaluable to those feeling alienated from the modern world. He qualifies this conclusion with an observation that we cannot neglect spiritual motivations in the conversion motivation, which Shaykh Nazim helps to fill.

Köse devotes a few paragraphs to Shaykh Nazim's predictions, providing a rough sketch of the basic apocalyptic expectations, and notes that even when they seem not to have come true loyalty to the Shaykh is undiminished, and that they may have a teaching role for some *murids*. Notably, Köse's work takes place sometime before the millennium, and his observations have been challenged (Draper, 2002).

A valuable in depth study is given by Tayfun Atay (1994) for his doctoral thesis. A social anthropological analysis, Atay's thesis explores Islamic identity among the *tariqa* in London, and in particular, how members of the *tariqa* 'think and talk about themselves and "others" (both Muslim and non-Muslim)' (1994: 3), and justifies itself on the premise that Islam must be understood by exploring the

many and diverse ways in which it functions according to the contexts in which it operates in order to completely challenge the notion that it acts as a homogenous entity.[23]

As an ethnographic study, Atay prefers to describe his observations and place them in wider context to give an idea of where the Haqqaniyya are situated in regards general trends in modernity and Islamic presence in the West. He suggests his subsequent lack of theory limits his thesis although 'with some irony' he suggests 'the relative poverty of [his] theoretical account is due to the richness of [his] ethnographic material' (Atay, 1994: 15). While Atay succeeds in providing a valuable ethnographic study he does neglect to inform the reader on how he selected themes for analysis and what, if any, he omitted.

Atay's research begins with a history of the Naqshbandiyya and continues with a biography of Shaykh Nazim and a valuable account of how the *tariqa* was established in London, including the challenges the Shaykh faced, something frequently omitted from official Haqqani literature.

Following a reflexive account of his fieldwork, Atay continues by exploring the *zikr* and its relationship to the *nafs*, as well as the *tariqa's* view on modernity, its millenarian dimension, and political viewpoints. The final two chapters of his research cover conflict between Muslims, in particular, how an Islamic 'other' is constructed through anti-Wahhabi discourse and power struggles in the group. These final chapters show the most sophisticated analysis and are valuable in demonstrating the complex relationships between power and different types of religious knowledge and how comparing oneself to other Muslims (in some cases deciding who is and isn't a Muslim) engenders the creation of a sense of self and ownership of correct Islamic practice.

On the whole, Atay's thesis is strong and while our insights may occasionally overlap as exploring apocalyptic thought necessarily involves discussion on authority and society, I believe our research diverges in a number of places. Aside from the in-depth attention I give to Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic thought, the anthropological dimension of my research differs from Atay's in that it takes place almost two decades later, my group is away from London and not, as

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[23] In this approach, Atay acknowledges his anthropological work follows on that begun by Asad (1983) (Atay, 1994: 246).

Atay's research was, focused primarily on Turkish men. Indeed, having access to women was somewhat of a challenge for Atay, again something he acknowledges (Atay, 1994: 15). In this, my research continues Atay's in providing further study that will contribute to widening understanding of the diversity of Islam.

Interestingly, my research also continues from Atay's in being in line with his suggestion that a comparative study of the Haqqaniyya with other Muslim, Jewish, and Christian apocalyptic movements be undertaken 'in order to reveal the similarities and differences between their discourses of eschatology' (Atay, 1994: 300).

Atay's chapter on apocalyptic thought is shorter than some of his others and primarily covers the background of Mahdism in Islam. He does uncover some interesting points, however, that deserve futher study. To begin, Atay notes that Mahdi interest is more common among Indo-Pakistani *murids* (although Westerners also have an interest), but he does not explore why this might be the case. He does, however, look to explain what the Mahdi teachings as a whole do for the community, noting the self esteem of the community is bolstered through the stress on being a privileged community with unique insight into the Mahdi (Atay, 1994: 212).

While Atay does not give detailed observation on how widely apocalyptic teachings are interpreted within the *tariqa* or their relative importance to individual lives or wider *tariqa* thought, he does indicate that they have a certain significance. He claims that 'throughout [his] fieldwork, [he] was struck by the richness and extent of the discourse in this particular Naqshbandi community concerning the Mahdi' and quotes a *murid's* statement 'we are waiting for the appearance of the Mahdi. That is what differentiates us from other Islamic groups or association', arguing this indicates the importance of the apocalyptic motif in Haqqani discourse (Atay, 1994: 200).

Interestingly, Atay argues that unfulfilled prophecies should not damage the *tariqa* as 'continuous cycles of reinterpretation, always with some modifications, seem to play a crucial role in the maintenance of the millenarian formulation' (Atay, 1994: 220). In the light of the millennium it is important to assess the

salience of this statement and expand our understanding of apocalyptic thought by exploring the strategies that make this reinterpretation possible.

The next major study on the Haqqaniyya was undertaken by Draper (2002). Taking an ethnographic approach, Draper compared the Haqqaniyya with the less well known Qadiri-Budshishiyya, paying particular attention to both *tariqas'* adaptations and appropriations to the Western spiritual context. This thesis thus introduced the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya (and Qadiri-Budshishiyya) in Glastonbury to the academic community and, as far as I am aware, it is the only in-depth study discussing the *tariqa* in this context.

In the final chapter of this thesis I describe in slightly more detail the content of Draper's thesis and the necessity of continuing more research. For the purposes of this literature review it will just be noted that this research took place over a decade ago. The *tariqa* has grown significantly in this time and to an extent, its engagement with the Glastonbury context has developed. Draper does acknowledge Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic teachings. However, he does not discuss how *murids* in Glastonbury interpret them.[24]

Two article studies published not long after Draper's thesis look at charisma in the Haqqaniyya. Böttcher (2006) argues legitimacy in Sufism comes from the claim of being a link between the profane and divine, and in her article argues for how this legitimacy is maintained in the *tariqa*. Noting a lack of formal organisational structure, Böttcher argues the *tariqa* is effectively held together by the charisma of the leadership. She thus outlines claims made of Shaykh Nazim, such as his miracles and position on the *silsila* that enforces his legitimacy. These are bolstered by rituals such as *ba'ya*, *rabita*, and connection.

While reasonably sound, Böttcher comes to some questionable conclusions. Firstly, she argues Shaykh Nazim has not been effective in convincing people to invest time and money in the *tariqa* over the long term that would allow an established institutional structure (Böttcher, 2006: 264). Secondly, she argues the *tariqa* is a fluid body that only takes form in the Shaykh's physical presence. This is a similar point to that made by Nielsen, Draper and Yemelianova (2006). It is, however, contentious. Stjernholm (2008: 100), for example, argues:

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[24] Draper has published a couple of articles out of his thesis including the frequently cited 'From Celts to Kaaba: Sufism in Glastonbury' (2004).

[the] notion of the *tariqa* being non-existent when the Shaykh is not present misses out on the validity of the movement's attendes themselves. Different activities persist in Shaykh Nazim's absence...the local attendees travel to see the Shaykh and bring back stories from the meetings with him...*Sohbets* and news of the Shaykh's utterances are rapidly spread to the local attitudes through the internet. Thus, many local parts of the movement can knowingly have the same newsfeeds, interpretations of events and symbolic stories.

A slightly earlier article by Schmidt (2004) also somewhat challenges some of Böttcher's stress on the importance of Shaykh Nazim's charisma in person, by providing a valuable analysis of Haqqani internet presence (at that time), with particular focus on charisma. Schmidt observes that the Haqqanis, particularly the American branch, used the internet as a space to position themselves as the legitmate voice and representatives of Islam. Moreover, she observed that attempts to transmit the authority of the Shaykh seemed to have something of an effect on spiritual seekers, recounting religious experience on the visitors book. While this may be easy to dismiss, there is some evidence to suggest a growth in cyber spirituality, pointing to new ways of understanding the reach and role of the *tariqa*. Given this research took place over ten years ago, it would certainly be interesting to reassess Naqshbandi space and activities online, particularly in the light of growing internet engagement by Sufi authorities and 'transglobal' Sufism (Geaves, 2009: 110).

In the volume *Sufism in the West* (Malik and Hinnells, 2006) the Haqqaniyya are the focus of two contributions, with briefer mentions in others. In the first contribution Nielsen , Draper and Yemelianova (Nielsen *et al* 2006: 103-114) undertook an anthropological study on the Haqqaniyya with a focus on the 'transnational' nature of the *tariqa*, that is, how the *tariqa* functions in the diverse contexts in which it operates, and as such, how it maintains a sense of cohesiveness, if indeed it does. At its broadest, their stated aim was thus to increase 'understanding of how Islam functions across boundaries of states, countries and ethnic groups' (Nielsen *et al*, 2006: 103).

Using guided interviews, observation, and multi-media research, they explored the Haqqani presence in three nations: the communities in Britain, the somewhat smaller community in Lebanon, and Shaykh Nazim's followers in Dagestan who they argue are not only isolated from the rest of the *tariqa* but

also are a '*tariqa* only in a very vague sense of sharing some form of spiritual adherence to the Shaykh' (Nielsen *et al*, 2006: 110).

In relevance to my own research, Nielsen, Draper and Yemelianova note the importance of a millennial apocalyptic discourse, remarking on its prominence during their fieldwork undertaken between October 1998 and March 2001. In their research they found this discourse lasted 'about eight months in all, from the spring of 1999 until the beginning of 2000, and was then followed during the summer of 2000 by a lower-key process interpretation' (Nielsen *et al*, 2006: 112).

The millennium discourse involved an outlining of millennium events and an 'extensive proliferation of texts and discussions that commonly had a minimal Islamic content'. Rather, they argue, 'this content had much closer affinity to the content and language of New Age movements and occasionally, of Christian survivalists' (Nielsen *et al*, 2006: 112). However, this point is only explored within a few sentences and is something I believe needs discussing in much greater detail. As we have seen above, previous research suggests Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse follows the traditional Muslim apocalyptic narrative. Any adaptation in terms of Western apocalypse would have to be considered in terms of a possible strategy to appeal to Western *murids* and the effectiveness of this, as well the identification of global apocalyptic trends in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. This work aims to fill this gap.

Furthermore, Nielsen *et al*. give little indication of how *murids* responded to the millennial argument beyond broadly noting disorientation and damage to the reputation of the *tariqa* in Lebanon when Shaykh Nazim's millennial prophecies failed to come to fruition (Nielsen *et al*, 2006: 107; 109). Nor do they give any treatment of the eschatological and apocalyptic foundations of the *tariqa*. This is not surprising as the millennial discourse is used to explore how messages are disseminated through the network, rather than discussed on its own merits. Nonetheless, their brief exploration is useful as it highlights that apocalypticism is not just a marginal teaching but occasionally takes prominence and because they stress interest in the millennium, not just the Mahdi, as other studies have. As such, when viewed in conjunction with other studies, their insights suggest

that there are apocalyptic dimensions in the *tariqa* worth exploring beyond messianism.

Following Nielsen, Draper, and Yemelianova's study is one which moves away from anthropological fieldwork and which aims to provide an overview of the public activities of the Haqqaniyya in the United States as well as some of the 'inner themes of religious and mystical instruction found in Haqqani publications' (Damrel, 2006: 116). Beginning with a useful, succinct history of the Haqqaniyya in the United States, Damrel continues by exploring the public organisations under the Haqqani umbrella and highlights the Haqqanis' aim to educate both Muslims and non-Muslims about Islam, the desire to be seen as the legitimate voice of Islam, and their oft noted 'anti-Wahhabi' rhetoric (Damrel, 2006: 119-121). Continuing to explore the internal dynamics of the Haqqaniyya, Damrel focuses key features of the Haqqaniyya including the significance of the use of the internet and in particular, that it has been rather effective at reaching American born Muslims and potential converts.

Damrel also picks millennialism as a key theme and argues 'the order's consistent interest in the end of the world, the *Mahdi* and the "Signs of the Hour" is exceptional among Sunni mystical orders' (Damrel, 2006: 121). After giving a short breakdown of a possible sequence of end time events and noting that both Islamic and non-Islamic themes and images are drawn upon, Damrel like Habibis notes an interesting dimension in briefly exploring the pedagogical nature of these teachings by arguing they provide 'a natural entrée for deeper spiritual lessons about the after-life, mystical praxis and Islam' (Damrel, 2006: 123). This links to his final key theme of Shaykh Nazim's ability to give insight into spiritual teachings by drawing on current events.

While certainly an interesting point to consider as eschatology often has wide implications for the rest of the spiritual life, this analysis risks dismissing the apocalyptic dimension of the Haqqaniyya as metaphor used as a teaching tool. As such, it fails to address whether apocalyptic teachings have any theological importance or depth, or significance in the construction of a world view.

The most recent thesis to have been submitted was presented by Stjernholm (2011). Undertaking a combined approach of textual study of ethnographic research with the *tariqa* in London and Cyprus, Stjernholm sought to discuss

how 'individual and collective activities and narratives provide meaning and identity for participants in the contemporary Sufi movement Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya headed by Shaykh Nazim' (Stjernholm, 2011: 6). As such, he sought to discuss how diverse individuals articulate their Sufi identity, as well as how *tariqa* leadership positions itself in a larger narrative of Islamic authenticity.

Stjernholm thus provides a valuable outline of the Naqshbandi relationship with the Sufi Muslim Council, new activities of the *tariqa* in London, and the communications of the *tariqa*. Stjernholm concludes:

> The construction of "knowledge" produced by these public Muslim scholars with the activities and narratives of particular Sufi communities are likely to have noticeable effects on public discourse on Islam and Muslims in the years to come. It could challenge and reshape lingering assumptions about Sufism as being chiefly inward-looking and apolitical "Islamic mysticism", adding to this view an awareness of the agency of socially situated Sufis and the continuous reshaping of complex Sufi identities' (Stjernholm, 2011: 294).

While Stjernholm mentions Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic teachings occasionally in passing, primarily in reference to how they are interepreted by *murids* he features as case studies, he gives no indication of how important the teachings are to the *tariqa*, and provides very few details of what constitutes Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic thought.

Naqshbandi-Haqqanis: The apocalyptic dimension

Studies focusing primarily on the apocalyptic nature of the Haqqaniyya are few. One very short introductory piece given by Damrel in the ISIM Newsletter in 1999 raises a number of interesting points which certainly suggest ideas for further study. For example, Damrel notes that Shaykh Nazim has been given a special role in the End Times due to his exalted spiritual station and quotes Shaykh Hisham's assertion that the Haqqaniyya are the only group expecting the *Mahdi* and the return of Jesus (Damrel, 1999: 1).[25]

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[25] An exclusivist dimension such as this in which the group considers itself as the only ones with access to truth is often present within groups which hold an interest in apocalypticism, particularly if they are grouped around a charismatic leader. This is an important dimension to consider as having sole access to truth, particularly apocalyptic truth which has a specific urgency, has consequences for group identity (as noted above), and both internal and external relations. Internally, the leader's unique authority is maintained through this and externally there

However, a number of questions are raised in the reading of this article. Damrel argues the 'Naqshbandi-Haqqanis are virtually alone among contemporary Sunni groups in its accent on the *Mahdi*, signs of the Hour, and the end of this world', yet we are given no reason as to why this may be the case. Moreover, Damrel notes how the Haqqaniyya draw on Western apocalyptic language such as the year 2000, Armageddon and Anti-Christ as well as Islamic ones in reaching out to Western audiences. While he argues 'The Haqqanis employ this shared apocalyptic vocabulary to poignantly emphasize how Islam and Islamic spirituality are vital to the lives of even their non-Muslim listeners' (presumably because of truth claims – Islam has the answers), we are not given insight into why apocalyptic symbols have any particular power among this group, if indeed they do.

A longer contribution to the study of the apocalyptic and eschatological dimension of the Haqqaniyya comes from Geaves (2001: 215-231). This study is, however, introductory and as such provides a springboard for further research. Geaves provides a brief timeline on how Shaykh Nazim has described the Last Days, highlighting his unusual specificity in setting timeframes by which these events will happen. Rather than to continue to focus on the Haqqaniyya, however, he moves on to sketch the importance of eschatology in Muslim history, particularly the idea of 'Manifest Success', as well the traditional interpretations of the Mahdi and Isa, particularly the latter's interest to Sufis.

This is as far as Geaves's analysis extends, however. In his conclusion he argues 'It is not in any way exceptional for a traditional Muslim, particularly when rooted in the Sufi tradition, to hold eschatological beliefs involving the *Mahdi*, Jesus, and *al-Dajjal* in conflict before the Last Day' (Geaves, 2001: 229), yet beyond noting that some Sufi leaders have been proclaimed Mahdis and while acknowledging Shaykh Nazim is somewhat unique in his interest in

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may be consequences for how the group perceive and relate to those outside. The extreme outcome of what might happen when a group's apocalyptic truth is rejected by those outside can be seen in the tragic case of Aum Shinrikyō. Originally a yoga centred New Age Movement, Aum Shinrikyō became a messianic movement with their leader Asahara Shōkō as the only one with the power to bring true enlightenment and save the world from encroaching darkness. Often questioned and ridiculed by wider Japanese society, Aum Shinrikyō became more introverted, alone against the world. Rather than saving it, the world deserved to meet the coming catastrophes for 'disregarding or impeding Aum's sacred mission' (Reader, 2000: 134). The demonization of those outside the group culminated to such an extent that Aum began its own punishment, bombing the Tokyo underground in 1995, killing thirteen people.

Christian apocalyptic timings and his specific time setting, we are not really given insight into where Shaykh Nazim fits in with wider Sufi heritage and interpretations.

Further, Geaves argues 'The Shaykh's visionary experience of the end time is firmly rooted in Muslim tradition and borrows heavily from *Hadith* accounts' (Geaves, 2001: 229). While maintaining the basic continuity of Shaykh Nazim's eschatology is a valuable insight (although no explicit Qur'anic or *hadith* references are given), it is also a limited conclusion as it fails to acknowledge either other authoritative sources such as visions and or thinkers like Ibn Arabi in forming the apocalyptic narrative, or the ways in which the message is presented by bringing in other, Western symbols. It is conceivable that the Shaykh's use of non-Islamic imagery in his apocalyptic rhetoric also adds to his 'unique' approach to eschatology.

This neglect of how the argument is presented to appeal to the audience is particularly noticeable as Geaves attempts to explore why Westerners may hold an interest in Shaykh Nazim, arguing for a sense of alienation and a general appeal of Sufism as an 'experiential religion' (Geaves, 2001: 230). On this point, Geaves argues 'The Shaykh's firm belief in the Muslim end time's imminence awakens his audiences' own general sense of unease with the era in which they are living' (Geaves, 2001: 231), unfortunately without any evidence of this, something which fieldwork and interviews could assess. Finally, Geaves does not explore whether apocalypticism has any genuine importance to the *tariqa*.

Geaves does conclude on an interesting point, noting '[Shaykh Nazim's] precise prophecies run the risk of all predictions concerning events that are so near in the future. The danger of them remaining unfulfilled may create a conflict between the requirement amidst his Western followers for visionary or mystical experience and their potential to dismiss incredulous belief' (Geaves, 2001: 231). Given that this was written before the fallout from the millennium was fully realised, it is important to assess how the apparent failures of the millennial prophecies were understood and how new prophecies are interpreted and presented in light of this, particularly as where prophecies are situated in the future appears to have implications for how successfully the group manages to negotiate the delay in the imminent end of the world.

The most recent publication on Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse was provided in mid 2014 by Weismann (2014). With Geaves's (2001) article, this article is one of the few studies of the Haqqaniyya which does not consider the apocalyptic teachings primarily in terms of their function to the *tariqa*. A reasonably short article, Weismann provides the most up to date account of the Haqqaniyya and observes one interesting development of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse in noting his apocalypse may be seen as an expression of dissatisfaction with the Muslim world and in particular, a means of resolving the threat of militant Islamism (Weismann, 2014: 135).

This is an interesting point and something this thesis likewise argues. However, Weismann does not provide much evidence to support this assertion, nor does he account for other aspects of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse which are equally defining. In this way, this thesis provides a contribution to the knowledge by presenting a holistic analysis of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, as well as more in-depth analysis on the points similarly raised in this article.

Conclusion

In conclusion, despite considerable work done on the Haqqaniyya, there are a number of gaps that this work will help overcome, particularly in the area of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic teaching. It is clear there is no single, comprehensive analysis of the form of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism in the post millennial period of the *tariqa*. This thesis thus aims to contribute to the knowledge by analysing the development of the apocalyptic narrative since the year 2000, provide an analysis of how prophetic failure has been justified, and an account of how apocalyptic teachings are presented to a new audience that is potentially much wider than the *tariqa*.

Moreover, since the work of Atay and Habibis, there has been no analysis of the role apocalyptic teachings play in the *tariqa*, or space given to how *murids* interpret these teachings. This is especially true of the *tariqa* in Glastonbury. This thesis will thus contribute to our understanding of how apocalyptic teachings are managed by this branch of the *tariqa*. This is particularly salient given the above observations made by Damrel and Geaves on the appeal of apocalypse to Westeners.

Finally, there is no comprehensive analysis of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, which compares its form to the broad patterns of apocalyptic belief found in either Islamic or modern Western end time thought. This thesis thus will contribute to the knowledge by examining authority in the *tariqa*, Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic interpretation of the modern world, his construction of apocalyptic time, and his apocalyptic theodicy, and how his apocalypse converges and diverges with a broad selection of patterns observed in other apocalyptic traditions.

Methodology

This study is concerned with Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic teachings. Unlike many previous studies of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, these teachings are sourced not from ethnographic research or interviews with the Shaykh, but texts available from Haqqani publications and recordings of his *sohbats*.[26] The analysis of these sources is informed by the discipline of Religious Studies. While, as noted by one of the most significant founders of the discipline, Ninian Smart, Religious Studies is a polymethodic discipline (Smart, 1973: 8), one that requires its students to be prepared to draw on a number of methodological frameworks, the most significant methodological and theoretical framework that has informed the study of religion has come from the field of phenomenology. As phenomenology forms an important part of the theoretical framework and research methods of this study, this chapter begins by outlining what is meant by this term, before detailing its application in the methodological approach of this work.

Philosophical phenomenology

The phenomenology of religion as a methodology used in approaching and making sense of religious phenomena is by no means clearly defined. There is no one way to carry out a phenomenological study, and indeed, this lack of clarity has left the phenomenology of religion open to major criticism. However, general trends in phenomenological approaches can be noted, elucidating where phenomenology positions itself as a theoretical standpoint.

The phenomenology of religion was in part influenced by the philosophical phenomenology movement of the early twentieth century. While the phenomenology of religion is not a direct application of philosophical phenomenology, nor indeed does philosophical phenomenology provide a clear methodology that could be applied, the values of philosophical phenomenology formed a foundation for the phenomenology of religion to build upon, as is very briefly outlined below.

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[26] The term *sohbat* (or *sohbet*) is used extensively in the *tariqa* to refer to Shaykh Nazim's teachings that are given in sermon form. The term has a spiritual association described on a Naqshbandi website as being a 'conversation of a totally different nature'. It is 'a spiritual dialogue, a cleansing of the soul and a meeting of the heart' (Sufi Path of Love, 2015).

Philosophical phenomenology is concerned with knowing through certain ways of perceiving phenomena and the uncovering of essences. Gerog Hegel (1770-1831) was an important influence in the development of philosophical phenomenology, in his argument that, despite apparent diversity, all phenomena contain an essential essence (*wesen*), and that this essence may be understood through investigating appearances and manifestations (Erricker, 1999: 76).

Perhaps more influential, however, was Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who proposed a method of thinking that would allow an observer to describe and understand phenomena as they appear in the world (Cox, 2010: 28). As Flood (1999: 93) explains, 'Husserl characterizes phenomenology as a return to "the things themselves", a return to the data given in our experience or consciousness'. In this way of examining the world, Husserl introduces two important concepts: eidetic vision and epoché.

Epoché is generally translated from Greek as 'bracketing out' and 'involves suspending judgements in order that attention can be devoted to the process of the operations of consciousness' (Cox, 2010: 28). Here, not only are problems such as the existence of the external world put to one side, but 'beliefs or assumptions derived from the natural standpoint' are suspended. With their suspension 'the observer allows the pure phenomena to speak for themselves'. Flood (1999: 95) likewise elaborates: 'through epoché there occurs the complete suspension of judgement concerning the objective world which thereby disallows solipsism and scepticism and allows for the certainty of the ego and its objects of consciousness'.

Following epoché is eidetic vision in which phenomena can be seen as they truly are, their essence can be grasped, through an uninfluenced intuition. This may be done through a method of 'free variation' in which many similar phenomena are examined and compared in structures and meanings, and for their similarities and differences with other phenomena (Allen, 2005: 190). Eventually, a phenomenologist will see that there are certain characteristics and essential structures that cannot be removed without changing what the phenomenon fundamentally is. As such, a reduction that reveals essences

takes place.[27] Thus, through the application of epoché and eidetic vision, 'the observer perceives the world as it comes fresh from the phenomenon and is able thereby to intuit new realities or at least achieve a more complete understanding of reality than had been attained previously' (Cox, 2010: 29).

In terms of the development of the phenomenology of religion, philosophical phenomenology also contributes both anti-reductionism, as it seeks to suspend preconceptions that would limit experiencing a phenomena, and the prioritisation of description, in seeking to describe how phenomena appear in immediate and intuitive experience (Allen, 2005: 189). While philosophical phenomenology is a large and complex area, Ryba (2006: 104) summaries it thus, highlighting the importance of essences, their relationship to each other, uninfluenced observation, and description:

> The objects of phenomenology are phenomena understood as any possible object of consciousness. The purpose of phenomenology is twofold: (1) the exhaustive diachronic and synchronic description and formalization of unchanging phenomenal qualities and relations, and (2) the taxonomic arrangement of qualities and relations. The distinctive methods of phenomenology consist of unprejudiced observation and description, especially phenomenological reduction, essential reduction, and taxonomy conducted according to mereological rules. Phenomenology does not exist as a separate science but is an observational method that is part of every science.

Phenomenology and religion

There is no single methodology for the phenomenology of religion, although a number have been suggested. However, phenomenology of religion can nonetheless be considered to have key characteristics and aims that form a distinctive approach to studying religious phenomena. The following therefore outlines some of these.

Perhaps one of the core distinctions of the phenomenological approach or position is that it practices epoché in two important ways. Firstly, truth claims

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[27] In regards an application to the study of religion, Schimmel (1994) undertakes an interesting study that suggests understanding a religion in terms of outward manifestations and inner essence is uniquely suited to the study of Islam. When looking at creation and at divinely ordained actions one must look beyond outward appearances and seek how they point to God. After all, she notes, the Qur'an stresses everything could serve as an *aya*, a sign from God (Schimmel, 1994: xii).

are 'bracketed out'. This means not only is a theological or philosophical position suspended, but one's own personal beliefs must be put to one side. Secondly, academic or theoretical explanations for religion such as Marx's thesis of religion as the opium of the masses or Freud's thesis of neurosis and religion would likewise be suspended, at least until the observed phenomena had had a chance to be observed without a theoretical lens. As Ryba (2006: 97) explains, 'phenomenology is not interested in the reductive explanation of religion or in making predictions, though its descriptions may be useful in assisting reductions or predictions'.

Ryba's analysis points us to another important part of the phenomenological process, description. This description would aim to describe the characteristics, structures, patterns and meanings of religious phenomena and how these relate to each other, as well as 'feelings, moods and tones within the phenomena' (Cox, 2010: 57). Importantly, the description a phenomenologist presents must be one which is recognised by the believer, insofar as it explains their beliefs and reasons for understanding why they undertake a certain act. As Smart (1996: 2) explains in this descriptive approach 'we do not use, so far as we can avoid them, alien categories to evoke the nature of their acts and understand those acts'.

If the phenomenologist is an outsider, that is one who is not a member or practitioner of the observed group, one describes the phenomenon through the application of empathy. As Cox (2010: 52) explains, 'empathy in this context, refers to a process of cultivating a feeling for the practices and beliefs of a religion other than one's own or at least of a religion which does not originate in the scholar's own culture or historical period'.

The end result of the descriptive process is one where the key aspects of a phenomena which distinguish it from other phenomena, whether in processes or experiences, are identified. Once identified, these phenomena may therefore be named (Cox, 2010: 58). Ryba (2006: 96) provides a useful example of phenomenological description as applied to Roman Catholic meditation:

> On the basis of the reports of meditators, the focus (or intentionality) of each step as well as the background consciousness attending each...the phenomenologist would attempt to understand whether each step was

grounded on the previous step, which steps were in the conscious control of the meditator, which steps were (apparently) influenced by factors outside conscious experience and which steps were indispensible to the results sought.

For phenomenologists, as Ryba (2006: 87) points out, this descriptive goal is valuable in and of itself: 'it looks for the essential structures that lie behind religious phenomena not because it wants to explain them in terms of simpler causes or in terms of a more scientific theory but because it wants to understand how the worldview of the believer logically coheres'.

However, comparison is also a key point of the phenomenology of religion perspective. This will aid the researcher in both seeing more clearly what makes a phenomena distinct but also adds to our understanding of religion as an aspect of human experience as a whole. Cox (2010: 62) outlines the values of this: 'we also can see how certain types of belief in one tradition may have modified under historical, scientific, or intellectual influences but how in another tradition they may have remained relatively unchanged...By contrast and comparison, basic understandings of each category are built up so that we can speak, for example, of the religious significance of myths or rituals'.

The comparative element of phenomenology which sought define a core common to all religions despite apparent diversity, and something which marks religion as unique in human life, was particularly important for the pioneers of phenomenology in the study of religion. While Max Scheler is generally cited as being one of the earliest to employ a phenomenology of religion (Allen, 2008: 191) it is Rudolf Otto who is perhaps best known for employing a phenomenological approach in his landmark text *The Idea of the Holy* (1968) in which he proposed that the core of religion was in non-rational religious experiences.

Allen (2008: 192) notes that Otto provides two independent contributions to the phenomenology in this work. Firstly, in discussing religious experience as being at the core of all religions, Otto posits an essential and universal element that runs throughout religions regardless of culture. Secondly, in stressing the

'numinous'[28] and therefore indescribable and essentially, irreducible and unexplainable, dimension of religious experience, Otto contributes to the antireductionist strand. That is, he suggests there is something about religion which is unique in terms of other dimensions in human life, and which cannot be accounted for by other perspectives. Indeed, for Allen (2008: 191), 'Otto formulates a universal phenomenological structure of religious experience in which the phenomenologist can distinguish autonomous religious phenomena by their numinous aspect and can organize and analyze specific religious manifestations'.

These themes of anti-reductionism and the uniqueness of religion in human life were likewise promoted by the influential phenomenologist Mircea Eliade (1907-1986). For Eliade, the irreducible, core component of religion was concentrated on what he termed hierophanies. This complex term has a variety of meaning within Eliade's work, but generally refers to the manifestation or experiences of the sacred in the profane (non-sacred) world (Rennie, 1996: 11).

Challenges to the phenomenological approach

Despite its considerable popularity in the early years of Religious Studies, phenomenology in the study of religion has come under attack from many sides and indeed, whether it even has a future in the discipline is now questioned by some (see for example Erricker, 1999:100). As this study is influenced by the phenomenological perspective it is thus important to outline some of the potential challenges in using it.

One of the core aims of the phenomenological approach to religion is that it provides through the exercise of empathy an account of beliefs and practices that are recognised by those who consider themselves part of the religion. However, Bennett (2010: xviii-xxiii) argues that when combined with faith sensitivity this has led to a lack of critical thinking in Religious Studies, particularly within the study of Islam, where due to the 'riskiness' of challenging

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[28] The numinous may be understood as a feeling of encountering the holy or sacred. For Otto, it was characterised by *mysterium tremendum et fascinas* which characterises both a sense of awe, dread, and being overpowered by something wholly other, while at the same time being fascinating and even attractive (Otto, 1958: 12-24, 31).

deeply held beliefs, questions over the origins of the Qur'an, for example, are not considered, instead replicating the insiders point of view.[29]

This warning against pure description is both useful yet potentially unnecessary in the Religious Studies use of phenomenology. Religious Studies is essentially polymethodic and the phenomenology of religion, while searching for distinct attributes, seeks to place these attributes in context. Gerad van der Leeuw (1890-1950), for example, argued phenomena must be understood within history, while C. Jonco Bleeker (1898-1950) argued the phenomenology of religion should be combine 'a critical attitude and concern for accurate descriptions with a sense of empathy for the phenomena', and seek the 'dynamic development of religious phenomena' (Allen, 2008: 193-194).

Despite this, the association of phenomenology with seeking essential structures which diminish the diversity and plurality of religion, or seeking to uncover an essence which makes religion unique, has likewise subjected phenomenologists of religion to criticism. The attempt to uncover an essence of religion regardless of variation in historical and social context, leads a phenomenologist dangerously close to essentialism, and thus presents a distorted picture of religion that bears little relationship to the lived practices and beliefs of its adherents. Indeed, (Smart, 1996: 7) notes 'because of essentialism (the view that a given type of phenomenon has a common essence) and other factors, earlier phenomenology tends to be synchronic and static', insensitive to 'patterns of change'.

Flood (1999: 113-114) is similarly critical of phenomenologists who have made religion ahistorical by removing the importance of language and context arguing that:

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[29] Similar criticisms have been levelled from theology in the study of religion. Cunningham (1999), for example, challenges O'Leary's (1994) theory of apocalyptic rhetoric, which while not a phenomenological approach, is similarly relatively lacking in theological critical perspective. Cunningham argues that when Christian eschatology is studied in terms of its ideas, one must ask theological questions that test the theological validity of what is being taught. Not only does this lack of theological criticism make any analysis of Christian eschatology 'dangerously incomplete' but also has effects for us all in that without scholarly criticism movements like the Christian Right have made 'highly dubious' claims but have nonetheless gained in power and popularity (Cunningham, 1999: 237).

> Locating description within narrative language moves completely away from any essentialist understanding of religion: through narrative we see that religious meanings are temporal, relative to context, and do not contain a timeless essence such as "the sacred". From the narrativist perspective, the sacred becomes a concept contingent upon other circumstances and, as J. Z. Smith has observed, something becomes sacred by having our attention drawn to it in a certain way...Engaging with religious phenomena in this sense of locating "data" within narrative, does not give privileged position to religion and places it within the context of its wider cultural history'.

Drawing on Talal Asad, Stjernholm (2011: 53) likewise argues for a narrative understanding of Sufism, arguing 'there must be a focus on the socially situated actors who make claims and judgements with reference to this discursive tradition and on Muslims as agents of their societies and cultures. The discourse does not exist separately from the actors who participate in it'.

Highlighting the embededness of religion to society and context, that meanings are essentially constructed, perhaps through narrative, is an important perspective on how to approach religion. However, this need not supplant the value of phenomenology, although it may mean we apply it more carefully and with more sensitivity to culture and language.

One of the biggest challenges to phenomenology, however, comes over questions of methodology and the value it places on objectivity and neutrality. Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), for example, argued all knowledge exists within narratives. Indeed, Ricoeur argues specifically in regard to Husserlian phenomenology that the 'demand for the return to intuition is countered by the necessity for all understanding to be mediated by an interpretation' and that 'all interpretation places the interpreter in *mediasres* and never at the beginning or the end' (Ricoeur, 1981: 106, 108). Subsequently, an objective knowledge in the form of Husserl's understanding is impossible.

Building on Ricoeur's work, Flood (1999) likewise challenges the possibility of the neutral, detached observer, arguing instead for the situated observer who engages with dialogue with the observed person or peoples. As Flood explains 'understanding and explaining religion occur within a conceptual scheme and are always from a particular situation, perspective and gendered place', 'the situated observer inevitably brings to the ethnographic situation not only the

methods of her analysis but also a personal biography which influences research' (Flood, 1999: 145, 147). As such, it is essential any engagement in research undertakes a reflexive enterprise. Flood describes this position as both 'critical and dialogical. It desires both to understand and offer explanations of religion or religious practices as completely embedded within other cultural practices but reflexively recognises the embodied/embedded, narrative nature of the enterprise' (Flood, 1999: 148).

Every act of research requires personal judgement on what sources to use and even in selecting what phenomena to study. This process itself is prone to personal bias in deciding what is and isn't religious, what is representative and what is not. Indeed, Waardenberg (1973) argues 'Throughout their work, scholars...arrived at a certain idea or image of the religion they studies and, partly by force of generalisation and partly by the notions of religion which they acquired through their own life experiences, they arrived at a notion of religion in general' (cited by Erricker, 1999: 75). Despite claims to objectivity, phenomenology has demonstrated the power of such unconscious bias. Otto, for example, found that even though religious experience was central to human religiosity, it found its perfection in Christianity (Erricker, 1999: 81).

The challenge of objectivity to phenomenology is considerable, as it does seem inevitable we cannot detach ourselves from the situation. However, to an extent Flood exaggerates the level of objectivity phenomenologists of religion expect to achieve. In her phenomenology of Islam, Schimmel (1994: xi) acknowledges that 'the personal bias of the research cannot help but be reflected in the study'. This does not mean, however, no attempt to objectivity should be made. As Cox (2010: 52) argues:

> The student is warned that epoché cannot be practiced perfectly and is best understood as a self-reflexive attitude which recognizes that the scholar begins from certain perspectives and predispositions. The attitude fostered by epoché attempts to minimize the observer's admitted and acknowledged preconceptions and biases, both personal and academic, in order that a fresh look at religious phenomena can yield new insights and greater understanding.

Epoché may therefore be seen as a prompt to reflexivity, and a way of reminding oneself to challenge received ideas of the free application of what might be inappropriate theory.

The application of phenomenology

With this more reflexive, situated approach, phenomenology as an approach to religion can thus maintain its usefulness and relevancy. This is particularly the case for this thesis topic, in terms of both its narrow focus (the apocalypticism of the Haqqaniyya) and the broader approach to understanding apocalyptic beliefs in general. Perhaps the most valuable part of the approach is that it calls for an initial suspension of judgement on the causes of apocalyptic belief. The free application of sociological or psychological theories based on apocalyptic groups would be troublesome for the Haqqaniyya as the apocalyptic dimension is but one aspect of Shaykh Nazim's teachings and superficially they bear little relation to more closely defined apocalyptic groups. However, this application would be troubling on a more theoretical basis.

Despite the wealth of apocalyptic literature, our understanding of how apocalyptic groups function is relatively limited. As more research has been undertaken, it has become apparent insular groups that hold primarily apocalyptic beliefs are relatively rare. Instead, such beliefs are held in more subtle and complex ways. This challenges a number of classic approaches to apocalypse.

In regards social and economic causes, for example, Cohn (1993: 281) argues in an important, but not uncontroversial study, that revolutionary millenarianism flourishes 'only in certain specific situations'.[30] Most notably, it holds its appeal to those living on the margins of society, typically the poor and politically persecuted. Indeed, in regards those swept up the millenarian movements of the Middle Ages, he finds 'these people lacked the material and emotional support afforded by traditional social groups; their kinship groups had disintegrated and they were not effectively organized in village communities or guilds, for them there existed no regular, institutionalized methods of voicing

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[30] The following Chapter One outlines Cohn's quite specific definition of millenarianism, but for the purposes of this literature review, it is worth noting that millenarianism is a description of a type of apocalyptic thought which sees a sudden reordering of the world though cataclysmic, and often violent, change (Partridge, 2005: 282).

their grievances or pressing their claims. Instead they waited for a prophet to bind them together in a group of their own' (Cohn, 1993: 282). He continues, 'because these people found themselves in such an exposed and defenceless position, they were liable to react very sharply to any disruption of the normal, familiar pattern of life'.

Cohn subsequently argues that for industrial workers in economically developed countries apocalyptic ideas no longer have any power, instead arguing they have penetrated 'economically backward countries such as Russia and China' (Cohn, 1993: 287) in a rather unconvincing suggestion that European apocalypticism and communism are linked, or are at least similar. While Cohn's argument may well have some validity, it is nonetheless limited. As is evident in the contemporary period, millenarianism cannot be dismissed as something only fringe groups are interested in, nor is there a convincing relationship between poverty, and apocalyptic action, or not having a voice in society, as is demonstrated particularly by mainstream American End Time belief.

Similarly, there is considerable difficulty in creating models of apocalyptic groups that would appropriately describe the majority of those who hold apocalyptic beliefs. Drawing on a sociological conception of religion which understands that religions construct realities and create authorities which govern social relations, Bromley (1997), for example, argues apocalypticism is an extreme aspect of the 'prophetic' mode of religious authorization, which stands in opposition to the 'priestly' mode. We can therefore distinguish a number of features which identify apocalypticism. For example, as the legitimacy of the current order is contested, apocalyptic groups will distance themselves from it. Indeed, he argues 'socially, the apocalyptic response is to distance from existing social order and create an alternative order that models social relations on a vision of the new world to come' (Bromley, 1997: 34).

Moreover, official interpretations of reality are challenged and deconstructed, with new realities constructed in their place. This has the effect of creating 'temporal liminality', where apocalyptic groups are distanced from the present order but still awaiting the next. As such, apocalyptic groups are anti structural, separatist, and build identities based on the coming world. Bromley concludes 'it is this combination of withdrawal from the existing order and eschewing of

creating an alternative that characterizes the apocalyptic form. It is group life in suspended animation' (Bromley, 1997: 42).

While Bromley's argument has some valuable insights, particularly his stress on the group nature of apocalyptic beliefs, the divisive break with the current order, and stressing apocalyptic groups typically focus on describing the apocalyptic present rather than a detailed vision of the utopic future, his essay nonetheless demonstrates the dangers of creating an overriding theory of apocalypticism.

To begin, this is an analysis which is most suited to contained and separatist religious movements such as Aum Shinrikyo, the Branch Davidians and Heaven's Gate. It does not account for the variety of apocalyptic forms. For example, apocalypse does not always occur outside of conventional religious structures. Indeed, as noted by McGinn (1979: 10), while apocalyptic imagery has been used to critique such structures it has also been used to support them against external and internal threats. Within Christianity, for example, such external threats were the Mongols or Islam while internal threats were heretics and tyrannical rulers.

Likewise, this model does not account for those who live within mainstream society, albeit holding an interest in end time belief, nor religions in which apocalyptic beliefs may be held but which are not the central feature of the belief structure, such as the Haqqaniyya. In regards what appeal the apocalypse holds, and why apocalyptic movements form, it is equally unclear.

Finally, Bromley argues 'in the prophetic tradition the present is linked to and legitimated by a predicted future, and so the value of the past as a guide to behaviour is depreciated' (1997: 36). While this may be true to an extent, it is also a limited analysis particularly in the light of a religion like Islam, in which the past and utopic future are in many ways linked. Here, then, the need to look beyond Christianity and it's New Religious Movement offshoots may be seen in order to draw more inclusive models of apocalypticism and apocalyptic beliefs.

It is thus becoming apparent apocalyptic belief is complex and multi-dimensional, existing in a complex web of other ideas with a variety of functions. By approaching apocalyptic belief neutrally, that is without causation theory

based in non-empirical psychology, we allow it to speak for itself and in so doing uncover new modes of apocalyptic belief which further our understanding.

It is tempting to dismiss those who believe in apocalyptic ideas and take comfort in its symbols as outside the realm of rationality but to make no effort to understand the motivations and beliefs as if one were an insider does nothing to seriously increase our understanding of this phenomenon. Indeed, without more studies considering the ideological levels of apocalypticism and the role it may have to play in human spirituality, it remains to be seen if McGinn's (1979: 15) statement that 'there is a wisdom and meaning in the symbols of apocalyptic spirituality that can easily be lost by the ham handed application of the critical method' can be verified.

Moreover, the phenomenological descriptive, empathic approach may have wider importance considering the sometimes volatile nature of apocalyptic belief. On this point Partridge (2005: 305), argues that had an emic and empathic perspective that attempted to understand the apocalyptic discourse and insider perspective been taken, the tragedy at Waco might have been averted as authorities could have taken actions that did not feed the eschatological narrative of the Branch Davidians.

While this is a strong case for the usefulness of studying apocalyptic ideas from an emic perspective, I must also agree with O'Leary's (1994: 4) statement that 'Apocalyptic arguments made by people of good and sincere faith have apparently succeeded in persuading millions; it is unfair and dangerous to dismiss these arguments as irrational and the audiences persuaded by them as ignorant fools'. Such a statement acknowledges the power apocalyptic ideas have had, and shows a genuine commitment to understanding them which does not ridicule the beliefs and motivations of others by default.

The values of comparison are also useful for this study. While not unheard of, comparison is not particularly well developed within apocalyptic religious studies. As we will see, the Haqqaniyya both challenge and share certain patterns seen in other apocalyptic thought.

With the above in mind, it is clear there is a need in contemporary apocalyptic studies for an approach to end time belief that allows for distinct aspects of

those beliefs to become apparent and which acknowledges the multi-faceted and complex nature of everyday apocalyptic belief. Indeed, as early as 1979, McGinn (1979: 6) argued 'we should attempt to work out a structure of interrelated concerns and motifs, not all of which need to be present in any single case [of apocalyptic thought] and which do not always need to be related in the same way, but which will be broad and flexible enough to do justice to a variety of related traditions over a range of centuries'.

As I have outlined above, I believe the phenomenological approach provides a strong theoretical framework for such an approach. In its application, I suggest we might speak of a dimensional approach to researching the apocalypse.

The dimensional approach is largely inspired by the approach of the influential scholar of religion Ninian Smart (1927-2001). While never stating a clear methodology for the phenomenology of religion, Smart was nonetheless a strong proponent, who in many ways expanded the remit of phenomenology and addressed some of its earlier limitations. Indeed, Smart challenged the view that all religions share a common, essential core, and instead argued that they must be understood in their historical and cultural contexts. As such, he argued for a 'dynamic phenomenology', one that was aware of changing phenomena and as such a study of religion that is open ended and ongoing.

For Smart, the essential task for the scholar of religion is to seek the patterns of religion, the elements in which it manifests itself in order to learn 'to understand how it functions and vivifies the human spirit in history' (Smart, 1996: 1). We should seek to approach religion through a phenomenological perspective by suspending our beliefs and judgements and using empathy. The researcher of religion must 'enter into' the experiences of the religious person and so do their best to accurately describe a religion so as to represent the internal logic that a believer would recognize (Smart, 1973: 45). This then would act as verification of our insights. As such, Smart (1996: 2) describes phenomenology as 'the attitude of informed empathy. It tries to bring out what religious acts mean to the actors'.

Smart was likewise sensitive to the idea that religion manifests across many areas of human life and that in order to understand a religion, we must be sensitive to its many facets. To this end, Smart advocated that religion be

conceived as consisting of seven dimensions, which could thus form a structure to a phenomenological study of religion. These dimensions are as follows:

1. *The ritual or practical dimension* – this dimension involves activities such as 'worship, meditation, pilgrimage, sacrifice, sacramental rites and healing activities' (Smart, 1996: 10).

2. *The doctrinal of philosophical dimension* – this dimension consists essentially of the beliefs and if appropriate, theologies, of a religion. On this dimension, Smart (1998: 17) notes 'It happens that histories of religion have tended to exaggerate the importance of scriptures and doctrines and this is not too surprising since so much of our knowledge of past religions must come from the documents which have been passed on by the scholarly elite. Also, and especially in the case of Christianity, doctrinal disputes have often been the overt expression of splits within the fabric of the community at large, so that frequently histories of a faith concentrate upon these hot issues'. The strength of the dimensional approach is that it balances both this tendency towards doctrine and 'elite' religion and comparison with manifestations of religion with which we are familiar.

3. *The mythic or narrative dimension* – this is the 'story side of religion' and may include all stories from creation to the history of the community to the foundational historical figures to the end of the world (Smart, 1996: 13). These stories have tremendous importance in their communities, providing the reasoning behind rituals, ways of acting and ultimately the purpose to life.

4. *The experiential and emotional dimension* – this dimension is central to Smart's understanding of the power of religion. He writes, for example 'it is obvious that the emotions and experiences of men and women are the food on which the other dimensions of religion feed: ritual without feeling is cold, doctrines without awe or compassion are dry and myths which do not move hearers are feeble. So it is important in understanding a tradition to try to enter into the feelings which it generates – to feel the sacred awe, the outpouring of love, the sensations of hope, the gratitude for favours which have been received' (Smart, 1998: 14).

5. *The ethical or legal dimension* – here, Smart was concerned with how the stories of myth were put into practice. The myths and narratives of religion put human life into context, but it is the laws and moral guidance, often first laid out in scripture, which tells an individual how to fulfil their place in the story.

6. *The social and institutional dimension* – This is where we see how religion 'works among people' (Smart, 1998: 20) and this dimension thus draws on the wider disciplines of anthropology and sociology.

7. *The material dimension* – these are the expressions of religion in the physical world. These could include human made objects such as art and architecture or sacred spaces in the natural world such as the river Ganges or Mount Arafat.

By employing this dimensional approach, Smart argued we could have 'a realistic check list of aspects of a religion so that a description of that religion or a theory about it is not lopsided' (Smart, 1996: 8). Secondly, and closely related, this dimensional approach would allow comparisons to take place in a way that does not privilege the values of one religion over another.

In the following section, I suggest a new dimensional approach to apocalyptic belief that similarly aims to provide a structure for comparative work and which makes space for the multifaceted nature of apocalyptic beliefs. These dimensions have been suggested based on the priorities of a number of influential apocalyptic scholars and evaluated in the light of my experiences with the Haqqaniyya. I do not propose it to be a definitive and comprehensive structure, not should each category be seen as mutually exclusive. Rather, they are interrelated and overlap. I do, however, believe it to be a useful starting point. Smart (1996: 4) argues in any study of religion 'findings should make use of cross cultural terminology and sensitivity; and that there should be no assumption of the priority of one tradition as the norm'. By the same token, I propose that in apocalyptic studies we should move away from making sense of beliefs based on Christian concepts or New Religions manifestations, and within Islamic apocalypticism in particular, be sensitive to the notion that apocalypse is not solely owned by violent or radical 'jihadists'.

Towards a dimensional approach to apocalyptic beliefs

1. Mythical

The first dimension that I suggest be considered is the mythical or narrative dimension. Drawing from Smart, this dimension refers to the stories that are told within a religious tradition about the end of the world, and involves uncovering the symbols and images that are associated with this end time scenario. In Islam and Christianity a large volume of apocalyptic imagery is drawn from scripture. Their interpretation is of course neither obvious nor value-free, but nonetheless, these images effectively enter the cultural reservoir to be freely drawn upon in times of crisis. These expectations may be peoples, events, signs of the times, and expectations of what the End Times look like. While interpretations may vary throughout history, these are elements of apocalyptic expectation that are necessary for the apocalyptic story to be complete.

Understanding these basic apocalyptic symbols is an essential starting point in the study of any apocalyptic belief and its purpose is twofold. Firstly, it allows us to begin to understand the persuasiveness of apocalyptic belief. O'Leary (1994: 13) in particular argues this point in his theory of apocalyptic rhetoric finding, 'apocalyptic succeeds or fails with its audiences to the degree that it persuades them of their situation within the particular historical pattern of temporal fulfilment represented in its mythic imagery'. By this, I understand O'Leary to mean that we can account for apocalyptic belief by seeing it as a persuasive argument in which an apocalyptic speaker convinces an audience that the world in its current state is as was predicted; that they are the divine actors at the end of history. To do this, we therefore need to appreciate the apocalyptic myth which a speaker and his audience can draw upon.

Secondly, understanding these symbols has comparative purposes. Scripture is always interpreted, but how these core resources are interpreted changes over time. If we are to understand contemporary apocalyptic belief, it is useful to look at how it was used in the past both to provide points of similarities and divergence.

The presentation of this dimension is somewhat bias towards apocalyptic beliefs within a defined religious tradition. Many New Religions present

eschatologies which are central to their belief systems and activies (Partridge, 2008: 208). However, superficially at least, they do not have a long tradition of symbols to draw upon. In such a case, I would suggest an analysis of myths and symbols is still valuable and appropriate. Many New Religions draw from a variety of established religious traditions. Partridge (2006: 64) for example, argues Heaven's Gate was 'fundamentally shaped by Christian pretribulationisat premillennialism'. While according to phenomenological methodology such observations are valuable in and of themselves, the wider implications of uncovering these symbols mean we better understand the motivations of those involved as well as the permeation of religious ideas in the modern world.

2. *Contemporary Context*

Continuing with this theme of comparison brings us to the second proposed dimension in which we seek to understand how these apocalyptic symbols and images are interpreted in the contemporary period. As is illustrated by Stein (2000: xv), this interpretation is dynamic: 'Modern advocates of apocalyptic often draw on established traditions, in some cases explaining the same texts, images and symbols in similar ways, in other instances rejecting or revising older interpretations as they construct new alternatives'. By looking at how the apocalypse is applied to the contemporary period, we can assess contemporary concerns. In many cases, the apocalypse becomes a vehicle for challenging or expressing dissatisfaction with modernity, although McGinn (1979: 8) notes in general apocalypticists seem to be particularly vulnerable to change. In establishing continuity and divergence, we may also have the opportunity to identify apocalyptic sources that appear outside of the traditional reservoir of apocalyptic belief. This is valuable as it aids our wider understanding of how religious ideas are shared and appropriated.

3. *Narrative*

This dimension considers the idea that lived apocalypses are fundamentally concerned with providing meaning to the current period. Within the Abrahamic religions creation may be seen as a story with a beginning and end. History is thus not without meaning and indeed working towards a point. Apocalyptic speakers propose that they know where we are in this cosmic story and through

this they potentially have a powerful appeal. By drawing on the images from the 'mythical' dimension they provide purpose to the lives of their listeners by revealing that they are hugely significant, that they are the last generation to live in this historical continuity. Importantly, this significance often comes because they are fighting a cosmic battle in which good will finally overcome evil once and for all. Through this narrative of the nearness of the End, apocalypses also give meaning to current difficulties; they explain why evil seems rampant, why a group are persecuted, and crucially provide hope to endure the current time of trials in the hope of the utopia which is soon to dawn. In this dimension we can thus discern themes of identity and self perception, the role of humanity at the end (and thus whether the apocalypse is passive or revolutionary), and the groups or apocalyptic speaker's view of evil in the world and others.

4. Time

The narratives of hope, justice and utopia are not unique to end time thinking. Indeed, Landes (2011), somewhat controversially, describes a wide variety of revolutionary groups as millennial. Rather, what distinguishes a group as apocalyptic is the immediacy of the End Times. Without an imminent end, even if it is not certain, apocalypse is eschatology, as O'Leary (1994: 152) illustrates: 'apocalyptic speculation on the topos of time must resolve into a specific temporal claim if it is to capture the attention and command the adherence of its immediate historical audience'. It is thus essential in any group to consider how their sense of apocalyptic time is constructed, how close they consider the end to be, and why they consider it to be so. Understanding this provides somewhat of a gateway to understanding apocalyptic behaviour.

The experience of time can be difficult for apocalyptic believers as Landes (2011: 14) illustrates: 'for people who have entered apocalyptic time, everything quickens, enlivens, coheres. They become semiotically aroused – everything has meaning, patterns. The smallest incident can have immense importance and open the way to an entirely new vision of the world, one in which forces unseen by other mortals operate'. Thus, within this dimension we may consider the signs that herald the end, as well as how groups pass through and out of apocalyptic expectation. This thus encompasses the study of how apocalyptic beliefs are managed.

We have seen a particular interest in the failure of apocalyptic beliefs, but this dimension may also include the maintenance of apocalyptic time. O'Leary (1994: 137) succinctly summaries the dilemma facing apocalyptic believes and speakers, 'the new form of apocalyptic belief, then, required one to maintain a precarious balance that accorded proper weight to present and future considerations, simultaneously taking account the imminence of the Lord's return and its possible postponement. To lose this balance was to risk ruin and public derision, on the one hand, and the loss of one's eternal soul on the other'.

Gutierrez (2005: 54-55) likewise notes the problems with the failure of apocalyptic belief, but this time from the collapse of a narrative of meaning: 'To abandon the storyline is to abandon the entire structure of epistemology and to run the risk of reducing history and current trials meaningless...the ethos of millennialism itself must perpetuate itself in order to continue making sense of the world'. Gutierrez proposes the maintenance of apocalyptic time may come from the strategies put in place to rationalise apocalyptic failure (Gutierrez, 2005: 56). However, it may equally be that prophetic failure never comes to pass because the expectations of imminence are managed (O'Leary, 1994: 151-154). Understanding these and how imminence is percieived thus gives us a broader understanding of apocalyptic belief and how End Time belief may in fact be relatively stable.

5. *Authority*

The apocalypse is an event which, of course, has not yet come to pass, nor does anyone know when, or indeed, if, it will happen. For a group to engage in apocalyptic belief it is therefore likely that an authority source (or multiple sources) will be appealed to in order to make the apocalypse a likely event. Apocalypse is perhaps most associated with the figure of the charismatic leader such as David Koresh of Waco, Sokoto Asahara of Aum Shinrikyo or Ti and Bo of Heaven's Gate. In the case of charismatic leader, a study in apocalypse might consider how their authority is established, including the personal narrative of the leader or prophet. Daniels (2005: 6), for example, argues this begins in the 'experience of a vision in which the prophet is given the mission from a divine or superhuman source whose authority is quite unquestionable. It

generally contains instructions on how the prophet is to proceed in accomplishing this divine and enormous task, and absolute assurance that the source is both authentic and infallible in its support of the mission'.

While important for some apocalyptic movements, we must be careful not to overstate the role of charismatic authority in apocalyptic beliefs. As noted by O'Leary (1994: 12) 'examining the discourse of most modern apocalyptic evangelists, one finds that their claims are founded not on the charismatic authority of the prophet granted a divine vision, but on the (ostensibly) rational authority of one who interprets canonical scripture'. Here, there is therefore a need to identify authority in the hermeneutical process – on what authority does one interpret the text? In the contemporary period with the advent of the internet and diverse and fragmented authority sources we may see particularly interesting complex ways of legitimating an apocalyptic message.

Authority in apocalyptic groups is complex and should always be approached with an open mind. Here, a study of the Haqqaniyya and perhaps wider apocalyptic belief in Sufi groups in general has much to offer. As we shall see in Chapters Six and Seven, the routinization of authority in the *tariqa* makes the apocalypse inherently more stable and is an example of the varieties of authorities that are drawn upon to legitimise an apocalyptic claim.

6. Experiential

The final dimension I propose that should be included in a study of apocalyptic belief is one which focuses on the people who live with and interpret the apocalyptic teachings they seek out or receive. This dimension is large and may potentially consist of many areas. One significant subsection of this dimension is interpretation of apocalyptic teachings by those who hear them. Apocalyptic studies have sometimes tended to focus on the leaders of the group portraying followers, even by implication, as essentially passive. In actuality, as Thompson (2005b), Melton (1985) and O'Leary (1994) have shown, those who entertain apocalyptic worldviews are far from passive, playing an active role in how they personally make sense of apocalyptic ideas. As such, it is therefore important to consider the wider context in which apocalyptic beliefs are situated. Melton (1985) has demonstrated that apocalyptic beliefs rarely take place in a vacuum;

they are part of a much wider web that gives meaning and coherence to an individual's life.

By understanding this wider context, we gain some understanding of why ideas may be interpreted in a certain way, as well as greater understanding of their relative importance. Moreover, by engaging in ethnographic research where possible, we go some way to addressing Flood's (1999) concerns of a study of religion which is distant, removed from the lived realities of its adherents, and which falsely claims to be objective, and move more towards a study of belief which is historically situated, and which through a dialogical and reflexive process, reflects the experiences of those who practice it.

Following this, we might consider what McGinn (1979: 3) refers to as 'apocalyptic spirituality' or 'the ways in which apocalypse affects the believer and his actions'. These effects could range from seclusion to a sense of meaning and purpose given by the sorts of apocalyptic narrative outlined above.

The experiential dimension also provides space to consider how apocalyptic beliefs are maintained by examining the wider activities of the group. An interesting example of such an exercise is given by Dein (2013) in his study of Lubavitcher Hasidim in the United States. In the late twentieth century expectation grew around the leader of the Lubavitch Rabbi Scheerson in regards his potential to be the Jewish Messiah. These were ultimately considered unfulfilled, externally at least, by the Rabbi's death in 1994.

However, for insiders, there was not an acute sense of failure. In the months following his death, a number of rationalisations were given such as that 'the fact the Rebbe had left his physical body rendered him even more powerful' (Dein, 2013: 35). In the following years, the most prevalent rationalisation is that 'the Rebbe's death was illusionary, and his is Moshiah [messiah] and still lives' (Dein, 2013: 36). This group undertake rituals and cultural performances which reinforce this belief maintenance. Dein concludes 'the function of ritual in maintaining belief in prophetic groups has been under-researched. This should be a focus for future work in this area including the complex links between ritual, religious experience and embodiment' (Dein, 2013: 39).

These dimensions thus provide a framework with which to appropriate apocalyptic beliefs within a group that is balanced and which provides space for discussing their complexity. This framework provides a rough structure for this thesis, and its broader phenomenological values will be applied. This approach is appropriate for the research questions as phenomenology seeks description and comparison, as well as providing space for explanation, not causation, of phenomena in the contemporary world.

Thus, by analysing Haqqani texts (see below) I shall attempt to identify key aspects of Shaykh Nazim's and Naqshbandi apocalyptic teachings and compare them both with wider Islamic thought and apocalyptic thought of the Christian West. My final chapter, making use of the experiential dimension, is more ethnographic, exploring interpretations of apocalyptic belief. In this final chapter, I explore the distinct methodological concerns of participant research. I do not speculate on the psychology of the Shaykh, nor seek events that may have 'caused' his apocalyptic outlook.

I aim to use empathy, and in acknowledging the limited possibility of true objectivity, engage in reflexivity. In the spirit of this, it is important to note that while I have approached texts through the lens of wider reading, my reading is also undoubtedly informed by the *murids* with whom I have spent numerous hours. While I hope this is an account scholars and *murids* will agree with, the richness of contemporary Naqshbandi practice will undoutedly reveal new interpretations when time is spent with a different Naqshbandi branch.

A note on sources

The growth of Sufism in the West has been accompanied by a growth in Sufi literature (see for example Hermansen, 2006). The Haqqaniyya are both prolific publishers of printed text and users of multi-media platforms available through the internet, both in shared public content and distribution through private mailing lists. With the exception of the final chapter, which draws primarily from interview and ethnographic material, it is Haqqani literature, books and videos which form the primary sources for this thesis.

It is important to note the general content of these books is edited lectures of Shaykh Nazim. While appearing to be transcripts of his talks, they are not

written directly by him nor are they edited by him. Stjernholm (2014: 199) has also observed this point, noting the contents of the books are selected and edited, although it is not always clear by whom. The extent to which these texts may be seen as an unmediated record of Shaykh Nazim's teachings is therefore dubious. Further, these texts do not always have a date and place note, again making tracing the development of the apocalyptic narrative difficult. Stjernholm (2011: 80) succinctly describes the nature of the texts when he finds 'the reader faces the text as it stands: as spiritually inspired speech in a textual representation. It is apparently supposed to transmit to the reader without side information; its qualities are taken to be self-evident'.

However, I do believe these sources are nonetheless valuable. These books are widely available and thus constitute the public face of Shaykh Nazim's message. From my fieldwork, it is clear the *murids* hold them to be authoritative and representative of Shaykh Nazim and thus it is consistent to consider them likewise so.[31] Moreover, these texts can now be supplemented by direct recordings of the Shaykh available online at sites such as saltanat.org and YouTube. Many of these *sohbats* are available as transcripts. In 2013, the Haqqaniyya promoted two large PDF files of e-book versions of previously published texts and transcribed talks. These transcriptions are primarily, but not exclusively, transcriptions of videos available online in their original format on SufiLive, a video archive of Shaykh Nazim's talks. These files total approximately 19,000 pages, making them a hugely valuable resource.

The quality of English is not always good, the Shaykh's language is sometimes transcribed as to make it more fluent (although the meaning does not appear changed) and it must be acknowledged there may be translation or transcription error. Where possible, I have attempted to cross reference with available *sohbat* recordings to ensure the transcription, when in English, corresponds with the Shaykh's words. For ease of referencing I refer to these files in the bibliography as '*Sohbats 2013*' and in the text as '*Sohbats 2013*' with the page number, making reference to the attributed year of the *sohbats* in square brackets.[32]

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[31] Stjernholm (2011: 143) likewise observed the power of these texts in his own fieldwork, observing that converstations with *murids* and Haqqani texts would often mirror each other. Stjernholm thus concludes 'many of them appear to have internalised the words of the shaykh and made them part of their personal narrative'.

[32] In the bibliography this source is refereced as Sufismus-online, 2013: *Sohabt Collection*.

Shaykh Nazim publishes in a number of languages but as this group are based in Britain with English as a common language, English language texts shall be used.

Finally, the majority of texts I have used have been attributed to Shaykh Nazim. However, this thesis also makes use of a text written by Shaykh Hisham, *The Approach of Armageddon?* (2003). This text is significant as it is made more widely available than Haqqani literature and appears aimed at a wider audience. If we are thus to appreciate more fully the apocalypticism of the Haqqaniyya, it is important to address how it is presented by the other Haqqani leadership and to a Western audience. As this text is different in style, I have avoided using it freely alongside Shaykh Nazim's literature, and instead treated it, where relevant, in its own section.

Chapter One: The End of the World in Islam: a preparatory overview

Introduction

The sacred texts of Islam contain much imagery describing the end of the world, and this literature has inspired numerous writers and movements until the present day. However, it would be a mistake to assume these writers and actors draw on the same material and interpret it in the same way. Rather, the way these images are used changes throughout history, revealing very contemporary concerns and fears. In order to understand developments in apocalyptic interpretation and identify new manifestations, it is therefore essential to understand the symbols available in the tradition and how they have been used in the past.

As an application of the first dimension of the proposed phenomenological framework, this chapter provides a background into the key features of end time thought in Islam and a historical overview of key trends in end time speculation in action, with special attention to Sufism. This chapter thus both seeks to establish if an interest in these ideas is unusual in Islam and prepares the ground for the following chapter, which will address one of the primary research questions of how Shaykh Nazim compares to other end time Islamic thinkers. This chapter seeks to identify broad trends that can be used as a comparative framework, but due to the breadth of material in the area, it cannot be considered exhaustive.

An analysis of end time belief cannot begin, however, without first clarifying what terminology will be used. When observed comparatively across world faiths, religions and spiritualities, it is clear teachings on the end of the world are prevalent and hugely varied. Methodologically, this raises challenges for researchers in applying appropriate terminology to describe and categorise observed phenomena. Moreover, within comparative research using established terminology to analyse and describe end time belief is further complicated when the same terms are used in different studies with different meaning attached. It is therefore appropriate to begin this chapter by addressing some common terminology used in this field, the challenges that come with using it, and a clarification of how terms will be used in this study. In doing so, this will aid in the examination of how to categorise end time belief in

the Haqqaniyya and provide tools to compare it with wider Islamic and past Sufi thought, one of the research questions of this study. Moreover, this will contribute to one of the broad aims of this study which is to provide an account of the Haqqaniyya which can be used to situate and compare them to wider trends in Western apocalyptic belief.

The problem of terminology

Eschatology

The term used within theology to describe religious teachings on the end of the world, time and what happens beyond this is known as eschatology, a term derived from the Greek term *eschatos*, meaning last or final. At its widest, eschatology encompasses what creation and death mean on a cosmic scale, and as such, the issues explored within eschatology touch on many other areas of theology.

The scriptures of Islam, Judaism and Christianity are highly eschatological in nature, frequently stressing that the world is finite, that history will end according to God's hand and that human beings will be accountable for their actions. The verses of Sura 6:60 in the Qur'an and Gen. 3:19 in the Bible, for example, illustrate a recurrent message in both scriptures that God created humanity and indeed all creation and that all will ultimately die and return to him.[33]

Sacred time is of particular importance in eschatology. Within the Abrahamic religions time is assumed to be linear, begun by God at the time of creation. Behind creation is a plan, that is to say, purpose. History is thus imbued with meaning. God's plan will come to fruition at the end of time when all creation returns to God. It is also in eschatology that the ultimate nature of the human being is revealed as it is after the final judgement human beings may see their true purpose, the nature of the immortal self, and God's complete plan. It thus may be argued that it is only by looking at the end that we can make sense of the beginning. The notions of judgement and justice are significant as, in this

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[33] Consequently, common themes explored under the branch of eschatology in the Abrahamic religions include teachings on the Day of Judgement (and therefore salvation), what happens after an individual's death, and the nature of resurrection, the next worlds, and eternity, when creation as we know it has ended. Eschatology may therefore also speculate upon the nature of prophecy, how hidden events can be known, and the hermeneutical concerns of how to read texts which describe events layered in poetry and symbolism.

finality, those who have followed God are rewarded and those who did not are punished – all things are set right.

Apocalypticism

The field of eschatology is intimately associated with that of apocalypticism. As a phenomenon, what constitutes apocalypticism is contentious. The association with a distinctive apocalypse and the term apocalypticism is obvious but difficult, and demonstrates some of the challenges of terminology within this area of Religious Studies. Apocalypticism may be seen as a belief in the coming of an immediate apocalypse, whether this apocalypse is positive or negative, placing emphasis typically on global catastrophe (see for example Wojcik, 1997). This definition may therefore also cover secular beliefs which expect an apocalypse, whether ecological, nuclear or pathogenic.

However, this reading is problematic when applied to the broad spectrum of Islamic end time belief. Islamic end time thinkers may well be concerned with identifying signs the world is in its last days, heralding an apocalypse, but the Islamic end time narrative does not always require an immediate commencement of global destruction or the end of the world as we know it. This may actually come several years after signs that herald the end, such as the appearance of the Mahdi or *al-Dajjal*, have passed.

For this reason, I favour a more open definition of apocalypticism when looking at religious groups, which would have expectations of the type of apocalyptic belief described above as a subsection. In this, I draw from McGinn's (1979: 4-5) definition and refer to apocalypticism in its simplest form as a pattern of religious belief which sees the end of the world and the foretold events that herald it as in some way imminent, whether they have begun now or will begin in the near future. As such, it is distinguished from eschatology both by its immediacy and by its concern with temporal events and reality, rather than the more other worldly and ahistorical or posthistorical speculation of eschatology, which in this definition should more be associated with the events after the end of either an individual life or creation as a whole. Apocalypticism should also be

distinguished from apocalyptic religious movements, in which apocalypticism forms the principle beliefs of a religious group.[34]

Following the overarching concept are terms attempting to describe more specific types of apocalypticism, such as millennialism. Millennialism has its origin in the concept of the Christian millennium and speculation over the verses Rev. 20: 1-15 which describe the binding of Satan, the one thousand year reign of Christ on Earth with those who had 'not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or hands' (Rev. 20:4-5), before the release of Satan, the final battle, and Last Judgement.[35]

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[34] Examples of Apocalyptic Movements might be seen in a new religious movement such as Aum Shinrikyō, for whom a conviction in the end of the world led to radically destructive acts, or an older movement such as the Millerites, in which expectation of the apocalypse formed the primary beliefs of the group. As the expectation of the apocalypse is neither Shaykh Nazim's sole teaching nor his primary one, the Haqqaniyya should not be considered an apocalyptic religious movement.

[35] As early as Justin Martyr in the first century C.E speculation has existed over when and in what form this reign would take and what it meant for the Christian community (Rowland, 2008: 68). Broadly, three millennialisms can be determined: amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism. Amillennialism became dominant in Christian thought by the work of Augustine as seen in *The City of God* book ten, chapter seven. In this reading the reign of Christ is now, manifested as the Church. Postmillennialism was particularly popular in the nineteenth century and assumed Christ would come again after the millennium (the one thousand year reign). This was an optimistic understanding of the millennium with human progress at its heart as it was understood humanity was to begin the work for Christ's return, creating a just and moral society. A sense of apocalypse was therefore not particularly strong. Postmillennialism became particularly important in America, where America was seen as a 'new Jerusalem', a place which had redemptive significance and as such was essential for God's plan of salvation. Indeed, under the influence of the Puritan theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), America was seen to have 'a major role to play in improving the world in anticipation of the second coming of Jesus' (Bendle: 2005 para.6). Premillennialism, the most significant form of contemporary Christian apocalyptic belief, understands that it is Christ who must inaugurate his one thousand year reign. Premillennialism has existed for almost as long as the church, but contemporary premillennialism can be traced to the influence of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) and Cyrus Scofield (1843-1921) and the phenomenon of dispensationalism. In this reading, the revelation of God's will to humanity and his actions in the world are not uniform throughout history. Rather, human history is divided into periods, dispensations, in which God acts and gives revelation in particular and often unique ways. This is significant as dispensationalists thus hold that God has not yet finished with Israel, raising questions about Israel's role in the last days. The final dispensation is generally understood to be inaugurated by Christ when he establishes the kingdom of God (Clouse, 2008: 264). Dispensationalism understands that humanity will have to endure a period of tribulations before the return of Christ, marred by catastrophic war and persecution of the righteous as depicted in the Book of Revelation. Among dispensationalists three further subdivisions can be seen: pretribulationists, midtribulationists, and posttribulationists which variously disagree on whether the faithful will have to suffer with the rest of humanity or whether they will be raptured to heaven to await with God before returning with Christ for his reign on Earth. The influence of dispensationalism makes contemporary premillennialism somewhat pessimistic, viewing the world as expecting inevitable catastrophic events and the rise of evil until Christ returns to establish his kingdom on earth. It may also be somewhat cynical of human nature, seeing it and contemporary society as sinful and corrupt (Bendle, 2005: para. 23).

While based in Christianity, the term millennialism has been appropriated by scholars to refer to non-Christian apocalyptic beliefs. Wessinger (1997: 48) provides a useful example of using this term when she finds 'millennialism in its most general definition refers to the expectation of an imminent and collective earthly salvation accomplished according to a divine or supernatural plan'. What is important in this definition is that the salvation emphasis retains a link to utopia and to God's final victory. Here, premillenialism is used to 'denote a pessimistic expectation of catastrophe caused by divine intervention to destroy the world as we know it, and then subsequently to establish the millennial salvation', while postmillennialism 'is used to refer to the optimistic expectations that human effort working progressively according to a divine plan will bring about the millennium' (Wessinger, 1997: 49). In both cases, this salvation is earthly (Landes, 2004: 333) or at least corporeal.

The difficulty with the terminology pre and post millennialism is that it is based in a Christian theological structure. As such Wessinger challenges the usefulness of the terms pre and post millennialism and instead argues for the terms catastrophic and progressive millennialism. In the latter the millennium will arrive 'noncatastrophically by means of human cooperation with divine will' (Wessinger, 1997: 51), while in the former the millennium will dawn in the wake of catastrophe. In both it may be argued that millennium does not have to refer to one thousand years and certainly not the reign of Christ, but rather a period of divine justice and utopia.

Wessinger's structure is useful to discuss beliefs surrounding the transition into utopia. However, it is less useful when discussing apocalyptic beliefs in which catastrophe does not lead to utopia. Here, the terms millenarian and millenarianism can be helpful.

In general, millenarianism refers to the belief that society (and perhaps all creation) will undergo a transformation in which everything will change. While the etymology of the term suggests a one thousand year cycle, it is more widely applied. Partridge (2008: 192), for example, notes that millenarianism is distinguished by 'a deep pessimism regarding the current world' and most importantly, discontinuity with the present state. Most frequently the passage to the new world is one of 'violent transformation'. While millenarianism does not

require the next period to be a positive one (ie, it may be postapocalyptic – such as the transition into post-atomic landscapes) in the apocalyptic religious sense there is often a soteriological element which allows for vindication of the believers and a positive transformation of this world into a utopia, as in catastrophic millennialism. In the following chapter I will demonstrate that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse can be considered millenarian according the influential definition of the term proposed by Cohn (1993).

An additional depth to millenarianism is given by Wojcik (1997: 211) who assesses a typology of apocalyptic expectation according to inevitability. In this typology there are four types of 'apocalypticism': 1) unconditional apocalypticism where apocalypse is unavoidable but where the faithful will be saved by divine means; 2) conditional apocalypticism where the imminent apocalypse may be averted if humanity heeds the warnings of the messenger; 3) unredemptive apocalypticism where the apocalypse is inevitable and no one will be saved; and 4) cataclysmic forewarning where the apocalypse is not inevitable but in which there is no supernatural plan either.

This study will argue in the following chapter that Shaykh Nazim's insistence that the signs of the end of the world expected in Islam are beginning now make the Haqqaniyya an example of Islamic apocalypticism. As his beliefs involve worldwide catastrophe, they can be described as apocalyptic. Due to his emphasis on destruction and sudden change into a new era that will become utopian after a short transitional stage, his apocalypticism can be categorised as millenarian.

Before concluding this section, it is worth acknowledging the phenomenon of messianism. Messianism is the belief that a divinely guided or divine figure will come to save or redeem a community or even the whole of humanity. While not necessarily associated with the end of time, messianism often appears in apocalypticism whether as a sign preceding the ultimate end or as someone to prevent ultimate destruction.

The vast scholarship on apocalypticism in the Abrahamic religions means it is possible to highlight some recurrent characteristics. One key aspect of apocalyptic views, like in eschatology, is that they are closely bound with notions of deterministic sacred time; God (or divine forces) are acting in the

world and events are unfolding according to pre-ordained design. There may be 'signs' that the last days are dawning in particular events both in the natural world and human society. They are dualistic, involving forces of absolute good or evil, they are cosmic as apocalyptic views involve all realms, seen and unseen, and the end of human history is the end of all history. As such they are anthrocentric.

Further, they are 'historicist' – salvation is tied to history and therefore salvation is this worldly, and importantly, collective (Robbins and Palmer, 1997: 6). That is to say, it happens on a mass scale, not just to individuals at the time of their individual deaths. Themes of persecution of the righteous and a sense of moral degradation in the contemporary period are common, but after this, society is overthrown and good normally triumphs over evil once and for all. Those who have been mocked for their beliefs are vindicated and true justice is finally established (McGinn, 1994b:10).[36] As such, whether quietist or revolutionary, apocalypticism is concerned with power and politics, through its concern with the eventual establishment of a truly just order (Luebbers, 2001: 223). As will become apparent over the course of this thesis, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism shares many of these characteristics. The following section now moves to discuss the position of end time belief in Islamic thought and history, with special reference to Sufism.

<u>Eschatological Imagery in the Qur'an</u>

The end of the world is significant to Shaykh Nazim in both its eschatological and apocalyptic forms and as will be demonstrated subsequently, for him the two are very much interrelated as eschatological goals give his apocalypse purpose and an additional symbolic layer. It is therefore appropriate to outline the basic eschatological narrative of Islam before discussing Sufi interpretations.

The basic eschatological message of Islam is relatively simple: time is finite, creation will end according to God's plan and human beings will be judged, and

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[36] McGinn (1994b:10-11) argues this notion of vindication is part of a pattern or 'triple-act drama' of 'crisis-judgement-vindication' that is an 'indispensible characteristic of apocalyptic eschatology'. This pattern is essentially related to history as time plays out in a determined way: the world is perceived to be in crisis, judgement falls upon the wicked, and the righteous are vindicated. As is outlined in Chapter Five, Shaykh Nazim very much follows this pattern.

subsequently rewarded or punished based upon their conduct in life. Images of the end of human life, creation and history dominate the Qur'an, particularly in the Meccan *suras*, and so central is this message that Chittick (2008: 135) argues that along with *tawhid* and prophecy, the return to God is one of three central tenets of Islamic theology and belief. The Qur'an also reveals that this message is not new; all previous messengers have brought this warning and guidance for leading a life that, with God's mercy, will be judged favourably.[37]

For the individual, the eschatological narrative begins at death when the body is placed in a grave[38] to await the principle eschatological event in Islam, the Hour, when the process of resurrection, judgement, and the end of the world as we know it, begins.

The Qur'an refers frequently to the Hour (for example, 22:1, 69:1-3), the Day of Resurrection (11:103, 22:69, 75:1-6, 39:47, 60, 67), and Judgement (22:56, 82:13-19, 107:1, 95:7), and what may happen at these times, but a clear chronology of events is not easily apparent. The events are elaborated on in *hadith* as well as manuals of eschatology such as al-Ghazzali's *al-Durra al-fakhira* and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya's *Kitab al-ruh*.

In following Smith and Haddad's (1981: 33) example, the following does not attempt to piece together a sequence of events but rather presents a general, introductory overview of key events and themes in the eschatological narrative. In keeping with the definition of eschatology given in the previous section, and how it is distinct from apocalypse, the overview is concerned with events which take place in the absolute last moments of this mode of creation and what happens subsequently. Signs of the Hour and associated figures which take place in this continuity of human history are therefore explored subsequently in the section on Islamic apocalypse.

The Qur'an refers to the end of history and this continuity of creation as being inaugurated by the blowing of a trumpet by the angel Israfil (Q69:13-16, 39:68).

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[37] On Abraham, for example, see Q2: 122-133. In this thesis, unless otherwise stated Abdel Haleem's (2010) translation of the Qur'an is used

[38] When in the grave, theologians disagree on how aware an individual is, what exactly happens to their soul, or what pleasures or torments they may experience. Two important figures agreed to appear are Munkar and Nakir, two angels not mentioned in the Qur'an, who interrogate the deceased on his works and beliefs (al-Tirmidhi 1071). This event therefore shadows the judgement that is to come on the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-Qiyama*).

Upon the first blow of the trumpet the world as we know it is turned to chaos: 'When the trumpet is blown with a single blast and the earth and the mountains are lifted up and crushed with a single blow, then, on that day, the terror shall come to pass and heaven shall be split, for upon that day it shall be very frail' (Q69: 13-16 – Arberry translation).

With a second blow, all creation save Jibril, Mika'il, Israfil, Izra'il, and the bearers of the throne of God, is destroyed (Smith and Haddad, 1981: 71). The Qur'an again portrays striking destructive imagery describing in Sura 39:61 for example, how 'the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand'. After this event, even the angels must die, and God alone remains. Smith and Haddad (1981) find evidence for this in the eschatologies of Abu-Layth al-Samarqandi and al-Ghazzali (24 n.29, 72) and reflect this reading in the Qur'anic verses 28:88 and 55:26-27, which to paraphrase, read that all perishes but the face of God. After a period of indeterminate time, God commands a rain which brings creation back, beginning with the angels and on earth, the actual regrowing of bodies in graves that have perished. Israfil again blows the trumpet and the Day of Resurrection begins (Smith and Haddad, 1981: 73). [39]

A common image in the Qur'an of this day is the earth throwing out its contents, that is to say, the contents of graves (84:3-4, 99:1, 100:9). After this, all people will gather on a vast plane (20:105-107), again for an indeterminate length of time, to await their final and ultimate judgement. While there are some exceptions, for the majority this is described as an uncomfortable experience, where individuals contemplate their acts, knowing they cannot change their fate (75: 10-11). The Qur'an stresses that this is a time of terror for many. *Sura* 80:34-37, for example, describes: 'the day when man will flee from his own brother, his mother, his father, his wife, his children: each of them will be absorbed in concerns of their own on that day'. The *sura* continues, however, that 'some faces will be beaming, laughing, and rejoicing', reminding believers that for those who have heeded the warnings of the prophets the return to God is a joyous thing.

Following this there are a number of events, all of which illustrate again the importance of divine justice and accountability. These include the reading of

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[39] Some scholars interpret Q39: 68 as indicating that there will only be two blows of the trumpet. In the first, all shall perish, and resurrection begins with the second.

recorded deeds from books and their subsequent weighing on scales, and the crossing of the bridge over the Fire. For the damned this is as sharp as a sword and as narrow as a hair, whereas for the faithful it is wide and short (Smith and Haddad, 1981: 79). Those damned fall into the Fire, perhaps, though not necessarily, for eternity, while the faithful go to the Garden, Paradise, where as part of their reward they may see the Beatific Vision of God. While sources differ on whether or not this judgement will take place on an individual or communal basis, this final judgement is collective, in that all people who have ever lived face it at the same time.

Sufi Interpretations

The eschatological teachings of the Qur'an have been explored by Sufis throughout the centuries in many different ways. The Day of Judgement, for example, is elaborated upon in the works of many celebrated Sufi poets.[40]

These teachings presented challenges for mystics in how to interpret eschatological verses and therefore raised considerations for spiritual practices and what should be considered the ultimate goal of the mystical life. Among the early Sufi ascetics in the generations following the Prophet Muhammad, fear of God and his punishment was prominent. Vakily (2005: 407) argues for such ascetics, 'the life formula for spiritual success was quite simple: Fear God and forsake the world, to be saved from the punishment of Hellfire seek God's pleasure by performing good deeds, and pray that He will grant you entry to Paradise where, purified and multiplied infinitely, all the pleasures of this world are awaiting the believers'.

One of the most famous early Sufis, Hasan al-Basri (c.642-c.728), presents a good example of this approach. For Hasan, the Day of Judgement was very much something to be fearful of and Schimmel (1975: 30) describes him as 'steeped in the sadness and fear so typical of ascetics of all religions, quoting a historian as observing 'It was as if Hellfire had been created exclusively for him and Umar II'. His concern was not just for himself, he encouraged his students

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[40] Rumi, for example, describes this day: 'Torn their shrouds, holding their heads in fear/How millions will shiver at the sound of the trumpet' (Schimmel, 1979: 166). Rumi further describes how, on the Day of Judgement, all thoughts of the heart will become visible (Schimmel, 1975: 107). Similar concepts of the interior becoming apparent are also found in the works of Attar and Sana'i. For Sana'i, however, the interior of an individual will be revealed when it takes the form of an animal (Schimmel, 1975: 107).

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to clearly follow the Qur'an 'so that they would not be ashamed at Doomsday'. His asceticism contrasted the growing wealth and material focus of his society and as such he likewise called Muslims to detach themselves from the world, as can be seen in the quote, 'why care so much for this perishable world? Be with this world as if you had never been there, and with the other world as if you would never leave it' (Schimmel, 1975: 30).

Hasan's emphasis did not stay typical of Sufi approaches to the afterlife. While renouncing the world remained a prominent necessary spiritual goal, indeed, it is central to Shaykh Nazim's teachings today, this goal of detachment came also to include Heaven and Hell themselves. Fear of God gradually became diminished in favour of love and faith in God's mercy. A contemporary of Hasan, Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya (c.713-801) is perhaps the best known example of a mystic so consumed by love that all else, even the promise of Heaven or fear of Hell, became a veil to perfect devotion.[41] For Rabi'a, if the afterlife was to have reward, it was only to meet God. That death could be a joyful thing and not dominated by fear, is likewise present in the writings of Yahya ibn Mu'adh al-Razi (830-871), who found death beautiful because it joined friend with friend (Waldman, 1987: 154).[42]

One final element of Sufi attitudes towards eschatology worth noting is the importance of the *hadith* 'die before you die' to spiritual practice. Schimmel (1975: 70) argues this approach was a cornerstone of Sufism and can be

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[41] This is most seen in her famous saying 'O Lord, if I worship you out of fear of hell, burn me in hell. If I worship you in the hope of paradise, forbid it to me. If I worship you for your sake, do not drive me from your everlasting beauty' (Attar, 2009: 113).

[42] While this view remained popular until the seventeenth century, it was not uncontested (Vakily, 2005: 411). Ibn Arabi criticised Rabia for a lack of understanding (410) while al-Ghazzali wrote extensively on the particulars of eschatology including the journey of the soul in the grave and the eschatological timeline (see for example Smith and Haddad, 1981). al-Ghazzali particularly encouraged being prepared to meet God at any moment (Schimmel, 1994: 233).One particularly interesting, and according to Vakily (2005), enduring, criticism of Rabia's form of devotion came from the influential Naqshbani shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624). Sirhindi argued that while worshipping God for his own sake is desirable, it was prideful and a sign of ingratitude to pass over the rewards God wishes to give to his friends (Vakily, 2005: 411). Moreover, this dismissal showed a lack of true surrender as in unity with God one should be truly unified with his will. As Vakily explains, for Sirhindi 'Paradise is desirable and Hell is abhorrent not for what they symbolize in themselves but simply because God has declared them to be desirable and abhorrent respectively' (Vakily, 2005: 412). For Sirhindi, the truth of the nature of Paradise and hell was revealed in mystical experience. Ordinary Muslims seek the pleasure of paradise and act so as to avoid hell, understanding them to be much like their earthly descriptions. Intoxicated mystics likewise see Heaven, much like earth and therefore a veil, while those who remain in God, the way of sobriety, accept Heaven and Hell. As such, Sirhindi was able to reconcile mysticism with the literal accuracy of scripture (Vakily, 2005: 414).

summarised as both the slaying of the lower qualities of the self (ego and all it loves, the world), which are a veil between God and man (Schimmel, 1975: 135) or as an expression in the mystical experience, losing oneself completely in *fana*, before returning to oneself, essentially 'resurrected'. Again, a strong theme of detachment from the world is present in this classical Sufi interpretation but in prioritising the mystical experience the normal eschatological experience is suspended, as death is not in the future, but already essentially passed.

The apocalypse of Islam

The clear eschatological message of the Qur'an is complemented by an apocalyptic message in two ways. Firstly, the Qur'an suggests a certain amount of urgency by stating the Hour is near (55:57) and that it has already begun (47:18).[43] There is also a strong message of apocalyptic awareness as the Qur'an warns the Hour could begin at any moment (6:31, 33:63), although ultimately only God truly knows when the Hour will dawn (see 79:44 for example). Secondly, the Qur'an speaks of signs that will precede the Hour and that these should be heeded (47:18). While the Qur'an does not provide many of these signs it does describe the appearance of Yajuj and Majuj (18:94, 21:96-97) and dramatic natural signs such as earthquakes (99:1) and that the moon will split (54:1). Thus, while Brown (2001: 372) is correct to point out that a linear timeline is not present in the Qur'an comparable to Revelation in the Bible, there is Qur'anic precedent for looking at the historical world for signs of the end, as in the Christian tradition.

However, the majority of events preceding the end of time that are drawn upon in Muslim literature come from *hadith*. Before continuing to outline these, it is important to note Cook's (2013: para. 3) observation that *hadith* relating to apocalyptic events of both weak and strong transmission were collected in fragments. These fragments, far from forming a coherent narrative comparable, again, to what might be found in apocalyptic Biblical literature 'lack context and

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[43] There is some difficulty in reading apocalyptic signs in the Qur'an. In reference to Q54:1, 'the Hour draws near; the moon is split', Abdel-Haleem (2010: 350) warns the Qur'an uses the past tense to encourage listeners to how it *will* be, and is not necessarily indicative of the current state.

are highly contradictory in nature, and/or overlap in content, taking no notice of other fragments or occasionally polemicising with them'.

This not only makes examining how apocalyptic traditions developed historically in the early years of Islam difficult, but also means that a single timeline of events is impossible to find. As such, apocalyptic writers have many signs they can draw upon and interpret to illustrate points about their contemporary situation. Nonetheless, there is a rough expectation of events that are expected to occur, the most popular traditions being present in the respected *hadith* collections *Sahih Muslim* and *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

The apocalyptic signs of *hadith* have been split into Lesser and Greater Signs of the Hour by Muslim scholars, although it should be noted there is no single agreed consensus on the categorisation of individual signs. Lesser signs include a range of events around human activity in all spheres and the natural world. Of the latter, Abu Huraya reports in the *Sahih al-Bukhari* (bk 88: 237) that the Hour will not begin until there is an increase in earthquakes and time will begin running quickly. There will also be signs in human society. Again, according to the above tradition, religious knowledge will be taken away (by the death of religious scholars), wealth will be in such abundance so as to make *zakat* obsolete, and people will compete in the construction of tall buildings. However, it will also be a time of such turmoil that people will wish they were in the grave. Morally, there will be a decline: piety will give way to pride, truth will give way to lies, drinking wine, public fornication, usury, adultery, homosexuality, and men obeying their wives will be freely accepted (Smith and Haddad, 1981: 66).

There will also be many wars. Again, Abu Huraya narrates 'the Hour will not be established until two big groups fight each other where upon there will be a great number of casualties on both sides and they will be following one and same religious doctrine' (implying an internal war). *Sahih Muslim* (bk 41: 6924) relates that there will be great fights between Muslims and Romans/Byzantines. Byzantines will attack Amuq and in the following battle a third of Muslims will desert, a third will die, and a third will conquer Constantinople.[44] As shall be

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[44] In this thesis, translations for *hadith* are sourced from the online collection provided by the Centre for Muslim-Jewish Engagement at the University of Southern Carolina.

outlined in the following section, this tradition has particular popularity in the contemporary period for making sense of ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

The Greater signs are more associated with the appearance of particular figures and unique events. Unlike the above signs, which are not necessarily definitive when compared with other moments in history, their appearance will be undeniable, or as Cook (2013: para. 3) notes 'it would be impossible for anybody to be ignorant of their occurrence'. In nature, perhaps the most dramatic sign is the sun rising in the west (*Sahih Muslim* bk. 41: 6931), an event which foreshadows the change in the natural order which will culminate in the final end (Q81: 14).

Two other figures who must be mentioned here are Yajuj and Majuj – mysterious figures referred to in the Qur'an as being kept behind a dam, the weakening of which is a sign of the Hour (Q18:94, 21:96-97). When released, they will devour the earth, stopped only by God.

Another of these great signs will be the appearance of *al-Dajjal*, the adversary or deceiver, commonly, but perhaps not entirely accuratley, translated as Anti-Christ.[45] While some sources cite that there will be as many as thirty *dajjal* (*Sahih al-Bukhari* vol. 9, bk. 88: 237), other sources describe a single figure. *Hadith* vividly describe his appearance and actions. Primarily, he will draw people away from the Straight Path, even performing miracles to do so. He will have a magnetic personality, an irresistible attraction (Cook, 2002: 100). He is commonly reported to be a Jew and will raise a following of thousands (Cook, 2002: 95; 99). Muslims are encouraged to retreat to safe places, including the holy cities (Cook, 2002: 109). There are descriptions of Jerusalem or alternatively Medina being besieged. While a clear chronology is not apparent, Cook (2002: 103) argues 'It would seem clear that the *Dajjal* appears in the general confusion and over-confidence following the Muslim capture of Constantinople, though, as usual, the sources are divided as to how long

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[45] Anti-Christ is a term found in Christian apocalypticism and eschatology that refers to a figure, or more rarely a system or institution, that will rise in the final days of history and persecute the followers of God, only to be defeated by Jesus in his return. As noted by Boyer (1992: 51), Anti-Christ has historically been 'an amalgam of images from Daniel, Revelation, and extrabiblical sources', perhaps most notably the figure of the beast from Rev. 13:1-18. In drawing people away from God, appearing at the end of time, and being defeated by Jesus, Anti-Christ and *al-Dajjal* share a number of significant features. However, their actions, length of reign, institutional and political power, and even physical appearance, do differ.

afterwards: either seven months or years'. The length of his reign is also unclear. In *Sahih Muslim* (bk 41: 7023) it is narrated *al-Dajjal* may stay in the world for forty days, forty months or even forty years.

Ultimately he shall be defeated by Jesus, whether by physical means or by spiritual power, who returns in glory to the Middle East. Cragg (1999: 57) notes that his appearance provides the Islamic Jesus with a powerful vindication given how he was treated in life and that he, unlike Muhammad, is particularly suited to the task having been raised to heaven and not having died an earthly death.

After defeating *al-Dajjal*, Jesus calls all people to him, and by extension, Islam. He will reign for an indeterminate length of time but up to forty years before dying a natural death (Anawati, 2012: 30). His Islamic allegiance is reinforced when he is buried next to Muhammad in Mekka, firmly establishing Jesus as an Islamic prophet, and in so doing establishing the supremacy of the Islamic understanding of history.

Isa's return is closely related to another messianic figure, the Mahdi. Believed to have originated from messianic expectations in the Second Civil War (Arjomand, 2012: para 3), the Mahdi is a non-Qur'anic figure who is associated with restoring and renewing the faith at a time of degradation. As such, the *Mahdi* must be seen as part of the tradition of *islah* (reform) and *tajdid* (renewal), and the expectation of a centennial figure the *mujaddid*, who as predicted by the Prophet, would be required to renew and maintain the moral righteousness of the community periodically (Voll, 1983: 33). The Mahdi's rule, however, is more utopian, filled with justice and righteousness, following a return to true Islam. Prosperity abounds, as illustrated in a *hadith* transmitted by al-Khudri:

> The Prophet said "There will be in my community the Mahdi, if for a short time, seven (years), otherwise nine. My community will then enjoy prosperity as they have never enjoyed. The earth will bring forth its fruit for them and will not hoard anything from them. Money will at that time be in heaps, and whenever a man will get up and say 'O Mahdi, give me', he will say 'Take'" (translated by Madelung, 2012: para 6).

As a messianic figure, the Mahdi will not only achieve great things but will be a great man, described as greater than the Caliphs and equal to the Prophet (Madelung, 2012: para 6).

While initially not a strictly end time figure, the apocalyptic dimension of the Mahdi was developed in the later *hadith* collections of al-Tabarani, al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, and al-Bayhakti and stressed that the Mahdi's rule would be in the Last Days, at the time of Isa's return (Madelung, 2012: para 17). Madelung likewise notes that the role of the Mahdi in the End Times may have been influenced by earlier *hadith* which suggested the appearance of a messiah like figure in the Last Hour. Al-Ansari and al-Khudri, for example, transmit: 'at the end of my community there will be caliph who will pour out the money without counting it' (translated by Madelung, 2012: para 2). Messianic expectation for this time is likewise precedented by the arrival of Isa and indeed, so closely related are the expectations of the Mahdi and Isa that Hasan al-Basra stressed that there would be no Mahdi but Isa son of Maryam (quoted by Arjomand, 2012: para 7).

The traditions surrounding the Mahdi are vast and varied, often giving contradictory reports on his appearance, character, and family lineage. Consistently, however, he is a victorious military leader, associated with great apocalyptic conquests, most notably the fall of Constantinople and Rome (Madelung, 2012: para 17). His rule will cover the whole world, including Jerusalem, China and India, reflecting early Muslim hopes of a complete victory over the places they currently considered impossible to conquer (Cook 2002: 166). At some point, most frequently in Jerusalem, he will meet the newly returned Jesus, and the two will lead the *ummah* in prayer. It is interesting to note that despite his deference to Jesus, Jesus will himself defer to the Mahdi, allowing him to lead the prayers, despite the fact that he himself is a prophet. Once again Jesus' allegiance to Islam is affirmed, reflecting the importance of eschatology in Islam. It is in the End of Days that all things become apparent as they should be, in this case, Jesus' true identity is revealed and Islam is triumphant.

Despite holding an ambiguous position in Sunni orthodoxy, the figure of the Mahdi has been one of the most powerful and motivational apocalyptic images

in Islam. Indeed, the significance of the messianic dimension within Islamic apocalypticism cannot be underestimated as when apocalyptic images have gained prominence in culture before the twentieth century, it is through the hope of the imminent coming of the Mahdi. As has been demonstrated by Furnish (2005), the figure of the Mahdi has been recurrent through Sunni history, inspiring movements of reform and even revolt while in Shiism the coming of the Mahdi is a central part of orthodoxy.[46]

The reign of Jesus and the Sunni Mahdi is described to an extent within the literature. It is a time of peace as wars are finished, people do good and evil people have been destroyed. Islam reigns over all the world and followers of other faiths convert (Cook, 2002: 175). It will also be a time of prosperity as there will be enough food for all, even mice, to eat (Cook, 2002: 177). In a number of ways this 'utopia' represents a yearning to return to the past where, as in the Prophet's time, Islam will be practiced purely and without corruption. However, in its vision of dominance it also presents an idea of completion and perfection. Yet it is unclear from this point when the Hour will commence but considering the passing of the Greater Signs which are said to be events of the Last Days, it is reasonable to assume it will not be too far in the future.

A specific order in which these things come to pass has not been established. Following al-Barzinji, what may be assumed is that the Mahdi will appear at a time of low moral standards and possibly natural disaster. *al-Dajjal* will also arise at this time and Isa will return to defeat him. After his reign there may yet be another decline involving the appointed moral and natural signs, followed by

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[46] The *Mahdi* is believed to be the twelfth Imam, son of the eleventh Imam, Imam Hasan Askar (d. 874) and so a descendent of the Prophet. Believed by Twelvers to have been hidden at birth, the Hidden Imam revealed to a delegate around 329/940 that he would be absolutely hidden until the end of time, when he would reveal himself again (Amir-Moezzi, 2012). The *Mahdi* returns to defeat widespread evil and in a climactic battle, is joined by great figures of the past such as previous Imams and prophets, and supernatural beings, like angels. As the *Mahdi* defeats evil, he restores justice and righteousness, something that has been absent since his occultation. In comparison with the Sunni *Mahdi*, who primarily restores the Islam of the Prophet's time, the *Mahdi* of Shi'ism is both more explicitly millenarian and apocalyptic. With the arrival of the *Mahdi* comes a new dispensation, a break with what has come before, including the *sharia* (Amanat, 2009: 41). Moreover, unlike the Sunni *Mahdi*, who may be a sign of the last days, but is not necessarily immediately before the end, the Shii *Mahdi* must 'prepare the world for the ultimate trial of the final resurrection and Last Judgment' (Amir-Moezzi, 2012). Indeed, Amanat (2009: 49) argues 'his kingdom was predicted to be ephemeral, only a prepatory stage before the cataclysmic end of the material world [and] the commencement of the Day of Judgment'.

the destruction of creation (Smith and Haddad, 1981: 67). What is clear is that Israfil will not blow the trumpet until these things have come to pass.

Apocalypse in society

The influence and presence of apocalypticism in Islamic history is ambivalent. While messianic movements and apocalyptic speculation have appeared recurrently in one form or another until the present day, apocalypticism was not particularly favoured by scholars. Indeed, drawing on Cook's (2002: 284-294) analysis of *tafsir* between 718-1882 C.E it seems many *hadith* commentators and religious scholars reluctantly acknowledged the apocalyptic material of early Islam: 'few [commentators] are particularly enthusiastic about apocalyptic; on the other hand, a few ignore it completely' (Cook, 2002: 298). Cook goes on to note in his conclusion 'ultimately Islam as a whole did not treat apocalyptic favourably' (Cook, 2002: 332).[47]

Despite the apocalyptic tone of many of the Mekkan suras, it is difficult to accurately assess how apocalyptic the first Islamic community was in nature. Among Western academics interested in apocalyptic Islam there is a trend that favours a belief that Muhammad and his community were apocalyptic. Cook (2002: 4), for example, raises the argument the Prophet was 'impelled by a powerful belief in the proximity of the Last Day' and that 'many early Muslims believed the End would come in their own lifetimes'. The apocalyptic atmosphere into which Islam emerged[48], combined with the apocalyptic flavour of the Qur'an makes this a possibility, but by no means certain. While some Qur'anic verses appear to be apocalyptic, ultimately we cannot know how the Qur'an was heard by its first listeners. The nearness of the Hour may be read less temporarily if seen in relation to human mortality. Individual death, like the Hour, will be unexpected, and in the timescale of creation, closer than we might like to think, encouraging an attitude of general preparedness.

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[47] Why this might be requires further research. There is some force in the argument that apocalyptic imagery, by its nature, undermines the stability of the current order, and as such a suspicion of it by religious authorities is understandable (Cook, 2002: 302). Yet, as noted by McGinn (1979), apocalypse can and has been utilised by Christian religious authorities to secure self image and position. While not entirely absent in Islamic history (see Yücesoy, 2009) current scholarship does not suggest a similar tactic or indeed interest in Islam.

[48] Cook (2002: 4-5) for example, argues 'the time in which Islam arose was one of great apocalyptic expectations on the part of all religious groups in the Middle East' due in part to ongoing conflict between the Byzantine and Persian Empires. As Cook describes 'expectations and prophecies were in the air, along with a general air of uncertainty after centuries of continuity'.

Moreover, it is clear the majority of apocalyptic literature in both the form of *hadith* and messianic expectations entered Islam following the Prophet's death (Arjomand, 2003; Cook, 2002). In particular, Arjomand (2003: 387) argues it is from the Second Civil War that apocalypticism began to gain a significant influence in early Islamic history, and it is in this context the tremendously important figure of the Mahdi first appears. He further argues that the apocalyptic connotations of the Mahdi were augmented in the wake of al-Mukhtar's failed rebellion under the Kasaniyya, a sect who 'became the major bearer of radical apocalypticism' and who 'hoped for a revolution (*dawla*) that would culminate in the Resurrection before the Hour' (Arjomand, 2003: 389), stressing a more catastrophic and immediate end than is typically seen.

Apocalyptic imagery appears to have been maintained into the Abbasid caliphate. Yücesoy (2009), for example, argues that the messianic expectations of this time are reflected in that the Abbasid leaders deliberately adopted the image of divinely appointed rulers who would last until Isa's return. Further, the later civil wars, as well as other elements, were interpreted as apocalyptic events. He thus argues the prophecies that circulated in this time demonstrated a sense of pessimism and need for change in the political spheres.

One of the earliest Sunni Mahdi movements beyond this early period was begun by Ibn Turmart (1080-c.1128) in the early twelfth century (Furnish, 2005). Ibn Tumart's Mahdi movement bears a number of resemblances with modern reform movements. This may be seen most notably in his attempt to restore Islam to its pristine origin, removing practices he saw as un-Islamic, such as the playing of music and men and women mixing in public. Ibn Tumart, like other later Mahdis revoked earlier sources of interpretation and sought a return to the Qur'an and *hadith*, claiming a new interpretive authority (Furnish, 2005: 37). While Ibn Tumart was motivated by dissatisfaction with the Muslim community he also considered Islam to be under assault from outside forces such as Crusaders and Shiites, through the Fatimids (Furnish, 2005: 38).

That apocalypse might provide a form of protest is revealed in Cook's (2002) study of apocalyptic prophetic traditions. Notably, Cook's apocalypticists were concerned with the moral state of their time, individually, socially, and politically. This moral laxity pointed to the nearness of the Judgement, but more

importantly the arrival of the Mahdi who would address this problem. By criticising the current order, and placing it in an end time scenario which would indicate the arrival of a messiah figure, these apocalyptic writers were able to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the religious and civil authorities for their lack of action. Indeed, Cook (2002: 235) argues 'the call for just government', that is the government of the Mahdi, 'was and is today, the hallmark of every revolutionary apocalyptic and messianic group'.

The extent to which groups or individuals have experienced a strong, immediate expectation of the end and whether this had an influence on Islamic history is unclear. Cook argues the existence of apocalyptic *hadith* is indicative of apocalyptic movements, although who the writers were is lost. This, however, is supposition. There are a few examples of writers who extrapolated upon *hadith* to provide an apocalyptic narrative, such as Ibn Kathir (c.1300-1373), al-Qurtubi (1214-1273), Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1446-1505) and al-Barzanji (1630-1691). While these apocalypses may have been written in response to contemporary events and even imply their meaning, they did not influence or inspire apocalyptic movements and political action (Filiu, 2011: 48) and in al-Barzanji's case may have been written to actively dampen apocalyptic expectation (Cook, 2007: 277).

Culturally there are also interesting examples of apocalyptic outlooks such as caliph al-Wathiq (reg. 842-847) who ordered an expedition to the Caspian Gate to check the wall holding Gog and Magog back was not broken, as he was led to believe by his dreams (Arjomand, 2003: 403) and rumours *al-Dajjal* had been born among the Jews in seventeenth century Lebanon, themselves experiencing considerable messianic expectation, resulted in the murder of several Jewish children (Cook, 2007: 274).

It is in messianic movements, however, particularly those driven by Sufi orders where the shaykhs were variously considered to be the Mahdi or his forerunner that Islamic apocalyptic activity has been most focussed up until the twentieth century, and these are therefore a major area to examine to uncover Sufi responses to the idea of the end of the world and Islam's apocalyptic heritage.

The apocalypse in Sufism

The most frequently cited examples of apocalypticism in Sunni history are the Mahdi movements. As will be outlined subsequently, these movements also provide insight into the most common relationship between Sufism and end time imagery. Indeed, outside of these movements interest in apocalyptic imagery, at least among Sunni Sufis, seems unusual. It is not, however, entirely absent. This section outlines two examples of spiritual approaches to apocalypse in Sufi history before moving to discuss the far more widespread and well known Sufi messianic movements.

One of the most prominent Sufi explorations of the end of time comes from Ibn Arabi (1165-1240). Ibn Arabi's apocalyptic vision is outlined in his Mekkan Revelations (*al-futuhat al-makkiyya*), which provides a detailed account of the events preceding the Day of Judgement. Filiu (2011: 32) notes that Ibn Arabi follows in the traditional expectation of the Mahdi's appearance when he reveals that the Mahdi will appear in Mekka. He will be joined by 'seventy thousand Muslims, all descended from Isaac' and they will besiege Constantinople and defeat the occupiers without a battle by calling '*Allah akbar*'. Eighteen days later the Anti-Christ will appear from Khurasan, and will be joined by Turks and Jews who will again number seventy thousand.

Following the Anti-Christ's appearance will be a 'Great Battle' and a subsequent 'Feast' on the plane of Acre. Filiu (2011: 33) notes this as a new dimension to the apocalyptic narrative tradition, where in previous accounts the fall of Constantinople will be the place of devastation for the army of the Mahdi. Interestingly, Filiu argues this new emphasis on a battle at Acre is 'almost certainly associated with recent memoires of the Crusades', where the city of Akka 'stood as the last emblem of Christian power in the East', a symbol of Muslim defeat and subjugation. The significance of this is that it demonstrates both that the apocalyptic narrative in Islam can be continuously modified, particularly by those with authority to make sense of difficult events, and that for Ibn Arabi, as with other Muslim apocalyptic writers, the apocalyptic events of Islamic tradition allowed for the hope of things to be put right.

This is also reflected in the Mahdi's dominance over the *ulama*, who will have no choice but to reluctantly submit to him due to his power but who nonetheless

'in their heart of hearts' 'will be convinced the Mahdi is in error' (Filiu, 2009: 33), providing a resolution for Ibn Arabi's own frustration with religious authorities. The Mahdi's reign will last for nine years after Jesus returns to Damascus and slays the Anti-Christ. While Ibn Arabi follows the tradition of the Mahdi's appearance and attributes as a political and military leader, he also diverges from this traditional outline (Saritoprak, 2002: 660). Ibn Arabi's Mahdi is infallible in his reasoning (and thus superior to the jurists) and is clearly divinely guided. He is a powerful spiritual person, unusual in his faith and sincerity (Saritoprak, 2002: 659), very much a saint-like person. Importantly, his rule will be a time of greatness for humanity, not because of his military and political dominance but because he represents the mercy of God to humanity (like the Prophet Muhammad) and brings a 'period of peace and tranquility within the hearts of believers' at this time (Saritoprak, 2002: 660). Ibn Arabi also talks about the Mahdi's helpers and advisors who would aid in the transformation of the world through their own spiritual abilities (Morris, 2001: 6).

Ibn Arabi's apocalypse therefore contains a number of interesting elements. Firstly, when read *prima facie*, it appears Ibn Arabi does not see apocalyptic traditions as purely symbolic, but rather events that will come to pass. Secondly, his emphasis on the spiritual qualities of the Mahdi and a transformation of the world provides a first glimpse into an alternative Sufi-mystical vision of the future. Thirdly, it demonstrates that the apocalypse can be used to establish a hope that wrongs will be righted and truth revealed, and perhaps if Filiu is to be believed, make sense of current events. Finally, Ibn Arabi's apocalypse is not dominated by doom and warning. His apocalypse is one of hope, not fear.

Interestingly, Morris argues that the Mahdi and his advisors have an additional message from Ibn Arabi. While the Mahdi is 'rightly guided' and fully spiritually awoken, his spiritual qualities are also demonstrated in 'the lives and teachings of many of the prophets and saints', and are not unique to particular future historical figures (Morris, 2001: 15). As such, the onus is on all to try to be a *Mahdi*, a rightly guided one who is a 'living guide and model (the literal meaning of *imam al waqt and al-imam al-mahdi*) for all those with whom we interact' (Morris, 2001: 8).

That the apocalypse could have an additional spiritual meaning is also present in Najm al-Din Razi's (1177-1256) writings. Razi stressed that both Jesus and the Anti-Christ will appear in the future, and will follow their traditional expectations: the Anti-Christ 'creates havoc and wreaks corruption and claims divinity' before Jesus slays him and establishes a 'reign of prosperity, justice and equality' (Nurbakhsh, 1983: 63). Razi also explains there is an additional spiritual truth to these teachings. The Anti-Christ is like the ego as, for example, 'whatever the Anti-Christ presents as heaven is actually hell and what he presents as hell is really heaven; by the same token, the ego presents carnal passions and pleasures as paradisiacal, though they are actually informal, and it presents one's spiritual devotion and worship as hellish though they are really heavenly in nature' (Nurbakhsh, 1983: 63).

However, like the Anti-Christ, the ego can by slain by harnessing the attributes of Jesus in the individual spiritual life. That both interpretations can be true is made possible by a mystical understanding of reality, as Razi wants his students to: 'be aware that all in the realm of form is a reflection of that which is in the realm of sprit, and all that is in the realm of form and spirit is represented in man'. Within the Haqqaniyya the question of just how to interpret Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism has particular potency, and indeed some *murids* promote an interpretation very much like Razi's, as will be discussed subsequently.

However, the most notable examples of Sunni apocalypticism are seen in the Mahdi movements.[49] One of the earliest Sufi Mahdi movements was focussed around Sayyid Muhammad (b. 1443) better known as the Mahdi of Jaunpur. A member of the Chishtiyya, Jaunpuri declared himself to be the Mahdi in 1495/900. Like Ibn Tumart, Jaunpuri's movement abrogated earlier interpretation and invoked a return to the Qur'an and *hadith*, with the Mahdi having particular interpretive power. He called for 'the establishment of a

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[49] There have been a number of fascinating Sufi Mahdi claims throughout the Islamic traditions, particularly in Shiism, and unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this thesis to outline them all. One particularly complex, esoteric and messianic movement was seen in the Hurufiyya movement of fourteenth century Iran. Believing the world to be of hidden truths, Fazlallah Astarabadi (1340-1394) and his followers believed the cosmic plan had finally come to fruition in his person. As Bashir (2002: 183) outlines 'those living in the age could choose either to gain paradise by accepting Fazallah's message, or reject him and ready themselves for the tortures of hell. The battle between good and evil played on the grand tableau of cosmic history had realised its zenith and all were to prepare themselves for its conclusion'. For a slightly later millennial movement see Bashir (2003).

Muslim community modelled on the example of Muhammad' and for Muslims to prepare for the millennium, which would dawn in 1591(Furnish, 2011: 39).

Jaunpuri's interest in the millennium should not be interpreted as symptomatic of a broad millennial interest. Rather, within Mahdi expectations, the century is equally seen to be significant, as it is every one hundred years that a renewer of the faith may be given to the community (Amanat, 2009: 23). The approach of the Islamic year 1300 (1882-3) was particularly significant for Islamic apocalyptic expectations, in part driven by the shock of European colonialism, complemented by signs of the hour such as natural disasters and unbelief (Sirriyeh, 1999: 34). Manifestations of apocalyptic expectation, or at least interest, may be seen in the publication of end time *hadith* collections and books about signs of the Hour (Saritoprak, 2002: 667). In messianic movements examples of this reaction to colonialism may be seen in the Mahdi movement of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (b. 1786) in India, a Naqshbandi, who again sought to reform Islam and save it from 'outside' influences, both Islamic and non-Islamic. Interestingly, it was his followers who claimed Barelwi to by the Mahdi, most notably after his disappearance, who like the Shi'i theology of the Mahdi, would return from a period of occulation (Funish, 2011: 43).

Messianic expectation also appears to have been considerable in Africa. In Algeria there were a number of 'near Mahdist rebellions in the late nineteenth century triggered by colonial concerns' (Furnish, 2011: 45). In Libya, Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sanusi of the Sanusiyya sought a renewal of Islam 'motivated by European colonialism' with a subtle messianic dimension as al-Sanusi's son was considered to be the Mahdi in private (Amanat, 2009: 44).

Moreover, the jihad of Uthman dan Fodio (1754-1871), a Sufi of the Qadiriyya in Nigeria, against British colonialism raised messianic expectations to the extent dan Fodio had to counter Mahdi claims, while still encouraging a utopic hope by stating, 'I am not the Mahdi, though it is his garment that I wear. I am the clouds that precede the awaited Mahdi, and it is for this that I am associated with him' (Choueiri, 1997: 11-12). Perhaps the most notable example of a nineteenth century Mahdi movement, however, is seen in Muhammad b. Abd Allah (1844-1885), a Sudanese Sufi who revealed himself to be the Mahdi in 1881.

As with previous Mahdi movements, al-Mahdi appears to have been motivated both by internal concerns and external political pressure. In this case this external pressure was colonial, but colonisation by the Turks and Egyptians (Furnish, 2011: 46). With the Islamic fourteenth century dawning, al-Mahdi thus sought to remove their presence from Sudan, succeeding though a revolt culminating in 1885, and establishing his own theocratic state (Esposito, 1998: 41).

Again, a strong reformist dimension was present in al-Mahdi's campaign. As Sirriyeh (1999: 35) explains, he 'perceived the age as one of evil and injustice, but that the time had come for this to end with a return to the model of the original Islamic state of the Prophet'. As such, he sought to remove anything he saw as deviating from this ideal and corrupting Islam, including traditional Sudanese practices and 'worked to accomplish a standardization and a unification of the Islamic community' (Voll, 1979: 156, 157). Indeed, so significant was this return to origin that Amanat (2009: 47) notes 'symbolic re-enactment of early Islamic history held sway over much of al-Mahdi's actions'.

In contrast to other reform movements, most notably Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, al-Mahdi was a Sufi based in the Sammaniyya *tariqa*, and this background must be seen as significant to his claims. Most notably, as has been convincingly argued by Layish (2007), the Sufi tradition of visionary experience of Muhammad gave al-Mahdi the authoritative structure to remove the four law schools and place himself as the sole interpreter of the law, through his unique position and visionary experiences, emphasising his messianic character. Indeed, it was visions of Muhammad that gave al-Mahdi the permission to begin his mission of restoring Islam and removing corruption (Amanat, 2009: 46). The apocalyptic dimension of al-Mahdi is also evident beyond his title. Amanat argues 'he drew upon Islamic apocalyptic prophecies as well as Sufi prognostications (such as Ibn Arabi's) to justify his own prophetic "signs", both physical and behavioural, which compared with those of the Prophet of Islam' (Amanat, 2009: 46).

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from this brief examination of Sufism and apocalypse. Firstly, it can be concluded that Sufism and an interest in Islamic apocalyptic events has a historical precedence in both

literal and symbolic interpretations, most frequently through an interest in the Mahdi. Secondly, Sufi interest in the apocalypse appears to rise out of a sense of crisis and protest, whether caused by political external pressure such as colonialism or internal dissatisfaction. For those who have a developed sense of sainthood and for whom the nature of the mystical knowledge makes the concept of the Mahdi possible, rallying around a messianic figure provides a natural vehicle for seeking a better future. However, the utopia that historical Mahdis aim to bring is a restoration of the Golden Past, rather than a new mode of history. As Voll (1979: 153) explains, 'the Sunni Mahdi's function is to support and restore the *sunna* of the Prophet, not to transcend or destroy it', making Sunni Mahdi movements a form of reform, or as Voll argues in the case of the Sudanese Mahdi, a form of fundamentalism.

Finally, a sense of apocalypse, millenarian catastrophe or the consequences of a truly imminent end being close are not emphasised. Furnish (2011: 7) notes this point when he finds 'Anyone who has ever declared himself the Mahdi would not have been thinking in such [apocalyptic] terms, or even their twelfth-, sixteenth-, or nineteenth-century equivalent; a Mahdi wants, not to usher in the end of the world, but to fix the world's problems on Islamic terms'. These Mahdis may well have expected apocalyptic violence in the future, but did not seem concerned with actively initiating it immediately. This lack of catastrophe and a utopia that is not particularly radical makes these apocalyptic movements difficult to describe as millenarian (although there are certainly elements of this) or fit within Wojcik's apocalyptic typology. This was to change in the contemporary period.

Contemporary apocalypse

The twentieth century saw a flurry of apocalyptic activity. Within Islam, there was a notable appearance of a Mahdi, Muhammad b. Abd Allah al-Qahtani, who in comparison to previous contenders was not Sufi. The movement was led by Juhayman al-Utaybi, al-Qahtani's brother in law and culminated in a siege of the Great Mosque in Medina in 1979. A Mahdi movement in the twentieth century is, however, extremely unusual. In comparison to past centuries, there have been notably few messianic movements. Indeed, even within jihadist movements there is little in the way of messianic or millenarian

ideology/symbology (Filiu, 2011: 192). This does not mean, however, that apocalyptic speculation is absent in twentieth century or twenty-first century Islam. Rather, it is most notably present in popular literature which gained in popularity in the Middle East during the 1980s, with title such as *The Anti-Christ* (Ayyub, 1987), *The End of the Jews* (Arif, 1990) and *Beware: The Anti-Christ has Invaded the World from the Bermuda Triangle* (Dawud, 1991).

Cook notes there are three categories of contemporary Arab apocalyptic writings. First are publications by the conservatives, the *ulama*, who have traditionally controlled interpretation of the classical sources, and who Cook identifies as making no effort to relate events currently taking place to those in the depicted traditions, and who seek to dampen apocalyptic expectation (Cook, 2005: 15).

Next are the radical school, who appear to make the most effort in contstructing apocalyptic narratives to convince their readership of the nearness of the End Times. Cook identifies this group's writings as largely hybrid in nature, drawing not just from Muslim sources of Qur'an and *hadith* but Christian sacred texts (especially the books of Revelation, Ezekiel and Daniel) as well as Western esoteric and conspiracy traditions.

Finally are the neo-conservatives who formed in a critical response to the radical school's use of non-Islamic texts. Instead, they seek to use primarily Islamic sources and in doing so, seek to give apocalyptic beliefs more respectability (Cook, 2005: 18). It is these last two categories who demonstrate the most interesting developments in Muslim apocalyptic expectation as these titles represent a departure from previous Muslim literature in their form in two significant ways.

Firstly, they are not fragments of *hadith* or *hadith* commentary. Rather, they demonstrate a deliberate attempt to make a coherent and readable apocalyptic narrative that not only explains what is to come, but makes sense of current events in an apocalyptic framework.[50] In this way, this new genre of Muslim apocalyptic literature more closely resembles *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Lindsey, 1970) and similar titles. This is significant as the second notable

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[50] This does not mean, however, that there is a consistent narrative among these writers. While we can observe broad trends, ultimately, each writer presents a different apocalyptic narrative.

difference is in from the 'radical school' that those writers draw on many sources to give their apocalyptic interpretations meaning including Biblical apocalyptic scripture (most often Ezekiel, Daniel and Revelation), Nostradamus, and the Western esoteric tradition (Filiu, 2011: 94).

Given the diversity of sources that are drawn upon, and the globalised society, it is of no surprise that there has been a change in emphasis in comparison to classical accounts. While classical accounts were primarily collected with focus on the Mahdi, contemporary Arab literature is far more weighted towards discussions of the Anti-Christ and Gog and Magog (Cook, 2002: 27). These figures are thus representative of two new emphases: an emphasis on conspiracy and, in comparison to the classical traditions, a far greater emphasis on wide spread global catastrophic destruction. That is, an apocalypse that is truly apocalyptic to the Western reader in the broad sense of the word.

Conspiracy is an overwhelming element of modern Arab apocalyptic and consists of three interrelated foes, who form the enemies of Islam: Jews, America, and the Anti-Christ. At the heart of this conspiracy is a firm conviction that the world is controlled, at all levels, by Jews. European leaders, American presidents, the UN, in short, all non-Muslim world agencies and powers are under the control and influence of this Jewish elite (Filiu, 2011: 123). Indeed, Cook (2005: 71) observes 'the spread of domination of the world by political Zionism is perhaps the cornerstone of the modern Muslim apocalyptic scenario'. While there is a certain amount of hostility towards Jews in the classical sources the formation of a Jewish conspiracy is adapted from the Western tradition. Indeed, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, is used as a legitimate source of authority.[51]

The depth of this anti-Semitism is large. Jews are 'doomed by God', behind all tragedies in the world, and at the final end will be removed from the world without mercy (Cook, 2005: 26) as there can be no peace so long as they exist. Such apocalypses therefore represent feelings of deep frustration with the

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[51] *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (1903) is an anti-Semitic text that claims to present lectures of a hidden Jewish government detailing their plans to take over the world, establishing a world government. Despite being now acknowledged as a Russian forgery the text has been the cornerstone of modern anti-Semitic conspiracy theory and is a classic example of New World Order conspiracy. A later and particularly influential edition was explicitly eschatological in nature and linked the Elders of Zion with the Anti-Christ (Partridge, 2005: 322).

existence of Israel and a fantasy exercise in how it will be removed (Cook, 2005: 22).

A second enemy closely related to the Jews for contemporary apocalypticists is America. As above, the anti-semitic conspiracy is present here, where Jews are the ones in control, who use the might and power of the nation to bring devastation on the Muslim world. Again, apocalyptic authorities reveal their deep dissatisfaction with their current situation in the fantasies of seeing America defeated, humiliated and destroyed though their own nuclear technology backfiring and falling victim to massive natural disasters (Cook, 2005: 141).

The absolute evil of both the Jews and America is seen ultimately in their willing submission to the Anti-Christ. The Anti-Christ, which while variously interpreted as a group, tendency, country, or Zionism in general, but most likely a person (Cook, 2005: 162), sits atop the Zionist conspiracy, manipulating world events to his own ends, which inevitably involve persecution of the Muslim world. He, through the Jews, and his tools America and Europe, is ultimately responsible for Muslim suffering in the world. He is currently hidden but will reveal himself after the Mahdi takes Jerusalem. Following the classical tradition he will be defeated when Jesus returns and destroys him, along with what remains of the Jewish people.

Contemporary Arab apocalypticists also place an additional emphasis on the Biblical concept of Armageddon, frequently equating it with the Amuq tradition and the Great Battle. Most frequently, catastrophic battles happen following the appearance of the Mahdi, with current wars leading to this point. Dawud, for example, describes how the Mahdi will head for Jerusalem. The West's nuclear weapons will be fired but will not harm Muslims. They will, however, destroy Western fleets in the Mediterranean and kill all Jews in neighbouring Jerusalem (Cook, 2005: 140). As was mentioned above, some writers predict that America too will be subject to nuclear warfare. Indeed, as the Anti-Christ mobilises his forces against the Mahdi there will be widespread devastation, with Dawud

predicting most of the world's population will be dead by the Mahdi's final victory, due to the actions of the Anti-Christ.[52]

This emphasis on catastrophic destruction into a new world, ruled by the Mahdi, makes contemporary apocalyptic more millenarian than in the classical period. Much like contemporary Christian apocalyptic literature, the utopia of the Mahdi is curiously ill-defined. Following the classical tradition it will be a time of peace, justice and plenty, a golden age. In a reversal of fortune, the Middle East will be the world centre, with Europeans coming to be with the Mahdi (Cook, 2005: 146). The Middle East will be the centre of prosperity, fully equipped with the West's technology, which the Mahdi gained dominion over. The West, however, will be in ruins. Islam and Muslims are prosperous, again in their rightful place.

These apocalypses reveal much about the hopes, fears, and psychology of their writers. Perhaps most arguably they feel alienated from the modern world and a dissonance with how the world is and how they expect it to be (Cook, 2005: 222). Moreover, the emphasis placed on the hope for the Mahdi and restoration of a perceived Golden Age of Islam reveals a deep dissatisfaction with current Muslim, or at least Arab, authority. That such literature began to appear in the 1970s, when disillusionment with secular governments began to grow and political Islam began to rise, may be significant (Cook, 2005: 13).

Their apocalypses also provide explanations for the state of the world, explaining the shift towards the Anti-Christ as he most easily provides a gateway to conspiracy which provides meaning to difficult times. For some writers, while in general reluctant to set an exact date (Cook, 2005: 85), many events demonstrate that we are living in events foretold. In addition to the evident worldwide Zionist conspiracy and the moral decline of society, the general sense of the end is supported by political events, where making peace with 'Byzantines' (seen today in various treaties between America and Arab Nations) is a sign of the end for Jamal al-Din, or for Abdallah the war in Kuwait

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[52] Similar predictions of the *Mahdi* appearing before Armageddon are found in the writings of Fahd Salim (Cook, 2005: 127) and Amin Gamaleddin (Filiu, 2011: 111). However, the *Mahdi* is by no means always present. Said Ayyub, for example, depticts a pervasive conspiracy in which the Anti-Christ, in co-operation with the Jews, is planning Armageddon to wipe out the Muslim world. The war of Armageddon will be hugely destructive, and will be fought by Muslims against the armies of the Anti-Christ, which include Jews and Christians. Ultimately, Muslims will be completely victorious (Filiu, 2011: 86-89).

or for Dawud, the Iran-Iraq war and the gathering of Jews in Israel (Cook, 2005: 91; 57; 55).

The shift towards absolute global catastrophic violence may also be accounted for in a number of ways. It is more prominent in the Christian apocalyptic tradition sources Arab apocalypticists are reading. Within the sources of Islam, wars and large scale destruction are also present in the *hadith* narratives. For Muslims living in the nuclear age, for whom global destruction is a very real and dangerous possibility, it is perhaps natural to extrapolate on these battles to make them global. Moreover, by assuming the West's weapons will be ineffective and even self destructive, apocalyptic writers address their own nuclear anxieties but perhaps more importantly, through a fantasy of violence, see their enemies ultimately destroyed, restoring balance and power, and providing retribution.

While there has been an increase in the type of apocalyptic literature described above, as well as new publications of the classical traditions, suggesting a popular demand, the extent to which these beliefs have any prominence in popular religiosity is unclear. As was noted above, the apocalyptic imagery of Islam does not appear to have entered radical political Islam in any significant way. In English, the internet reveals many websites and YouTube channels outlining signs of the end, or engaging in apocalyptic debate, and there are a few translations of popular apocalyptic books such as *The Anti-Christ* (Thomson, 1997) now available. However, it is difficult to assess how truly widespread interest in these ideas is without fieldwork and moreover, when faced with questions about signs of the end, religious authorities both online and off the internet commonly stress caution in pursuing this area, citing that only God truly knows when the end will come.

Before concluding this chapter it is worth noting millennial imagery has been used in new Western Sufi movements. In her study of Beshara, Taji-Farouki (2007: 116) noted the millennial flavour characteristic of many New Religious Movements that developed in the spiritual atmosphere of the Sixties. As she explains of Beshara's hope for the Second Coming of Christ, 'the anticipated new cycle, the new age, is one motivated by the Second Coming, while the transition represents the time of preparation that will make this possible'.

Unusually for Muslim apocalypticism but not for many Sixties spiritualities, this interest in the End is not apocalyptic nor particularly interested in classical apocalyptic figures such as the Mahdi. Rather, to use Wessinger's (1997) term, it appears to be an example of progressive millennialism in which humanity fulfils its spiritual potential (Taji-Farouki, 2007: 117, 122). As we will see, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, while likewise demonstrating some Western New Age characteristics, is radically different.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that there is a rich apocalyptic tradition based in the Qur'an and *hadith* that Muslims can draw on. Before the twentieth century apocalyptic imagery was expressed in the form of *hadith* collections, which more rarely were expressed as apocalyptic narratives. In society, apocalypse had its biggest presence in Sufi Mahdi movements, which emphasised a desire for justice and reform, and were triggered by internal and external pressures. While based in apocalyptic concepts, a sense of immediate catastrophic destruction was not strong. In the contemporary period, there is more pronounced truly apocalyptic expectation, present primarily in popular literature. These writings are violent and millenarian, steeped in conspiracy and are political in that they seek the downfall of external enemies, primarily Israel and America. However, the extent to which apocalypse has any significant popular platform is unclear.

Therefore, while Shaykh Nazim is not an anomaly either as a Muslim or a Sufi in taking an interest in the end of the world, the extent of his interest, manner of expression, and position as well known religious authority at this time makes him quite unusual, as is acknowledged even within the *tariqa*. Damrel (2006: 121) likewise observes this point, arguing 'the order's consistent interest in the end of this world, the Mahdi, and the Signs of the Hour is exceptional among Sunni mystical orders', as does Geaves (2001: 229) who finds 'It is not in any way exceptional for a tradition Muslim, particularly when rooted in the Sufi tradition, to hold eschatological beliefs involving the Mahdi, Jesus and *al-Dajjal* in conflict before the last day...however, in [Geaves's] experience it is unusual for Sufi shaykhs or other Muslim leaders to be as specific as Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani'.

This chapter thus raises a number of questions. Firstly, and to be addressed in the next chapter, is in what ways Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic diverges and converges with the broad trends observed above. Following this, it must be asked why any differences exist and whether this can help address one of the primary research questions of this thesis – can Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic vision be accounted for? Before these questions can be answered, however, an analysis of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic teachings must be given, including how they might be categorised.

Chapter Two: A Sufi Vision of the End of Time

Introduction

This chapter outlines Shaykh Nazim's basic end time scenario and in keeping with the first part of research question one, discusses what is revealed about his apocalypse in terms of its imminence (and how this is maintained), its literal yet miraculous nature, and its catastrophic focus. In keeping with the phenomenological comparative approach of this thesis and research question two, this analysis takes place with reference to patterns of apocalypse found in non-Muslim apocalyptic movements. As this analysis will discuss how time is perceived in terms of imminence of the end and the nature of apocalypse in the terrestrial world, it will also address the 'time' dimension suggested in the dimensional approach to apocalypticism. Following this, some initial comparisons are drawn with the trends noted in the previous chapter.

This chapter begins, however, with a brief outline of the history of the Naqshbandiyya, followed by Shaykh Nazim's biography and some observations on the characteristics and activities of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in the contemporary period, with particular stress on those relevant to activities in the West.

The Naqshbandiyya *tariqa*

The Haqqaniyya are a modern branch of the Naqshbandiyya, a large and influential *tariqa* with a presence throughout the world. Unlike the majority of *tariqas*, who trace their spiritual lineage (*silsila,* or 'golden chain'*)* back to Ali, the Naqshbandiyya are distinctive as they trace their lineage to Abu Bakr. Algar (1976: 129) notes that, the golden chain began when the Prophet and Abu Bakr hid in a cave during the *hijra*. The Prophet shared with Abu Bakr the silent *zikr*, a distinguishing aspect of Naqshbandi practice that has been passed from all subsequent masters to pupils. Algar (1990: 11) further notes that the Naqshbandiyya have seen the Qur'anic *ayat* 9:40 as alluding to this in its statement 'then God sent down his peace upon him'. Here, Algar argues, peace refers to the silent *zikr*, and so a divinely bestowed method of attaining God's presence. Indeed shaykhs, who are in direct receipt of this moment, remain of central importance as paths to the divine to this day in the *tariqa*.

The Naqshbandiyya note a number of significant figures in their *silsila*, including Bayazid Bistami (804-874) and Yusuf Hamandi (1048-1140), who developed a close relationship with Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Gilani (1078-1166), the influential figure of the Qadiriyya (Algar, 1990: 13). The Naqshbandiyya began to cement their distinct spiritual approach under the guidance of Abdu'l-Khaliq Ghujduwani (d. 1220) who not only maintained a stress on silent *zikr* but also developed eight principles that were necessary for journeying towards the divine presence.[53]

It is not easy to define when the Naqshbandiyya became definitively formed, but a figure of tremendous importance in this process is Baha ad-Din al-Naqshband (1318-1389). Naqshband transformed Ghujduwani's eight principles into three: '*wuquf zamani,* i.e. the 'temporal control' of the spiritual state; *wuquf adadi*, this being the 'numerical control' of the times the divine name is silently repeated with the aim of preventing the intrusion of distracting thoughts; and *wuquf qalbi*, 'stoppage of the heart', i.e. its spiritual control with the aim of directing it entirely towards consciousness of God' (Abun-Nasr, 2007: 115). So influential was he that he gave the order its name, meaning 'he who fixes in the heart the impress of the divine name' (Algar, 1990: 17).

Following the spread of Naqshband's followers and pupils, the Naqshbandiyya continued to rise and dominate Central Asia under the guidance Ubaydallah Ahrar (1404-1490). While nonetheless maintaining the mystical integrity of the *tariqa*, Ahrar argued that service to the world must come through influencing those with power. Indeed, Schimmel (1975: 386) makes the interesting point that 'the Naqshandiyya...has always been interested in politics, regarding the education of the ruling classes as absolutely incumbent upon them'. In many ways, the Naqshbandiyya-Haqqaniyya are unchanged in this attitude, regarding reaching current world leaders and their spiritual journeys as just as important as reaching ordinary men and women. It is important to note, however, this interest does not extend to direct political action, but is rather concerned more with guidance (Atay, 1994: 222).

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[53] Schimmel (1975: 364) translates these as 1) *hush dar dam,* 'awareness in breathing'; 2) *nazar bar qada*, 'watching over one's steps'; 3) *safar dar watan,* 'internal mystical journey'; 4) *khalwat dar anjuman*, 'solitude in the crowd'; 5) *yad kard,* 'recollection'; 6) *baz gard,* 'restraining one's thoughts'; 7) *nigah dasht,* 'to watch one's thought'; 8) *yad dasht,* 'concentration upon God'.

Equally significant was Ahrar's insistence on the supremacy of the *shari'a* (Algar, 1990:20), something that when combined with the path of sobriety and distrust of mystical ecstatic states has given the Naqshbaniyya a distinctive presence that continues into the current period. Indeed, both Abun-Nasr (2007: 115) and Algar (1990: 21) make the point that the stress on sobriety and strict adherence to the *sunna* has enabled the Naqshbandiyya to gain a particular position in many Islamic societies by recruiting the *ulama* and by acting as establishments of religious learning and orthodoxy.

In addition to Central Asia, the Naqshbandiyya also gained influence in India, the Ottoman empire, and China, as well as more limited parts of the Middle East (Abun-Nasr, 2007: 118). Another influential figure was was Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi al-Mujaddid (1563-1624), whose following extended to the Moghul court and beyond. Like his forbearers, Sirhindi stressed sobriety and the supremacy of the *shari'a* as being central to the spiritual life, arguing that those who pursue mystical states are 'short-sighted', and 'caught up in the prison of fancy and imagination...deprived of the perfections of the *shari'a*' (translated by Agar, 1990: 28). He was considered by his followers to be a *mujaddid*, a renewer of Islam in its second millennium, and such was his image as a reviver that his title came to define a branch of the Naqshbanidyya, the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi, a branch still in existence today (Algar, 1976: 143).

A final figure worth mentioning before the exploration of Shaykh Nazim is Shaykh Khalid Naqshbandi (1776-1826) who gave the epithet Khalidiyya to the *tariqa*. He is a figure of such significance that Algar (1990: 34) argues 'contemporary adherents of the Naqshbandiyya [of which the Haqqaniyya are included] attribute their general pre-eminence among the existing Sufi orders to the still inexhausted *baraka* of Maulana Khalid'. Accounts of Shaykh Khalid typically begin by recounting the start of his spiritual journey. While on *hajj* in 1805, Shaykh Khalid met a man with his back to the Ka'ba. Despite silently reproaching him the man understood Khalid's thoughts and said 'why do you object? Do you not know that the worth of God's servant is greater than that of the Ka'ba? It is more fitting that my face should be turned toward you'. Understanding that the man was a *wali*, Shaykh Khalid repented and asked to be taken as a *murid*. The man declined and instead sent him to find his destined teacher in India, Shaykh Ghulam (Algar, 1990: 35).

After returning to Kurdistan Shaykh Khalid attracted a large following which would expand to many thousands of adherents across Anatolia, the Middle East, and Kurdistan (Foley, 2008: 530), and included in their numbers political leaders such as the Ottoman ruler Mahmud II. Like Ahrar, Shaykh Khalid stressed the importance of the *shari'a* in Muslim society and sought to uphold the Ottoman Empire as its vehicle (Algar, 1990: 35). Foley (2008: 532-535, 538) argues that it is through establishment of his *wali* status that he was able to gain and sustain his influence, even to this day. He became a rallying point, a symbol that could be used to revitalise the Islamic community. He provided a solution to the anxieties of the age, drawing on familiar symbols, and built on his appeal by using different aspects of his identity to appeal to different people. In this way, there are a number of striking similarities between Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Khalid, and it would be interesting to pursue a detailed comparison in another work.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya

Shaykh Daghestani

Shaykh Nazim's branch of the Naqshbandiyya is Khalidi (Habibis, 1985: 72), tracing its lineage to Shaykh Khalid and from him, Shaykh Sirhindi (Draper, 2002: 121). Shaykh Nazim's immediate successor was Shaykh Abd Allah al-Faiz ad-Daghestani (1891-1973), referred to in the *tariqa* as Grandshaykh. A Haqqani account of Shaykh Daghestani's biography is given by Kabbani in *Classical Islam and the Naqshbandi Tradition* (Kabbani, 2004). Habibis (1985) also provides an interesting history of Shaykh Daghestani settling in Syria and the challenges he faced in establishing a following.

In brief, Shaykh Daghestani was born in the Russian territory of Dagestan, the nephew of the Naqshbandi Shaykh Sharafuddin ad-Daghestani. Kabbani (2004: 423) reports Shaykh Sharafuddin told his sister 'The son you are carrying has no veils on his heart. He will be able to see events that have passed or that are coming. He is one of those who can read the unseen knowledge from the Preserved Tablets directly'.

As a young man, Shaykh Daghestani moved with Shaykh Sharafuddin and other members of his village to Busra in Turkey (Kabbani, 2004: 428). He

served for a time in the Ottoman Army, before settling in the mountains surrounding northern Damascus (Habibis, 1985: 73). Habibis reports that Shaykh Daghestani initially only had a small following in Damascus due to the influence of Arab nationalism, competition from other Naqshbandi shaykhs and his 'uncompromising nature' (Habibis, 1985: 74, 75). However, he did develop an audience in the region. Habibis (1985: 78, 79) recounts, for example, a story in which Shaykh Daghestani met King Abdullah of Jordan and how he became widely known by rich and poor throughout Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Kabbani (2004: 449) likewise describes a meeting with John Bennett, the influential figure in alternative spirituality.

Habibis suggests one interesting facet of Shaykh Daghestani's teachings may have contributed to his popularity increasing. Like Shaykh Nazim, Shaykh Daghestani taught that we are living in the last days. Habibis (1985: 80) reports 'This had been confirmed [to him] in a vision of the Prophet that Shaykh Abdullah had after the Second World War. In it he was told that now nothing could change the hearts of people; that the Mahdi had been born in 1941 and would soon announce his arrival'. Shaykh Daghestani's revelations about the imminent return of the Mahdi gained him some interest, however, 'when the Mahdi failed to appear over successive years, disillusionment and derision set in' (Habibis, 1985: 76).

Kabbani does not mention Shaykh Daghestani's teaching on the Mahdi. However, he does refer to his predications, 'some of which have come to pass and some of which we still wait' (Kabbani, 2004: 455). Kabbani outlines that Shaykh Daghestani predicted the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War and civil war in Lebanon in 1975. Of the prophecies not yet fulfilled, Kabbani lists:

- 'England entering Islam', with a member of a royal family in Europe supporting Islam
- China as being under the authority of a great saint who 'will be one of the greatest saints in the time of *Mahdi* and Jesus'. He will influence the brokering of peace between China and the West
- A non-Arab Middle East country will attack the Persian Gulf
- Cairo will sink under water and Mount Olympus near Busra will erupt

- There will be a war in the Gulf area where 'a huge fire will arise and involve the rest of the world'

- Germany and England will lead the whole of Europe. A hidden saint will develop the spirituality of the people of Europe

- There will be peace between the Arabs and Israel, brokered by America

- Communism will collapse, splintering the Russian empire, leaving America as the sole world power. Peace will spread throughout the world

- Turkey will be attacked leading to 'a great disaster on earth and a horrible war'. The Mahdi will rise, Jesus will return and 'Love and happiness and peace will fill this earth' (Kabbani, 2004: 456-457).

As this chapter will outline, Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic vision reflects many of these distinctive elements. However, unlike previous research, it will also show that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse also deviates from Shaykh Daghestani's predictions on the events leading up to the end of time.

Shaykh Nazim

Muhammad Nazim Adil al-Qubrusi al-Haqqani was born in April 1922 in Larnaca, Cyprus, to a family with a significant Sufi heritage: his mother could trace her lineage to the Mevleviyya and his paternal grandfather, from whom he began to learn, was a Shaykh in the Qadiyiyya (Kabbani, 2004: 461). Following his schooling he moved to Istanbul in 1940 where he studied Chemical Engineering. It was in Istanbul that he met his first teachers from the Naqshbandiyya, Shaykh Sulayman Arzuruni and Shaykh Jamaluddin al-Lasuni. After his degree, Shaykh Nazim received permission to travel to Damascus to seek who would become the defining guide in his own spiritual journey, Shaykh Abd Allah ad-Daghestani.

After a difficult year of travel, Shaykh Nazim reached Grandshaykh in Damascus in 1945 and shortly after was instructed by Grandshaykh to return to

Cyprus. Shaykh Nazim ran into conflict with the Turkish state by calling the *adhan* in Arabic from the mosque in Larnaca rather than in Turkish.[54]

In the following years, Shaykh Nazim travelled around the Middle East, particularly Turkey, Lebanon, and Syria, teaching and instructing in the Naqshbandi way. In 1952 he returned to Damascus and married a daughter of Shaykh Abdullah, Hajjah Amina Adil (Geaves, 2000: 146). Despite his new family, Shaykh Nazim continued his spiritual training, undergoing long seclusions which are vividly recounted in his biography (see for example Kabbani, 2004: 472-478).

Shortly before Shaykh Abdullah's death in 1974, Shaykh Nazim was instructed to go to England as 'he had been told that the prophecy of "Islam rising once more, this time from the West" was becoming a reality' and 'people in the West need a "star from heaven" to lead them out of their abyss of darkness' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 7, 8). Visits to England were repeated annually, usually coinciding with Ramadan.[55] In each visit Shaykh Nazim gave talks, ran *zikrs*, and initiated members into the Naqsbandiyya. Although he found an audience in the Turkish-Cypriot community Shaykh Nazim began to gain a Western audience, many of whom would enter Islam under his guidance. In 1992 a donation was made by the leader of an Islamic state (sources report both a Middle East leader and the Sultan of Brunei) that enabled the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis to acquire St. Anne's Priory in Tottenham. This would be renamed the Haqqani Islamic Priory and became the official headquarters of the Haqqaniyya in Britain (Geaves, 2000: 147)

From Britain, Shaykh Nazim's influence spread to other parts of Europe, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. Shaykh Nazim expanded activities in the Western world when in 1990 he instructed his son-in-law Shaykh Hisham Kabbani to expand the Naqshbandi-Haqqani presence in the United States. Shaykh Nazim himself visited in 1991 and returned every couple of years until 1998. Haqqani literature describes how in these early days of American activity,

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[54] Shaykh Nazim's defiance of the secular state is a well told story in the *tariqa*. After being jailed for a week, it is reported, he resumed his stance, travelling throughout Cyprus repeating his actions. One hundred and fourteen lawsuits were filed against him and Kabbani's biography recounts how he escaped an imprisonment of over a century due to a change in government on the day of his hearing which abolished the ruling. This was attributed to a miracle by the Grandshaykh (Kabbani, 2004: 469).

[55] For a more detailed account of Shyakh Nazim's initial time in London see Atay (1994: 54-57).

thousands entered Islam, although as noted by Damrel (2006: 118), numbers are almost certainly inflated.[56]

In 1986, Shaykh Nazim also expanded activity into the East, particularly South East Asia, where he returned in 2001. His biography recounts how in both these visits Shaykh Nazim was greeted warmly by 'sultans, presidents, members of parliament, and other government officials, as well as course, by the common people...where many hail him as the 'Saint of the Age' (Kabbani, 2004: 500).

In the final years of his life, Shaykh Nazim based himself in Lefke, Cyprus, with Shaykh Hisham, his son-in-law, taking over the role of the 'travelling shaykh' (Stjernholm, 2009: 93). In 2011, Shaykh Nazim made his son Shaykh Mehmet his successor, bypassing his son-in-laws Shaykh Adnan and Shaykh Hisham, who it had widely been assumed would lead the *tariqa*. While Shaykh Nazim rarely travelled, he was visited by thousands of *murids* every year. In April 2014 he was admitted into hospital where he fell into a coma. During this time *murids* prayed for the Shaykh's recovery and news of his condition was passed around the *tariqa* through a variety of channels. He died May 7th aged 92.

His death was met with much genuine grief from many members of the *tariqa* both in Cyprus and among the *murids* I was working with at the time. In the days that followed, the *tariqa* released a number of videos that stressed the Shaykh Nazim was 'still alive', living in the hearts of *murids*. However, they also carried a theme of working to keep the *tariqa* unified, and that Shaykh Nazim had left them a leader who would lead them in his stead. These videos thus hint at concerns over authority in the *tariqa*.

In one of these videos, Shaykh Nazim's son, Shaykh Bahauddin, warns *murids*, 'we don't want a place for *fitna*', and to be aware of Satan, warning 'we don't want Shaytan to make this unity, un-unity' (Saltanat, 2014). Speaking from inspirations given to him by Shaykh Nazim, Shaykh Bahauddin calls for Shaykh Hisham and Shaykh Adnan to be respected, but likewise affirms the authority of

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[56] It is difficult to accurately gauge a sense of the true size of the *tariqa* due to both reports of inflated figures and how individuals are initiated. In contrast to many other *tariqas*, *bayat* is not given after a period of sometime in which a student demonstrates their consistent interest in the *tariqa*. Rather, Haqqani shaykhs allow *bayat* to be given almost immediately, even before an individual becomes a Muslim. Indeed, for many in the Haqqaniyya, their journey in Islam began after joining the Naqshbandiyya.

Shaykh Mehmet by stating, 'Mawlana Shaykh, he gave all his responsibilities, power, secret for Shaykh Mehmet. He can teach you a lot'.

The secret to which Shaykh Bahuddin refers may refer to a secret which is an important part of Naqshbandi mystical knowledge and maintenance of the authority of the shaykhs. In Kabbani's (2004: 466) biography, Shaykh Nazim refers to gaining the secret from Shaykh Daghestani: 'the third stage, which is the secret of the secret, is only permitted for shaykhs of the Naqshbandi order, whose imam is Abu Bakr'. Here it is apparent the secret is only attainable from shaykh to shaykh.[57] As its new possessor, Shaykh Mehmet is therefore in a uniquely authoritative position. *Murids* are thus called to give *bayat* to Shaykh Mehmet but whether the *tariqa* will remain cohesive will require much careful monitoring over the coming years.

Some aspects of the tariqa

Shaykh Nazim's ability to transcend national and ethnic boundaries made him remarkable and the Haqqaniyya notable for their diversity. Indeed, Nielsen *et al* (2006: 103) find that it has 'possibly one of the largest and most diverse international membership of any Sufi *tariqa*'. The diversity of the *tariqa* is evident as a microcosm in the *tariqa*'s profile in the UK. Despite Shaykh Nazim's reduced ability to visit in recent years, the Haqqaniyya have maintained a presence and activity in the UK. While branches of the *tariqa* are found throughout the UK, there are a number of notable 'centres' *murids* are connected to. From my experience with one branch there is little in the way of community between these centres, with Shaykh Nazim acting as the unifying force.

The *tariqa* in London is particularly diverse, consisting of followers from Turkish, South Asian, and Western convert backgrounds (Nielsen *et al*. 2006: 106). While two mosques in London are controlled by Turkish-Cypriot members, the Haqqani Priory has been run by various groups of *murids* who meet and hold activities separately and differ in practice (Geaves, 2000: 155). Despite Shaykh Nazim's desire to unite Muslims, the different backgrounds have not always existed harmoniously. Indeed, Geaves further notes, 'the history of the Priory

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[57] Draper (2002: 130) likewise noted the importance of the secret in Haqqani life after observing 'almost alchemical discussions concerning the nature of the secret and how one can attain it'.

has been one of struggle between the Turkish and non-Turkish followers to maintain control of the activities' (Geaves, 2000: 155).

More recently, Stjernholm (2009: 94) noted a regular Thursday night *zikr* is ethnically diverse and contains the interesting development of whirling in the Mevlevi custom. While Shaykh Nazim's Mevlevi link provides the practice with some legitimacy, Stjernholm notes most attendees do not participate. Stjernholm also noted the introduction of sports to the centre and the ability of this 'branch of the *tariqa* to attract new followers without them meeting the Shaykh for a long time...it seems that some also consider themselves to be his *murids* without ever having met him, simply by reading his and Kabbani's books and taking part in the activities in the priory' (Stjernholm, 2009: 95-96).

In addition to the London centres, there are notable presences in Birmingham and Sheffield. Like London, previous research showed the Sheffield group to be ethnically mixed with members from South Asia, Turkey, and British converts. In contrast the Birmingham branch has tended to be made of up South Asian membership, and normally young men (Nielsen *et al*, 2006: 105).

Most significant for this study is a branch in Glastonbury, which forms the ethnographic focus for this research. This branch was established in 1999 when Shaykh Nazim travelled to the town. Shaykh Nazim recognised Glastonbury as the 'spiritual heart of Britain' and instructed a senior *murid* to stay and establish a Haqqani presence. This *murid* set up a Sufi charity shop, 'Healing Hearts', which ran until January 2015 with weekly *zikrs* and talks attended by a small group of *murids*. The membership of the *tariqa* in Glastonbury is primarily convert and female dominated. As was initially observed by Draper (2002) the *tariqa* has made considerable efforts to integrate with the alternative spiritual atmosphere of the town. While they remain open to non-Muslim interest the extent to which they can be considered truly universalist is, however, small.

The *tariqa* has likewise maintained a strong presence in the United States. The *tariqa* in the US is the main vehicle for promoting the *tariqa* in English and in Western public space. Shaykh Hisham remains the overseer of Haqqani activity, and at last research is responsible for twenty three mosques, centres, and retreats, as well as a convention and retreat centre in Fenton, Michigan (Damrel, 2006: 118). Shaykh Hisham also oversees four non-profit

organisations including the *tariqa* itself, the as-Sunna Foundation of America (ASFA)[58], Kamilat Muslim Women's Organisation[59], and The Islamic Supreme Council of America. This latter organisation exists both to guide and unite the Muslim community and educate the non-Muslim community about the nature of Islam (Darmel, 2006: 118). Consequently this organisation produces vast quantities of literature.

Another important aspect of the Haqqaniayya that has contributed to the *tariqa's* image as a global brotherhood is in its embrace of the internet. Indeed, Stjernholm (2007: 99) notes 'the Internet activities related to the Naqshbandi-Haqqani *tariqa* have become so widespread that it is almost impossible to avoid their websites and other materials if you used words like "Sufism", "Shaykh", or "*dhikr*" in your search'.

There are numerous unofficial Haqqaniyya websites devoted to Shaykh Nazim and his teachings as well as private mailing lists. In addition to the web domains held by the ISCA (islamicsupremecouncil.org), the official websites include naqshbandi.org which seeks to educate the Muslim community, providing information on Sufism, the shaykhs and how to perform *zikr*; Saltanat, an online journal of Shaykh Nazim's teachings; eShaykh.com; shaykhnazim.com; and sufilive.com, an archive of his video lectures. Additionally, the website sufismus-online presents transcriptions of Shaykh Nazim's *sohbats* as well as electronic copies of a number of Haqqani publications available in print.

In recognition of the significance of the internet as a means of connecting the community, it is possible to take initiation through the websites. Naqshbandi.org, for example, contains a link for reciting the *baya* text, specifically for those who cannot reach authorised representatives.

The names of Naqshbandi organisations such as 'The Islamic Supreme Council of America' indicate the desire of the *tariqa* to be the legitimate voice of Islam in the West and indeed, the Haqqaniyya have attempted to gain a public voice.

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[58] The as-Sunna Foundation of America serves primarily to provide guidance in regards correct Islamic practice for Muslims in America (Damrel, 2006: 118).

[59] Kamilat Muslim Women's Organisation which was founded in 1997 and commits itself to enriching the lives of Muslim women through a number of projects including providing health awareness information, English lessons, and emergency aid and relief for recent refugees (Damrel, 2006: 118). At present, there is a notable lack of information online about Kamilat.

The ASFA biography of Shaykh Hisham, for example, lists the events Shaykh Hisham has attended including events at the House of Commons, and his meetings with Prince Charles, Tony Blair and Jack Straw to discuss Islam (As-Sunnah Foundation of America, 2012). These meetings were faciliatated by his strong links with the British organisation, the Sufi Muslim Council.[60]

In the US Kabbani has spoken at a number of conferences, promoting Sufism as 'moderate, traditional and accepting of differences' with the potential to overcome 'religious, cultural and ethnic differences', in contrast with Wahhabi Islam (Stjernholm, 2009: 87).. The public voice of the Haqqaniyya has not been without controversy. In 1999 before the State Department Shaykh Hisham claimed 'extremism had been spread to 80% of the Muslims in the US' and that the vast majority of mosques were vehicles of 'extremist ideologies' (Damrel, 2006: 12). Unsurprisingly, this caused uproar among other Muslim organisations, severely straining their relationships with the Haqqaniyya.

In addition to trying to educate non-Muslims about Islam, the Haqqaniyya see educating Muslims as incumbent upon them. Indeed, Damrel (2006: 120) argues the Haqqaniya present the American Muslim community as being misguided, lost, and in need of guidance into true Islamic practice, which they endeavour to provide. This is essential as for Shaykh Nazim, the true enemy of Islam comes from within. This enemy is Wahhabism and as noted by Atay (1999: 463) the term is used widely to denotes those who argue Sufism, and in particular shaykh veneration, is un-Islamic. Wahhabism is dangerous, not only because it prevents Muslims from following the true path to God, but also because it stops the spread of Islam to non-Muslims.

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[60] The Sufi Muslim Council (SMC) was founded in 2006 with the aim to 'provide practical solutions for British Muslims, based on the traditional Islamic legal rulings of an international advisory board, many of whom are recognized as the highest ranking Islamic scholars in the world.' (Sufi Muslim Council, 2010). While claiming to represent ordinary Muslims, as Stjernholm (2009: 87) notes 'its links to the broader majority of Muslims in Britain appear vague.' The SMC appears to have had reasonably well established political connections, as its website describes meetings of the organisation with Jack Straw and Hazel Blears. Its articulation of a true authentic Islam, and its very public condemnation of 'extremist' Islam are very much consistent with Shaykh Hisham's other work to discredit 'Wahhabi' Islam, as Stjernholm (2011: 280) argues: 'the SMC can be viewed as a British offshoot of Shaykh Hisham's and his aides' long term project of advancing their vision of Sufism as a positive counter-force to the alleged threat from 'Wahhabis' – a project that had already begun in the mid-1990s'. How successful it has been, however, is very unclear. The relationship is certainly not well promoted in the *tariqa* in my experience.

The Haqqaniyya are particularly active in condemning attacks on Sufism, and many of their websites explicitly attack anti-Sufi polemic and defend Sufism as authentically Islamic. So vehement was Shaykh Nazim in his attack on those who attack Sufism that he argued they were not even Muslim, needing to reaffirm their faith if they seek to join him (Atay, 1999: 462). This fight against 'Wahhabist' Islam is just one among many being fought in the modern world for the souls of humanity, a fight which is absolutely imperative when it is seen in its eschatological context.

There is little in the way of extensive treatment on the teachings of Shaykh Nazim. Overall, Shaykh Nazim can be described as reasonably conservative. As shall be demonstrated in Chapter Four, Shaykh Nazim believed in traditional gender roles for men and women and felt that modernity had undermined important values and knowledge, and as such damaged human flourishing. His flexibility towards new Muslims is based in his following of the Prophetic example (Geaves, 2000: 148). He believed firmly in the importance of monarchy and spoke often on the foolishness of democracy. His teachings are dominated by the theme of calling people back to God, to feel His endless mercy and love. For Shaykh Nazim, hidden forces such as *jinn* and angels were undeniably active in the world as were the forces of evil and darkness. This is evident in his controversial warnings that we are living in the Last Days, a set of teachings which are the focus of this thesis.

<u>The approach of the end: Shaykh Nazim's end time scenario</u>

Throughout his leadership of the Haqqaniyya, Shaykh Nazim spoke repeatedly and consistently of the nearness of the end of the world and the arrival of Isa, the Mahdi, and *al-Dajjal*. The most accessible introduction to Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic vision is presented in the Haqqani publication *Secrets Behind the Secrets Behind the Secrets...* (al-Haqqani, 1987), reprinted in the United States under the title *Mystical Secrets of the Last Days* (al-Haqqani, 1994). These texts present a series of lectures given by Shaykh Nazim at a retreat in Basel in 1985, and represent the earliest Haqqani text to present a coherent and detailed apocalyptic narrative. Since then, this narrative has been persistently referenced either in fragments or in its totality. While not unchanged, it has

however, remained broadly consistent over the past thirty years. The following represents an outline of this apocalyptic future.[61]

There are many signs that indicate the End Times are beginning, but the definitive event that signals the start of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic narrative is a massive world war, which he refers to as Armageddon. This war is 'the biggest war which will be on earth before the last day' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 40). Initially, this was referred to as a war between East and West but in 1985, details began to emerge of what would cause the world war, how it would be fought and its effects on the world. Most persistently, Shaykh Nazim argues the war will begin when Russia invades Turkey to reach the plain of Amuq in Syria. In 1985 for example, he states:

> They [the red-coloured people] will then go to Pakistan and then to Turkey...They will come up to Amuq near Aleppo at the West of Aleppo. The plain of Amuq will be the place of greatest slaughter. So that is the first sign, Russians coming to Turkey' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 126).

The world splits in two, with all nations drawn into the conflict. Some will back the Russians, the rest behind America, who will be camped in Adana, Turkey (al-Haqqani, 1994: 127). Indeed, Shaykh Nazim is explicit: 'It is impossible for the end of the world to come until the whole world will be in two big camps' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 126-127). The Third World War begins, ending the world as we know it.

During this war, six out of seven people will die (al-Haqqani, 1994: 30, 129).[62] Undoubtedly, these deaths will be caused by military action, as Shaykh Nazim frequently refers to falling bombs. However, sometimes the Shaykh implies the war will be nuclear. In one publication, for example, he states 'those dangerous atomic weapons will remove the whole civilisation from East to West and kill billions of people' (al-Haqqani, 1997a: 89). This war will last ninety days until the

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[61] The volume of Haqqani literature is considerable and there is not yet a comprehensive analysis of key themes and how these changed over Shaykh Nazim's life. In Appendix One I've complied a sample collection of statements pertaining to the apocalyptic teachings to demonstrate consistency, and points of divergence, in this element of Shaykh Nazim's teachings.

[62] See also, for example, *Sohbats 2013* ([2009]: 511) – 'I am a weak servant, but making Lord of Heavens to come to my ear the sound of Armageddon, that taking six (people) from seven and one remaining and six going away'. Alternatively, Shaykh Nazim has given the figure one in six, describing 'From six people one will remain. If there are six billion people, five billion people, five billion must die' (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 176).

West inevitably wins because 'it is written' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 30). Armageddon ceases when the Mahdi appears in Damascus, signalling the start of a new sequence of eschatological events.

While the prediction that Russia will start Armageddon has been consistent over the past thirty years, the enemy they fight is less so. As mentioned above, the war was considered to be between East and West, identified initially as Russia and America. However, in 2011 (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 9383) and again in 2012 (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 728), Shaykh Nazim outlines a slightly different turn of events.

Again, the Russians will enter Turkey and gather in Syria. Their army will be vast; Shaykh Nazim describes '80 regiments and 80 flags and under each flag 12,000 soldiers' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 9383). This time, however, they will fight Muslims from either Damascus (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 728) or Istanbul (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 9383) and the Muslims will be victorious. Shaykh Nazim describes the events of this battle: 'The soldiers will come from Damascus in three groups. Three groups from the Muslims, one third will be *Shahids*/martyrs. One third will escape and the third Allah (swt) will keep them firm and they will be victorious against the *Banu Asfar*/yellow nation.[63] They will defeat *Banu Asfar* and reach all the way to Istanbul, Constantinople. Then Mahdi (a.s) will appear' (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 728). In a slightly alternative vision, Shaykh Nazim describes the army coming out of Istanbul. The Mahdi is with them, but hidden (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 9383).

While this may seem like a change in the narrative, this embellishment may provide an insight into an essential element of Shaykh Nazim's end time expectation and the first clue into the eschatological significance of the West. Shaykh Nazim has had some success in the West, particularly among Western converts. Within the *tariqa* it is frequently mentioned that the Shaykh began visiting the West on the order of Shaykh Dagestani. As was mentioned above,

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[63] In *Sohbats 2013* ([2011]: 9383), Banu Asfar is translated as 'blonde people' and refers to the Russian people. This is an alternative translation of a common phrase in early Muslim literature where Banu al-Asfar (yellow people or light coloured) is used to describe Christians, particularly Byzantines (Goldziher, 2012; Fierro, 2014). The Byzantines feature prominently in early Muslim apocalyptic literature, particularly in regards mentions to a colossal war, in which a peace is made and then broken (Cook, 2002: 49-51). Here then, we see a modern reinterpretation of classical apocalyptic expectation. Yellow also has additional apocalyptic significance. A small number of traditions describe yellow banners coming from the West (North Africa) fighting those under the black flags, interpreted by Cook (2002: 83) to be the Abbasids.

Shaykh Dagestani had recognised that the prophecy 'Islam was rising once more, this time from the West' was beginning, and Shaykh Nazim was sent because 'the people of the West [would] need a "Star from Heaven" to lead them out of their abyss of darkness' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 7, 8).

This prophecy is generally interpreted within the *tariqa* as referencing the rise of Islam among Westerners. It is also explicitly eschatological as it is explained: 'One of the signs of the coming of Mehdi, is that seven great nations will come to Islam, the first of these will be the Germans' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 146) and in another text, 'When the last days approach, they [the English] will be the first of 7 great nations to find peace in their hearts' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 79). While the detail that the army comes from the Middle East makes it difficult to consider the apocalyptic narrative entirely coherent, Shaykh Nazim's vision of a European conversion to Islam may mean the army which fights the Russians is an army of Western Muslims.[64]

In all scenarios, the war will end when the Mahdi reveals himself to the world by calling *Allahu Akbar* three times and invites all believers to follow him to Damascus (Sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]; al-Haqqani, 1994: 30). The whole world will hear this call and at this moment all technology will cease, ending the conflict (sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]; al-Haqqani, 1994: 31). This is made possible because the Mahdi controls the *jinn*, who in turn control electricity and technology.[65] They will also rid the world of concrete buildings (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 12). The Mahdi will travel to Istanbul and retrieve the relics of the Prophet Muhammad from Topkapi Palace before moving to Damascus

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[64] That the West will play a significant role for Islam in Armageddon is also revealed in Shaykh Nazim's revelation that after the appearance of the Mahdi an army will join with him that contains soldiers from the West: 'Each man in his army will be worth an army. 12000 soldiers from five countries of the West (known only to the *Awliya*) will come. They are always in contact with Divine Powers, which is a sign of real faith. They are steadfast, never turning their face from the Face of Allah Almighty under any circumstances' (Sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]).The eschatological significance of the West is an interesting and distinctive element of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic vision, particularly given his attack on Western modernity, explored in Chapter Four. Chapter Five will explore what this element of the apocalyptic narrative might reveal about Shaykh Nazim's vision of the wider Muslim community.

[65] One interview participant informed me that one reason we see increasingly difficult conditions without actual end time events is that the *jinn*, who like human beings are both good and bad, are making mischief, as they know this is their last chance before they are called to serve the *Mahdi*.

(*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 9383). He will call all people to follow him and many will relocate to be with him in Damascus or the holy cities of Mekka and Medina.[66]

Throughout his teachings, Shaykh Nazim repeatedly warns his *murids* to be self sufficient, to move away from the cities to the countryside and not to rely on technology. This advice is based on two factors. Firstly, the cities will be bombed in the war, and without electricity after the appearance of the Mahdi, people who cannot live self sufficiently will be incredibly vulnerable. Secondly, living self sufficiently in the countryside will be necessary to survive the greatest trial after the war: the Anti-Christ or *al-Dajjal*. The Anti Christ will appear at approximately the same time as the Mahdi, at the end of Armageddon. He is currently 'imprisoned on an unknown island that no one can approach – because he is saying "I am your Lord", claiming to be the Lord of mankind, not just a prophet, but the Lord...He cannot move from there. His is Shaitan, the father of all devils. He is giving orders, and he has thirty deputies who are preparing people for his coming...And he is one-eyed...' (Sufismus-online, 2014k [1999]; also, al-Haqqani, 1994: 23).

He will travel the world, passing through every human settlement 'making big *Fitna*, making people *Kafir*, or killing them' (Sufismus-online, 2014c [1999]), for forty days. In this period 'The first day is going to be like one year. The second day is going to be like one month, the third day is going to be like one week, and after these three days the remaining thirty-seven days will be normal days' (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 520). Those who meet him will follow him and it is implied that his charisma will be so strong, no one except the saints will be able to resist.

Believers are advised to stay in the home when he passes, with instructions from Shaykh Nazim: 'Take ablution, close the doors, say: *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim*', and sit inside until his armies pass by, and then you should be in safety...' (sufismus-online, 2014c). In preparation, Shaykh Nazim's *murids* have been advised to have three months food at all times (diminishing to one month in recent teachings).

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[66] This removal of electricity, simultaneously referred to as technology, is hugely significant to Shaykh Nazim's eschatological narrative and indeed his world view as will be demonstrated in Chapter Four.

After travelling the world *al-Dajjal* will arrive at Damascus. Upon the approach Shaykh Nazim reveals, 'Archangel Gabriel puts his wing in front of him, when he comes, and when he will look up and it will be without end, and he will look down and he can't see it. He will see it as a wall in front of him, a huge hindrance, and he is going to say to his armies: We have reached the end of this world. Beyond this there is no more mankind. Now the whole world is under my command and I am your Lord' (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 520). Thus, those believers with the Mahdi are protected.

At this point Isa will descend from heaven. Again, Shaykh Nazim is remarkably clear, even cinematic in his description: 'Jesus Christ (ع) will come to a minaret of that dome which lies in the East. When the people go to the dawn prescribed prayer and two angels will protect Him with their wings. They will bring him down. He will be wearing a green turban and he will be shining. He has the most beautiful face, rosy and white. His beard is red and he is sweating' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 105). The Shaykh warns, however, that Jesus is different to as he was in the past: 'Jesus Christ will not come like he came the last time. He will come to kill the dragon because the world is now full of evil. The first time he came he showed his mercy, with the result that people came against him, wanting to kill him. This time his mission is to correct everything. You may pacify a cat by stroking him, but not a snake!' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 64).

Here, Shaykh Nazim refers to a sense that there are wrongs in the world that need to be rectified. Among these is the nature of Jesus himself. In response to a question on why Jesus is the only prophet allowed to return and 'conquer this world', Shaykh Nazim replies, 'because of all the prophets, not one was as misunderstood as Jesus Christ (ع). Therefore, the Lord is sending Jesus Christ (ع) to inform all the people: Christians, Jesus, Muslims about who he really is' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 108-109). The Mahdi will ask him to lead the prayer, but Jesus will defer. After this he will take his flaming sword and kill the Anti-Christ. With the Anti-Christ's death all his followers will die with him, leaving only believers.

The Mahdi will live for seven years following Isa's return, before dying a natural death. Jesus will rule a utopia for forty years, but during the end of his life, unbelief will again enter the world. Following his death, a sweet smelling wind

will envelop the earth and all believers who smell it will die a quick and painless death (al-Haqqani, 1994: 22). Then Gog and Magog will be released and devour the world. Following this is the Day of Judgement, again vividly described by Shaykh Nazim.

Categorising Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse

The previous chapter outlined some of the terminology that has been used to describe end time belief. Shaykh Nazim's end time belief has been described as 'millenarian' by Habibis and Atay, yet neither analyses whether this is an appropriate term to describe Shaykh Nazim's end time belief.[67] In keeping with research question one and one of the primary aims of this thesis, the following section thus seeks to examine whether the above narrative can be described as millenarian by using a conventional definition widely used in the study of apocalyptic groups.

The definition of millenarianism that will be used for this exercise is proposed by Cohn (1993: 13). This is a classic description which, while modified and specified, has yet to be convincingly challenged. Cohn argues:

> Millenarian sects and movements always picture salvation as a) collective, in the sense that it is to be enjoyed by the faithful as a collectivity; b) terrestrial, in the sense that it is to be realised on this earth and not in some other-worldly heaven; c) imminent, in the sense that it is to come both soon and suddenly; d) total, in the sense that it is to utterly transform life on earth, so that the new dispensation will be no mere improvement on the present but perfection itself; e) miraculous, in the sense that it is to be accomplished by, or with the help of, supernatural agencies.

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[67] Habibis provides no definition of millenarianism, which given the loaded nature of the term, is problematic. Indeed, she describes Mahdism as 'a form of Muslim millenarianism' which, as I have argued above, is not entirely appropriate (Habibis, 1985: 159). However, her use of millenarianism appears to based on the assumption that millenarian movements develop when a group of people feel politically helpless (Habibis, 1985: 163). While this may account for some more revolutionary millenarians (see Cohn, 1993, for example), it by no means is a defining aspect of millenarianism. Atay (1994: 200) gives more space to discussing millenarianism, defining it as 'the expectation of certain eschatological events which will cause large scale transformations in the world, end suffering and bring peace and salvation for humanity'. While this is an improvement, this definition lacks articulation of the distinctive aspects of millenarian thought, and indeed, could apply to those more utopic, postmillennial movements described in the previous chapter.

Collective

If salvation is to be understood as the deliverance from an evil and corrupt world to living in a way which fulfils God's creation, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is undeniably one which sees salvation as collective. The transition from this world to the post-apocalyptic world of Isa and the Mahdi happens simultaneously around the world. Indeed, Shaykh Nazim stresses the community dimension of surviving this apocalypse by stressing the importance of the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa* in protecting people. While there is no guarantee that any individual will survive the war, those that do will live in a transformed world with the rest of the faithful in a perfect community.

Terrestrial

The vision Shaykh Nazim sets out is one which is very much set on earth. There is no question of the post-apocalyptic utopia taking place other than in the terrestrial world. However, perhaps one of the most intriguing questions in the study of this area of Shaykh Nazim's teachings is whether Shaykh Nazim understood the apocalypse to be a literal event. This is a debate held within the *tariqa* as both Habibis and Atay found. The reasons for this ambiguity lie in the nature of Shaykh Nazim's religious knowledge. Repeatedly, *murids* assert that Shaykh Nazim has knowledge of hidden things, but also that he is a master of human psychology. He does not always speak clearly, but rather speaks in layers, the wisdom of his sayings not becoming immediately apparent. Within the *tariqa*, there is thus room for interpretations of apocalyptic teachings that see them as more metaphorical or teaching tools, serving to impart difficult ideas about mortality and encourage improvement in behaviour, regardless of whether the apocalyptic teachings are literally true.[68] With the continual deferment of the start of definitive end time events, some *murids* thus suggest rather than looking at the superficial and apparent message, we look instead to what the Shaykh is 'really trying to say'.

The idea that there may be another purpose or meaning to the apocalyptic dimension of Shaykh Nazim's teaching is put forward briefly by Darmel (1999, 2006). While he does not go so far as to state the apocalyptic ideas of the *tariqa* are not taken seriously, he does argue that these ideas serve as a tool to help

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[68] This is also discussed in Chapter Seven.

murids understand 'deeper' teachings. As he illustrates, '"Last Day" imagery serves as a timely and effective teaching tool with which the shaykhs drive home to their followers more subtle spiritual teachings about the afterlife, mystical praxis and Islam' (1999: 6). As such, Darmel (2006: 123) stresses how by providing 'real time' mystical comments on world events, the Haqqani shaykhs can effectively address correct behaviour in this world.

While it is not necessarily true that non-apocalyptic ideas are 'deeper', there is considerable merit to the idea that apocalypse does provide a gateway to improving spiritual practice and religious understanding, as well as quality of life. On staying inside, being with the family and observing religious practices, for example, *murids* who observe this are less likely to be in places with strong satanic influences, and as such, keep within God's prescribed laws for humanity.

Furthermore, while Shaykh Nazim is clear that living in the countryside means one is less likely to be adversely affected by the loss of electricity that will come with the Mahdi's appearance, it is also apparent that he considers living in the countryside to be beneficial for human flourishing in general. This is because one lives a simple life close to nature and in clean air (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 7555); *sufismus*-online, 2014f [1999]), away from the artificial, with purpose in life through work. The Shaykh states that God wants people to be happy and this is achieved through faith (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 17). By encouraging *murids* to undertake these actions in case of apocalypse, he improves their chances of leading a good life in the present, seeing the utopia of the Mahdi, and perhaps most importantly, the safety of the immortal soul.[69] The apocalypse therefore acts as an incentive to make a positive difference in one's life that will benefit them both here and in the afterlife, regardless of whether the Mahdi comes within their individual lifetime or not.

While an important interpretation, this does not satisfactorily account for the statements in Shaykh Nazim's teachings that suggest the apocalypse is a literal event. Given that we cannot ask Shaykh Nazim directly the nature of his

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[69] Many of the virtues mirror those outlined in the Qur'an over who will be rewarded in the afterlife, such as those who ' "purify themselves, remember the Lord's name and perform the prayers" (Q87: 14-5), those "who give and fear God and believe in the fairest reward" (Q92: 5-6) and "those who believe and do good deeds" (Q84: 25, 85: 11, 95: 6)' (Raven, 2014: para 13).

apocalyptic teachings, nor trust the answer was unveiled even if we could, we must look to Shaykh Nazim's teachings to see what is implied.

To my reading, it seems that Shaykh Nazim certainly intended for *murids* to take his warnings literally and that the apocalypse must therefore also be considered in this way. In Basel, for example, Shaykh Nazim dismisses any metaphorical interpretation of the apocalypse after a listener reveals the following theory:

> Like with Armageddon. Is it going to be physical? Because everything you are talking about also happens in our bodies, as well, does it not? What I am trying to say is that you are a complete world by yourself. Every human being is a world, a complete world so that what is happening within you in your spiritual world, like evil forces fighting good forces, can happen within myself. And Armageddon is maybe not something physical we are going to see because there is no specific date which has proved it will happen before then. But the forces from the East and the West can be that which happens inside us before we die or when we are dead. We are not going to see satan or the angels with our eyes because they are inside us, within our egos (al-Haqqani, 1994: 34).

In the following conversation Shaykh Nazim repeatedly dismisses such theory as 'imagination' or 'your source', implying it does not have his authorisation (al-Haqqani, 1994: 35). Moreover, the Shaykh implies the literalness of the apocalypse with statements such as 'this is not what I am hoping for, it is a reality of what will happen in the days to come' and 'this is not a hope, it is a reality. We believe in realities, not imaginations' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 13, 33).

That the apocalypse should be taken seriously as a literal possibility is also indicated by the warnings Shaykh Nazim gives to his *murids* to move to the countryside and be safe from the troubles to come. In the approach to the millennium it is clear a number of *murids* took this advice, some of the Glastonbury *tariqa* included. While, as we shall see in the following chapters, Shaykh Nazim considers living in the countryside to be good for human flourishing in general, it is difficult to think why he would ask his *murids* to do so for a metaphorical threat, when with his authority as a Shaykh, he could encourage this without the image of Armageddon.

The literal and temporal nature of the apocalypse is also revealed in descriptions of the Mahdi. The Mahdi is undeniably one of the most important and central figures in Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse. As shall be demonstrated subsequently, he is absolutely messianic, a saviour who will correct the ills of the world. The Shaykh consistently refers to the Mahdi and has been remarkably clear in his biography. He was born c. 1945 in Wadi Fatima to a mother and father from the line of Hasan and Hussayn (al-Haqqani, 1994: 127). At an early age he began to display miraculous behaviour and was taken behind Mt. Qaf, where he lived with some friends of God, protected by *jinn*. Shaykh Nazim reports that his first appearance to the world was in 1960, where he appeared on Mt. Arafat in Mekka. This was a private appearance for the friends of God. 124,000 gave him *baya* including both Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Dagestani.

Since this time he has remained hidden form the world in the Empty Quarter, awaiting God's orders, but in contact with *walis*, including Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Dagestani. In 1985 he was reported as being 35-40 years old (al-Haqqani, 1994: 128). Providing the Mahdi with an age makes it clear these events are temporal and literal. In regards views of time, however, the Mahdi's age also points to the apocalypse's imminence, the next dimension of Cohn's millenarian definition.

The continual frequency, permeation and conviction with which the Shaykh speaks, his insistence the teachings are real, not metaphorical and the seriousness with which they are taken in the *tariqa* suggest that the apocalypse is not just a teaching tool to reach other ideas, though it certainly has the potential to do this. However, that there is the alternative way of understanding apocalypse provides a means of negotiating prophetic failure, as well as a means of maintaining interest and authority among those *murids* who are less apocalyptically minded.

Imminence

Imminence, the nearness of the start of end time events, is perhaps one of the best recognised facets of apocalyptic and millenarian thought. While all of the Abrahamic religions teach that time is finite, if a speaker concerned with the end is to gain attention and ensure an immediate responsive action, the speaker

must convince his listeners the end is to come soon. As mentioned above, O'Leary (1994: 152) perceptively summarises the importance of a specific claim when he observes 'Apocalyptic speculation on the topos of time *must* resolve into a specific temporal claim if it is to capture the attention and command the adherence of its immediate historical audience.'

If a speaker can convince an audience that the claim of an imminent end is true or at least very probable, perhaps through setting a date, an intense apocalyptic expectation may develop. Believers enter what Landes (2006; 2011) terms 'apocalyptic time', a distinctive way of perceiving the world and their place in it. As he explains 'apocalyptic millennialists live in a world overflowing with meaning and purpose...When the signs indicate that final drama, their readers enter apocalyptic semiosis. From the people they meet and the texts they read to the events that happen around them, everything coheres as part of a huge apocalyptic plan, crystalline in its clarity and glorious in its implications' (Landes, 2006: 15-16).

It is, however, hugely volatile:

> Believers who have received this calling burn bridges to past lives: they give away their wealth, they leave their homes, forsaking spouse and family, friendships, jobs and professions...Such behaviour is always radical, whether it benefits others – as emotional and material charity – or harms them – as violence aimed at eradicating evil. In any case, because the believer has broken with the past, he has made a leap of faith into a future whose advent he or she had seen coming' (Landes, 2006: 16).

With its volatility, this belief is also potentially risky, as it is prone to disappointment with its failure. Summarising the dangers of apocalyptic speculation, Cook (2005: 96) finds 'dating and calculating the end is perilous, since such a prophecy must be close enough to impel urgency if it is likely to draw adherents, yet if it is too close, the person making the prophecy risks failure when the date comes and goes without incident, followed by ridicule and abuse, or the humiliation of having to admit to error and adjust the prophecy.' In recent years alone, a number of prophets have been ridiculed for their failure, perhaps most notoriously Harold Camper of Family Radio.[70] However, an

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[70] Family Radio was a particularly well publicised example of apocalyptic belief. While originally predicting the End of the World in 1994, Camping made headlines throughout the world in 2011

imminent end can be suggested without resorting to date setting, or necessarily entering a volatile period of expectation.

Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic expectations have been a consistent part of his teachings, explicit since the 1980s, and themselves somewhat adapted from those of Shaykh Dagestani. Throughout the period of this research apocalyptic expectation remained intense until the Shaykh's death. Thirty years is an extraordinary length of time to maintain that the world is coming to an end and this thesis proposes that Shaykh Nazim has managed to achieve this by not committing to a specific date and by a use of language that is consistent with O'Leary's (1994) concept of strategic ambiguity.

One major exception to this pattern, however, involves his interest in the year 2000. Throughout recordings of his early *sohbats* Shaykh Nazim tells his listeners we are in the last days of mankind. However, in the mid 1990s he began to be more specific, teaching that by the year 2000, or during it, there would be a period of tremendous change. He states, for example, 'before the year 2000 there will be no more Christians, no more Judaism, only the ones calling to Allah, Islam. That will continue' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 38). In the same text he argues 'according to Holy Books there will be no more democratical systems in the year 2000...the alternative for democracy is monarchy. By the year 2000 everything in this world will be changed. It will be from West to the best, *insha Allah*' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 81).

Such references are throughout recordings from the time are far too numerous to list. In one text alone he states: 'One more biggest trouble is in front of us, which will wipe away six out of seven people. People cannot imagine the tragedy which will happen in the war to come. It can come in 1996, or in 1997, or in 1998, or in 1999. It will not wait for the year 2000 to come' and later, 'we are reaching the end of the twentieth century and according to our traditional knowledge, it is the last point which mankind will reach' and finally 'we expect

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when he predicted the rapture would first take place on May 21st and then later 21st October (Pilkington, 2011). While believers of Camper's message prepared for the End, social media users watched on with amusement (Batty, 2011).

this miraculous person [Mahdi] will come before the year 2000' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 116, 118, 151).[71]

While Shaykh Nazim's predications around the millennium gained him a certain amount of attention, including from academic circles (see for example Geaves, 2000 and Damrel, 1999) providing a date which could be so definitively falsified was actually somewhat unusual. Rather, the Shaykh uses a number of more subtle devices to convince his followers of the imminence of the end of the world without providing a date which could be proved wrong. While some of these devices, such as signs and authority, are explored in Chapters Five and Six, the following section discusses how the Shaykh makes the end seem close.

Strategic ambiguity is a tactic noted by O'Leary (1994) in the work of Hal Lindsey and the twentieth century dispensationalists. O'Leary argues Lindsey 'sought to maintain an intense expectation of Jesus' imminent return without resorting to date setting' (O'Leary, 1994: 136). Like Shaykh Nazim, the dispensationalists referred to scripture but instead of using it to calculate a specific end as previous Christians like the Millerites[72] had done, 'laid emphasis on the qualification, saying that 'Jesus *is* coming' and 'he *may* be here today'. Such language was strategically ambiguous as it was based in the absolute truth of scripture but not committal on specifics. Crucial to O'Leary's reading is that this provides an incentive to personal purification but not necessarily social isolation. The possibility of the apocalypse occurring tomorrow meant that believers could no longer afford to defer salvation. They could make themselves ready to be raptured but at the same time live within the world, preparing both for a worldly future and a heavenly future, a tension of the now/not yet (O'Leary, 1994: 137).

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[71] Further examples include: 'the limit is up until 2000. On the New Year's night, at midnight, the technology is going to be finished' (Sufismus-online, 2014c [1999]), 'According to the knowledge which has come to me, the limit will be reached before the year 2000. We will find bright, enlightened, happy, beautiful, handsome and familiar faces. Violence will have finished' and 'The last days are approaching. Don't think that everything will be the way it is now. A change is coming before the year 2000' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 15, 74).

[72] The Millerites were an early nineteenth century American movement led by the Baptist preacher William Miller (1782-1849). After undertaking a detailed analysis of prophecy in the Bible, Miller claimed the return of Jesus was to be in 1843. When this date passed another date was set for 1844. As described by Boyer (1992: 81) 'the passage of the appointed day left an aftermath of profound disappointment. "Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before," one Millerite recalled. "We wept, and wept, till the day dawn."'

Importantly, because no date had been set, this time of tension and preparedness could be infinitely extended. Indeed, of dispensationalist psychology, O'Leary argues (1994: 139) 'their prophetic scenario could not be falsified since they had not committed themselves to any predictions of historical events that would occur before their own departure from the earthly scene.'

Shaykh Nazim is similarly ambiguous and as will be demonstrated, uses the apocalypse as a similar imperative to personal purification. However, he does differ from O'Leary's reading of Lindsey in that his language, while to an extent similarly non-committal, does strongly imply an imminent time frame. Frequently, for example, he uses phrases such as 'time is short', 'time is coming to an end', 'we are at the end of time', 'time is over', as well as 'soon', 'Jesus will come in the near future' and that big events are approaching or 'indicated as near'.

Such language builds a sense of anticipation without the danger of an absolute, certain date. With such ambiguity falsification is difficult but a sense of urgency is not lost. For example, the Shaykh mentions a number of times that the twenty-first century will not be completed. As a significant number of *murids* will live to see the twenty-first century there is certainly cause for action. However, as few will see the whole century, definitive falsification is unlikely. As such, there is a sense that the events preceding the Day of Judgement, which will be clearly apparent to all, are just out of reach. This limnal period is thus extendable, at least within the lifetime of a typical human being. Indeed it might be argued that relying on the physicality of the Mahdi is the closest the Shaykh comes to risking falsification of his prophecies outside of the millennium prophecies.

It is this sense of imminence that makes the apocalypse effective in prompting spiritual reform. While the apocalypse is not confirmed its possibility of arriving within the lifetime of an individual means they must address their behaviour immediately. Death, whether individual or global, becomes a pressing concern.

Combined with creating a sense of imminence, the Shaykh also encourages people to be prepared for the apocalypse by referring to unknown and unseen forces. The Shaykh constantly refers to hidden worlds, not just heaven and hell,

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but all the worlds in between. Angels, *jinn,* and agents of Shaytan are very real in his world, and the importance of his mission to make people realise that life is controlled by forces greater than they understand cannot be underestimated. This sense of the unseen drives his construction of an apocalyptic atmosphere. In regards God, for example, he states 'He who plans, He who is in charge of time, He is absolutely punctual' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 68). Like Lindsey, this creates an atmosphere that encourages individuals to be prepared for the moment to come at any time and reflection on where true power resides in the universe.

Total

Cohn describes this dimension of millenarian thought as to 'utterly transform life on earth, so that the new dispensation will be no mere improvement on the present but perfection itself'. (Cohn, 1993: 13) Here we can expand on Cohn's definition and emphasise that millenarian thought foresees a period of 'radical discontinuity' in which there is a decisive break with the past (Partridge, 2005: 282). McGinn (1994b: 11) likewise notes this discontinuity, and places it in the context of sacred time and salvation history, finding 'Apocalypticists tend to see a definitive break in the eruption of divine judgment into history; the coming age is not a goal toward which history is building, but a new beginning sent by God'.

Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic vision very much fits this description of total change into a new radically different world. The war acts as a pivot point between the world as we know it now and a world in which the hidden spiritual world is apparent. The world that follows the war is one in which only one seventh of the world's population remain, where technology no longer functions, and where the achievements of modern humanity are destroyed. This is thus also an apocalypse which fits Wessinger's (1997: 49) idea of 'catastrophic millennialism' which expects imminent catastrophe, followed by earthly collective salvation, where evil is eliminated. The radical discontinuity is further emphasised by figures such as the Mahdi and Anti-Christ, who Shaykh Nazim describes as 'miraculous' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 101), and appearance of previously hidden creatures such as *jinn*. Even the laws that govern the normal temporal world change, with time becoming fluid during the time of the Anti-Christ. Moreover, the utopia described by Shaykh Nazim is one which could

never be reached without a radical break with this world. As we will see in Chapter Five the world of Isa is one which is morally and spiritually perfect. Evil is eradicated, food is unnecessary as people subsist on *zikr*, and everyone has the powers of saints. It is, as Cohn describes of millenarian thought, not merely an improvement, but perfection.

Miraculous

McGinn's observations on the concept of divine interruption in history leads to the final of Cohn's categories in the need for the utopic/salvation period to be accomplished by supernatural agencies. Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is reasonably passive in terms of human beings shaping the new world or bringing about transformation. While *murids* are called upon to ready themselves both spiritually and physically so they might have a chance of survival, ultimately it is the figures of the Mahdi and Isa who will bring in the new era. Indeed, Shaykh Nazim repeatedly reiterates the Haqqani hope for a figure from God to save the world. He states, for example, 'Send us Mehdi because if he does not come there will never be any good on earth and instead there will only be fighting, killing, destroying, burnings, earthquakes, storms and hurricanes' (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 2321). Similar sentiments are likewise reflected in his calls 'Please send us a king, Mehdi, so we can fight in the way of Allah' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 5736) and 'Send us a leader to revive *Shariah* and destroy falsehood. Send us a sultan who will be a carrier of power, might and magnificence, and make us of those who will gather under his banner' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 5781). This is thus also an apocalypse which is messianic.

Continuity and divergence

While a full outline of how Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse converges and diverges with other Muslim apocalypses will only become apparent in the conclusion chapter, we can already draw some preliminary points. Superficially, Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic narrative is synchronous with classical apocalyptic expectation. In terms of expected end time events, Shaykh Nazim follows traditional *hadith* expectations in a number of places. The most obvious example of this is in the description of events which happen after World War Three. Shaykh Nazim's description that the Anti-Christ will rise in Khurasan mirrors traditional expectations (Cook, 2013: para. 1) and his description that he

will travel the earth for forty days is present in *Sahih Muslim* (bk. 41: 7023). His description that he will perform miracles and has a magnetic persona is likewise traditional, although as far as I am aware he does not follow the tradition that Muslims will be able to read *kufr* on the Anti-Christ's forehead (Cook, 2013: para. 1). Rather, they will be as vulnerable as non-Muslims. This may hint at pessimism into the state of the *ummah*, and may further serve to remind *murids* of the importance of spiritual training and preparation.

Similarly, Shaykh Nazim's description of 'eighty regiments and eighty flags and under each flag twelve thousand soldiers' in the Russian army appears to be a reference to *Sahih Bukhari* (vol 4, bk 53: 401) which states 'count six signs that indicate the approach of the Hour...a truce between you and *Bani al-Asfar* (ie, the Byzantines) who will betray you and attack you under eighty flags. Under each flag will be twelve thousand soldiers'.

The return of Isa also has traditional precedent. While some sources expect his return to be in Jerusalem, Damascus is also consistent, as is his description of being flanked by angels, and the length of this reign being forty years. Moreover, Shaykh Nazim's description of Jesus coming with a sword to address the ills of the world, including how he is understood, is a common theme in Muslim apocalypticism. On *hadith* expectation, Cragg (1999: 59) for example, notes, 'Jesus would confess and proclaim Islam, break all crosses, kill all swine, and so inaugurate millennial righteousness...Anti-Christ is defeated eschatologically by Jesus as the agent, but by Islam in the event, and not by virtue of the Cross and of the love that redeems. The hope of history is the final triumph of the prophetic, as culminated in Muhammad, but assigned to his nearest predecessor'.

The events leading up to the appearance of the Mahdi and the Anti-Christ are more unusual. As we will see in Chapter Five, Shaykh Nazim rarely references specific apocalyptic *hadith* and their parallels in contemporary events as proof of the nearness of the end of time. One of the most interesting uses of 'minor' sign *hadith*, however, is in Shaykh Nazim's predictions surrounding World War Three. The war of Armageddon is the central point of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, marking a pivot point between the world as we know it now, and the dawning of the eschatological age of the Mahdi. As we have seen, Shaykh

Nazim most frequently describes this war as one between East and West. The closest *hadith* precedent for this is in *Sahih Bukhari* (vol. 9, bk 88: 237) where Abu Hurayya narrates 'the Hour will not be established until two big groups fight each other where upon there will be a great number of casualties on both sides and they will be following one and the same religious doctrine.' The Haqqaniyya, however, interpret this far more broadly, with Kabbani translating this *hadith* as 'the Hour will not appear until there will be two enormous groups fighting each other in a colossal battle and their issue is one' (Kabbani, 2003: 185).

Moreover, Shaykh Nazim describes this battle as taking place at Amuq. Amuq has apocalyptic tradition, appearing in *Sahih Muslim* as the place of a great battle between Muslims and non-Muslims (Filiu, 2011: 16). More widely, Cook (2002; 2005) argues that we can speak of an Amuq tradition focussed on predictions of a truce between Christians and Muslims that is broken, leading to a 'final apocalyptic battle' (Cook, 2002: 50). This tradition is significant as 'it is used as a hinge tradition between events of the here and now and the apocalyptic future' (Cook, 2005: 55) and that classically, 'the whole area would seem to be a point of decisive change, or continual battle for the apocalypticist' (Cook, 2002: 53).

Shaykh Nazim continues this tradition, even if his war does not appear consistently as one between Muslims and non-Muslims. However, in other ways he diverges from the tradition. Shaykh Nazim's vision of the Mahdi arising out of this chaos is unusual. While there is no single classical apocalyptic narrative to act as a distinctive comparison point, classical descriptions of the Mahdi typically see him appearing unexpectedly, but not after a global catastrophic war (Madelung, 2012: para. 17; Saritoprak, 2002: 657). Indeed, the Mahdi became associated with spreading the victory of Islam over the world, particularly leading the conquest of Constantinople and Rome (Madelung, 2012: para. 16). This is reflected in contemporary Muslim apocalypses, where writers such as Muhammad Isa Da'ud predict the appearance of the Mahdi in Mekka and outline his decisive victories throughout the Middle East, leading to wars led by the Mahdi against the West (Cook, 2005: 129-145).[73]

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[73] See also Fahd Salim (Cook, 2005: 127) and Gamaleddin (Filiu, 2011: 111).

Indeed, while huge traumatic wars around Amuq and the Middle East in general are found in contemporary and classical apocalypses, the significance Shaykh Nazim gives this battle as a single, sudden millenarian event is distinctive. The new order comes violently through global transformation, driven by supernatural agents. In contrast, Sufi use of apocalyptic imagery in the past has primarily used the idea of the Mahdi to instigate social reform. While Armageddon and destruction are more pronounced in the contemporary period, it is still not common to see a single war act as a shift into a new mode of modernity. Rather, Armageddon more commonly happens after figures such as the Mahdi, Jesus, or *al-Dajjal* have acted or made an appearance.[74] Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is thus further distinguished by not being a reform movement, nor appears triggered by a particular enemy. The development of this distinctive millenarian vision is significant but not necessarily easy to account for.

One explanation may be found in Shaykh Nazim's spiritual heritage. Before Shaykh Nazim's leadership the Naqshbandi narratives and teachings were primarily transmitted orally, and it should therefore be acknowledged that previous Naqshbandi shaykhs may well have influenced Shaykh Nazim, but who have not been credited as sources. Indeed, Habibis (1985: 164) reveals 'specific prophecies about the timing of the arrival of the Mahdi were made by Shaykh Ahmed as-Sugkri and his successor, Shaykh Sheriidin, Shaykh Abdullah Dagestani's Shaykh', both of whom, according to Shaykh Nazim, would expect to see the Mahdi in their lifetimes. Unfortunately, Habibis is not able to reveal any more prophecies, or comment on whether their prophecies extended beyond the Mahdi or to something resembling Shaykh Nazim's, which is not particularly common among pre-twentieth century Sufis.

In contrast, some of Shaykh Daghestani's prophecies have been recorded. Interestingly, they diverge somewhat with Shaykh Nazim's expectations, although they don't necessarily negate them. Shaykh Dagestani speaks, for example, of a global peace which America will lead following their success in brokering peace between Israel and the Arab World (Kabbani, 2004: 457). This period of peace does not have a strong presence in Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, and is instead replaced with an interpretation of the world as degrading and decaying. He also predicted the destruction of Cairo by flood and

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[74] See for example Cook (2005: 192-200; 129-140) and Filiu (2011: 86-87).

a massive volcanic eruption from 'Mt Olympus, near Bursa', drowning Cyprus (Kabbani, 204: 456). These events are not emphasised in Haqqani end time publications, although I have heard them referenced in fieldwork, and it is unclear if they should be considered signs of the end.

The most obvious influence of Shaykh Daghestani on Shaykh Nazim comes in his prediction regarding Turkey. Following pax Americana, 'suddenly, an attack will be made on Turkey from a neighbouring country and war will start, followed by an invasion of Turkey by a close neighbouring country. This will threaten the US bases in Turkey and will cause a greater battle to ensure. This will result in a great disaster on earth and a horrible war', out of which the Mahdi will appear (Kabbani, 2004: 457). As was outlined earlier in the chapter for Shaykh Nazim the neighbouring county is identified as Russia. Shaykh Daghestani's teachings as presented by Kabbani are thus similarly millenarian and provide precedence for Shaykh Nazim. However, Shaykh Abdullah was also a twentieth century shaykh and the question of why he would turn to an unusual millenarian vision of destruction, and why Shaykh Nazim would likewise maintain it, must be addressed.

Shaykh Nazim is also unusual in a number of other ways. Like other contemporary Islamic apocalypticists, but unlike past apocalypticists, Shaykh Nazim presents an apocalyptic narrative, rather than *hadith*. His specificity, his millennial interest, and his position as a Sufi speaker, drawing on authorities that go with this, likewise make him unusual in the contemporary period. Perhaps one of the most interesting unique elements of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is his conviction that technology will be removed. This is of course not present in classical apocalypses, but it is relevant to contemporary Muslim apocalypses.

Cook (2005) notes fantasies about technology feed many Muslim apocalypticists in the Middle East. In his reading, however, technology is considered a tool of the West, the enemy of Middle East apocalypticits. For Cook's writers, 'apocalypticists share both this enemy and this hatred and seek to explain to their audiences how exactly this awesome power is going to be nullified in the immediate future or is going to be transferred in its entirety to the Muslims' (Cook, 2005: 71). When it is ineffectual it is because Muslims are

supported by angels. This notion of envy, the reversal of fortune for the West, and the dominance of Islam is not shared by Shaykh Nazim. Instead, as Chapter Four outlines, his antipathy towards technology far more seems a reaction to modernity's effect on spirituality as a whole rather than being based on a reaction to the strength of the West.

Conclusion

By taking a comparative approach and considering Shaykh Nazim's view of apocalyptic time with reference to Cohn's definition of millenarianism, this chapter has revealed a number of new insights about the Shaykh's apocalyptic narrative that help address the first research question of this thesis. To begin, it found that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse follows Cohn's definition of millenarianism in being collective, terrestrial (and literal), imminent, total, and miraculous, and thus for Shaykh Nazim, also messianic. Within this analysis it also revealed that the strategies Shaykh Nazim uses to make the end seem near extend beyond interest in the millennium to a more subtle strategy akin to that observed by O'Leary.

Moreover, this analysis found the immediacy of the End Times to have a role in promoting personal improvement. The apocalypse encourages a psychology of preparedness, not just for the Mahdi, but individual death outside of the apocalyptic context, as well as the necessity of detachment from the material world. This secondary dimension to the apocalypse, which is also based in moral improvement, may become the primary interpretation of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse if the End Times are again deferred, and it will be interesting to monitor developments within the *tariqa* on this point.

In terms of comparison with other Muslim apocalypses, this chapter has revealed that Shaykh Nazim, while superficially converging with *hadith* apocalyptic expectation, diverges in more significant ways. His reading of the Amaq tradition, for example, and his millenarian vision of a war which changes the world marks a significant departure from reform driven Mahdi movements. Furthermore, it is unusual, like his attack on technology, compared to the contemporary apocalypses described by Cook (2005) and Filiu (2011). Already then, it is becoming apparent that there is more diversity in contemporary Muslim apocalyptic thought than has been previously implied.

The millenarian dimension of Shaykh Nazim's narrative is, as mentioned above, not easy to explain, even when taking into account Shaykh Daghestani's legacy. It may be that with the global flow of ideas Shaykh Nazim has been influenced by Western apocalyptic images, or that with the advent of possible global destruction in the twentieth century, millenarian ideas will become increasingly dominant across many apocalyptic traditions. The following chapters therefore turn to the second dimension proposed in the methodology chapter to assess if the specific contemporary context can help explain this modern development in Sufi apocalyptic thought, and so address the final subquestion of research question one.

Chapter Three: A Western Apocalypse?

Introduction

The past century has seen rapid and widespread social changes. Peoples and ideas have moved throughout the world creating opportunities for new syntheses of traditions and spiritualities. Neither apocalyptic thought nor Sufism has been unaffected by this and this chapter therefore discusses whether Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse demonstrates an engagement with the Western apocalyptic tradition. This will therefore aid in answering the primary research questions of what characterises the apocalypticism of Shaykh Nazim, by identifying any ideas which draw from the Western apocalyptic milieu, and whether the unique aspects of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse and his interest in the end of the world can be accounted for, by considering whether his engagement with the apocalypse might be explained as a way of appealing to Westeners. It will therefore also account for why Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse differs from traditional Muslim apocalypse and provide a contribution to our knowledge of Sufi adaptations to the Western context.

This chapter begins by outlining the cultural context of twentieth-century Sufism in the West and discusses some popular ways of categorising its manifestations, before outlining some of the adaptations Shaykh Nazim has made to the Western context. In establishing that Shaykh Nazim has a precedent of referring to Western spiritualties as a way of appealing to spiritual seekers, it moves to consider the way his apocalypse specifically engages with Western apocalyptic themes. These include the new age, nature apocalypses, 2000 and Y2K, and finally nuclear destruction. It concludes with a discussion on how to understand these different engagements.

Sufism in the West

The spiritual landscape of the West has changed radically in the past century. Christianity has in many ways lost its position as the primary source of spiritual guidance and truth in society. It is now joined not only by expressions of traditional world religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, but a wide variety of New Religious Movements and an engagement with non-exclusive 'spiritualities'. While an interest in alternative religion gained some interest

through the Theosophy Movement of the nineteenth century (Partridge, 2005: 174), it was not until after 1945, and in particular the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, that these new expressions of religion and spirituality gained a popular platform, through both the Sixties Counter Culture movement and immigration.

As we will see in the following chapter, modernity encouraged the development of a trend which sociologists term the turn to self, where in the place of traditional and external authority, authority now lies with the individual. For spiritual belief, particularly in the Sixties, this fed into what Heelas (1996: 2, 18-20) describes as 'Self Spirituality' and 'the monistic assumption that the Self is sacred'. As such, those pursing this new mode of spirituality sought to cultivate their inner spirituality and sought well-being and freedom by seeking to uncover the authentic or 'higher' self, as distinct from the ego or lower self which is conditioned and essentially controlled by wider society and its expectations (Heelas, 1996: 19).

This sacralisation of the self was generally seen to be incompatible with the perceived authoritarian nature of Western Christianity. As the 'self is the only source of meaning and significance' (Taji-Farouki, 2007: 3), Sixties seekers sought the experiential and 'mystical' in religion which cultivated experiences which were both verifiable to the self and seen to aid in the revelation of the 'authentic'. As Geaves (2000: 140) explains, 'the inner search for self-discovery often emphasises "this worldly" spiritual goals arising from immediate contact with the Divine rather than "other worldly" concerns such as the afterlife'.

These trajectories of the search for the authentic self, authentic experience, and the freedom to step outside the bounds of one's limited religious and cultural upbringing led to many spiritual seekers of this period 'turning East'.[75] The religions of India, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism, were seen to be examples of religions and spiritualities which cultivated the authentic self and

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[75] The 'turning East' of Western culture has also been known as Easternization, a term coined by the sociologist of religion Colin Campbell. As noted by Partridge (2004: 88), the 1960s saw a growth in interest in 'all things Eastern', particularly those practices associated with mysticism, experience, and personal spiritual development. Rather than a distant, transcendent God of Christianity, seekers sought the spiritual experience of a more impersonal, but imminent spiritual force. It thus refers to a broader trend of 'neo-Romantic, mysticizing religio-cultural stream in the West', 'a syncretistic process whereby Eastern elements are absorbed into sympathetic Western worldviews' and 'the influence, absorption, import, or adoption of explicitly *Eastern* beliefs, ideas, and practices, not simply to that which looks vaguely Eastern, yet is more likely to have roots in explicitly Western traditions' (Partridge, 2004: 117-118).

the mystical experience of true reality. This interest in the East was given energy by popular culture as Taji-Farouki (2007: 7) notes: 'fascination with Eastern spirituality came to the fore in Britain with the accounts of The Beatles and some of The Rolling Stones visiting Maharishi Mahesh Yogi of Transcendental Meditation fame in India in 1968'. While some seekers did journey to Asia in search of new spiritualities, 'Eastern' spiritualities were also imported and assimilated into British and Western culture. Indeed, Partridge (2004: 99) notes 'In a fairly short period of time, the West witnessed the "de-exotification" of a range of "Eastern" beliefs and practices'. That is, practices and beliefs initially placed in broader religious or cultural traditions such as karma, yoga or meditation, became appropriated by Western culture, albeit separate from their traditional origins. As will be outlined below, Sufi ideas were appropriated by these new spiritual seekers in a number of ways.

While the new spiritual atmosphere of the Sixties resulted in a seeking and appropriation of spiritual practices from around the world, new immigration controls in the UK simultaneously led to traditional religious and spiritual practices travelling into the West via immigration. While these two processes did overlap with the travelling gurus and shaykhs, for the most part it is unclear the extent to which immigrants served as transmitters for traditions which were adopted by Sixties seekers (Geaves, 2014: 45). The result of these two strands is a melting pot of expressions of Sufism in the Western context and in an attempt to make sense of this, a number of typologies of Sufism in the West have been put forward.

Perhaps one of the most well known is provided by Hermansen (2006) who describes Sufism in America as a 'garden' comprised of perennials, transplants and hybrids. Here, Sufis are categorised with regard to both how closely they identify with 'an Islamic source and content' and the extent of adaptations made to the Western context. Transplants, for example, are 'Sufi movements conducted among small circles of immigrants with less adaptation to the American context' (Hermansen, 2006: 29).

In contrast is perennialist Sufism (also associated with universal Sufism) which 'in its broadest sense [refers] to the idea that there is a universal, eternal truth that underlies all religions' (Hemansen, 2006: 28). As such, perennialists are

less inclined to closely identify Sufism with historical Islam, but rather see it as one manifestation of truth among many. The extent to which perennialists were exclusive to Sufism as an expression of Islam thus also varied. Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998), for example, who was initiated into the Alawiyya, believed 'that he had found the true essence of Sufism, hidden under the ephemeral details in which the various historical orders and traditions had clothed the traditions' (Hammer, 2004: 133). He thus felt free to combine 'aspects of Islam, Buddhism, Hindu philosophies and several Native American traditions' into his practice and became a somewhat controversial figure in his promotion of practices which conflicted with *shari'a*.[76]

This eclectic practice of Sufism also manifested in Sixties New Religious Movements and the New Age Movement.[77] Taji-Farouki (2007: 201), for example, argues convincingly that Beshara must be understood in this context, and that the Beshara 'worldview evinces a strong affinity with that of the New Age'. Another 'universal' form of Sufism was promoted by Vilayat Khan (1916-2004), founder of the Sufi Order of the West and son of Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882-1927). While a practicing Muslim and Sufi, Hazrat Inayat Khan's Sufism was an 'eclectic universal Sufism in which he asserted that "true" Sufism is above religion and that the attainment of inner truth by direct experience is not the prerogative of Islam or any other religion' (Geaves, 2000: 175).

In the 1960s, Vilayat Khan spread his father's teachings in the West and 'attracted large numbers of the alternative youth culture of the 1960s' (Geaves,

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[76] In another paper Hermansen (2000: 159-160) elaborates on two strands within perennialist Sufi movements. Firstly are those movements that 'deliberatly express the "perennialist" title, as articulated by Rene Guenon and later Frithjof Schuon and his intellectual circle'. And who advocated adherence to the Shari'a 'at least in principle'. However, they also acknowledged there are many paths to the divine. Secondly are those groups who are more esoteric and Gnostic, combining spiritual practices from a variety of traditions. Interestingly, Hermansen describes this first group as being 'characterised by an anti-modern and somewhat millenarian vision'.

[77] The New Age Movement refers to a set of beliefs which gained particular prominence in the Sixties. Heelas (1996: 16-28) argues it can be understood as consisting of the following key features: the assumption that Western lives are dysfunctional and enslaved, that the 'socialised self' can be overcome by explaining the true, authentic self through cultivating inner experience – 'the inner realm and the inner realm alone, is held to serve as the source of authentic vitality, creativity, love, tranquillity, wisdom, power, authority, and all those other qualities which are held to compromise the perfect life'; that people are responsible for their own individual experience; the search for freedom from the lower self; and finally, perennialism, that there is wisdom in all religions, despite their differences. Thus, 'the New Age is a highly optimistic, celebratory, utopian and spiritual form of humanism, many versions...also emphasizing the spirituality of the natural order as a whole'.

2000: 175). Combining eclectic New Age themes such as 'holistic living, alternative healing practices and ecological themes' (Geaves, 2000: 182), the Sufi Order has a complex relationship with Islam. As Geaves further explains 'the initiates of the Sufi Order do not consider themselves to be Muslims...Sufism is defined by the Sufi Order of the West as the religion of the heart "in which the primary importance is to seek God in the heart of humanity". It is not considered to have a specific dogma or to require prescribed rituals from one culture, religion or source of inspiration' (Geaves, 2000: 180).

To return to Hermansen's final category, there are Sufi hybrids - 'those movements that identify more closely with an Islamic source and content...generally founded and led by immigrant Muslims who were born and raised in Muslim societies. Within those parameters, there are a wide range of responses and adaptations to the hybrid context in which they operate, for example in the membership of the movements' (Hermansen, 2006: 28). They may thus make some concessions to the American, or indeed Western context. This category is most interesting for this study as Hermansen identifies the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis and Bawa Muhaiyaddeen as examples of hybrid movements.

Acknowledging this typology, Taji-Farouki (2007: 405) proposes a twofold typology with four sections based primarily on where Sufism is positioned in regards Islam (including expectations on followers regarding conversion) and ethnicity. These categories thus consist of Islamic Sufism type a and type b and Universal Sufism type a and type b.[78]

The use of such typologies, however, is neither straightforward nor uncontroversial. Stjernholm (2014: 207) in particular challenges the usefulness of these typologies arguing *tariqas* in the transnational context are fluid and complex and may manifest as a subsection of a typology in one context and a

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[78] Islamic Sufism (a) refers to non-Muslim, Western individuals who converted to Islam and joined established *tariqas*, conceiving of the spiritual path in an 'Islamic frame of reference'. Islamic Sufism (b) refers to Muslim, non-Western individuals who introduced established *tariqas* to the Western context, requiring conversion to Islam in order to participate. Universal Sufism (a) refers to non-Muslim, Western individuals who adopted Sufism to new spiritual trends in the West. Conversion to Islam is not a requirement and ideas may be combined with other non-Islamic spiritualities. Universal Sufism (b) refers to Muslim, non-Western individuals who bought Sufism to the West, often transferring it outside of its traditional context. Conversion to Islam is not required (Taji-Farouki, 2007: 405).

different subsection in another. Moreover, he questions the usefulness of typologies in furthering the study of Sufism in that they tell us very little about what it 'actually means for the people involved in the *tariqa*, and as such, suggests 'It may be more useful to closely analyse the actual activities and narratives conceptualized as "Sufi" in these social contexts, as well as how this conceptualization is made, than attempting to determine which type of Sufism we are dealing with'.

While I would agree with Stjernholm's observations that we must be careful about applying categorizations too freely, I am not sure that this suggestion of using 'a perspective for the study of contemporary Sufism that focuses on activities and narratives of socially situated Sufis, relating these in turn to competing conceptualization of Islamic tradition, to transnational flows of people and information, and to the politics of belonging and identity on both individual and collective identities' (Stjernholm, 2014: 208), is developed enough to dismiss the usefulness of typologies entirely, particularly in regards how we analyse self conscious engagement with particular contexts.

Therefore, while I acknowledge Stjernholm's reservations, when taking a broad overview approach based on the public actions of Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Hisham in Europe and America, I would agree with the assessment of both Hermansen and Taji-Farouki that the Haqqaniyya can be understood as both hybrid and of Islamic Sufism type b respectively, due to adaptations Shaykh Nazim makes to the Western context, without compromising on a firm commitment to Islam. The extent of adaptations within the *tariqa* vary according to location and *tariqa* membership, and while due to this diversity within the group no firm, absolute generalisations can be made, there does appear to be a conscious engagement with Western culture by the shaykhs. This can be perceived as taking place in three areas.

Firstly, sensitivity is shown to Western perceptions of Islam, particularly around women. Geaves (2000: 153) notes that in gatherings in London, particularly when Shaykh Nazim visited, men and women were permitted to mingle freely, and moreover, that after a major conference in the US 'both Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Kabbani called their wives to the platform at the close of the conference in a public acknowledgment of their valued contribution to the work of the two

men'. Further, on naqshbandi.org Shaykh Nazim's daughter Hajjah Naziha has a biography under the subsection 'Living Masters' alongside only two other biographies, those of the shaykhs. However, these expressions of Western gender equality are most easily accepted in the American context, and harder to enforce without conflict in Britain (Geaves, 2000: 154).

Secondly, the Shaykh showed considerable tolerance and flexibility towards non-Muslims and new converts. He did not insist, for example, that one need be a Muslim to follow him initially or give *bayat*, although in my experience, it is generally accepted within the *tariqa* that this will happen in time. Non-Muslims such as myself are encouraged to attend *zikrs*, ask questions, and engage in *salat*.

The tolerance and flexibility of Shaykh Nazim was likewise extended to new converts. Shaykh Nazim repeatedly stated that a new Muslim should not feel obliged to observe the whole *shari'a* immediately. He outlines, for example:

> Allah did not send the whole *Shariah* in one day. It was completed within 23 years. It shows us that the followers of Muhammad were improving their prayers step by step. First they were only praying 2 *rakats*. After the Night-journey Allah ordered them to pray 5 times. We too must try to make the way easy for new Muslims (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 50).

This supports Geaves's (2000: 148) assertion that 'the Shaykh himself does not believe that his method of teaching Islam is innovative but sees it as firmly based upon the example of the Prophet' and that he 'relates to new comers according to their understanding and never criticises their present situation or current beliefs and practices...even when they become Muslims he allows them to develop according to their capacity and desire to embrace their new faith' (Geaves, 2000: 149).

Indeed, recognising that many converts have had a long spiritual journey before meeting him, often encountering faiths such as Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as New Age philosophies and a general attitude of respect for diversity in the spiritual path, Shaykh Nazim was often careful to acknowledge other religions and demonstrate an interest in alternative spiritual paths.[79] On a number of

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[79] As a more general trend, Köse observed a relationship between Western conversion to Sufism and a history with New Religious Movements. He argues 'People who are drawn into

occasions, for example, he visited centres of other religions, and in a demonstration of sensitivity to his audience, Shaykh Nazim explicitly references a more universalist stance, stating for example, 'a human being may follow any religion. One is free to follow any belief from East to West. One is free to follow the prophets, to follow the saints, to follow the shaykhs, to follow the Babajis. They are free, but the main purpose of following must be to face towards the heavens' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 2). Moreover he refers to Allah as being 'the Lord of Buddha' as well as 'the Lord of Abraham, the Lord of Moses, [and] the Lord of Jesus Christ' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 51). This does not mean, however, that Shaykh Nazim considered all paths to God as equal, or that an established *murid* or Muslim would be wise to start practicing Hinduism. Indeed, in the same talk, he describes the Naqshbandi order as 'the most perfect way to the heavens' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 2).

His flexibility extends to opening a conversation and should not be seen as an acceptance of spiritual eclecticism as might be seen in perrenialist Sufism. Nonetheless, Geaves (2000: 151) considers this flexibility to be effective, finding for example, 'the Shaykh's willingness to visit the centres towards which young Western seekers have gravitated in their search for fulfilment brings his undoubted charisma into contact with them, but it is his tolerant universalism and focus on the experiential dimension that attracts his followers to him'.

This leads onto the final point of adaptation Shaykh Nazim demonstrated when addressing a Western audience. Occasionally within Haqqani texts, Shaykh Nazim uses language familiar to Western spiritual seekers. While this may include referencing specific practices such as healing and meditation, or beliefs such as the four elements[80], more often it was language and spiritual goals which, while maybe appealing to anyone, were particularly synchronous to

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Sufism are most likely to be from the group of people who have been progressively seeking to master spiritual and/or physical disciplines in order to achieve a state of enlightenment and self-harmony, often following the examples of a revered teacher or people who have been in search of meaning to their lives'. While initially interested in Eastern spiritualities, his participants turned to Sufism which 'offered them an overall system, a way of life based on moral and ethical values' (Köse, 1994: 166).

[80] See for example, 'You must use some methods to arrange your four elements: water, fire, air, and earth. They all have to be put on their own line to achieve the balance and to make it possible for the power to run through your hand to the one being healed' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 74).

values of the New Age Movement and well-being culture, such as achieving 'unlimited happiness'.[81]

Given the flexible approach Shaykh Nazim has demonstrated and the potential for this interaction with Western spiritual values to attract and maintain Western spiritual seekers, it is interesting to consider the extent to which Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse draws on and is expressed in ways which are similar to broad apocalyptic trends in the West.[82] Discussing this will thus aid in answering why Shaykh Nazim shows such a strong interest in the end and importantly, why it has taken this form. The following part of this chapter therefore continues by discussing firstly whether there are any similarities with New Age apocalypse, and secondly, the similarities with more catastrophic popular apocalypses.

<u>The New Age</u>

In popular use, the apocalypse denotes catastrophe, the violent end of the world as we know it. However, the end of the current order, or even human history as it has existed to this point is not always associated with cataclysm. That the end might come peacefully and therefore most likely gradually, is expressed by the difference in terminology between pre and post millennialism and catastrophic and progressive millennialism. While in recent years, pre-millennialism, associated with violence and sudden change, has been popular among those who hold apocalyptic beliefs, progressive millennialism, the view that a non-catastrophic change is coming, has nonetheless had a presence.

Such a view is perhaps most recently seen in the New Age movement prior to the year 2000. Such visions for the new age were optimistic. The world would be transformed into a spiritual paradise, peaceful and without injustice and

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[81] This language is replicated in the Glastonbury context where, Draper (2002: 141) observed a use of language more familiar to the New Age Movement, such as 'breathing in light' and 'taking in the Divine'.

[82] As I noted in the literature review, the appeal of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse to Westeners has been noted previously in scholarship. Geaves (2000: 152), for example, argues Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse appeals to 'alienated and disaffected members of British culture'. Damerl (2006: 122-124) draws a more explicit connection finding 'the order has been able to unite traditional Sunni ideas of the 'Last Day' with the millennial expectations of a new generation of European and American converts to Islam'. This apocalyptic interest both 'tap[s] a vein of contemporary spiritual interests that can foster interest in the order' and provides a gateway for other spiritual lessons the shaykhs wish to teach. This is not limited to apocalyptic teachings, as Damrel outlines 'The Haqqanis can effectively transform such modern tropes of 'Western' spirituality as religious disenchantment, interest in prophesy, and millennial anxiety about the 'next world' into Islamic dialogues concerned with behaviour in this world'.

suffering (Hanengraff, 2002: 250). This change would be the result of a change in global consciousness, as humanity realises the values of interconnectedness and spiritual holism. In some manifestations this change was seen as inevitable due to the change from the astrological Age of Pieces to the Age of Aquarius – a time dominated by peace, a lack of materialism and spirituality and living in harmony with nature (Mayer, 2013: 263).

For some, this peaceful transition would come instead through the assistance of a messiah-like figure. Noting the significance of Jesus in popular Western culture, even outside Christian traditions, Taji-Farouki (2007: 116) observes, for example 'A general mood of expectation crystallized during the 1960s and 1970s, as prophecies of Jesus's imminent return gathered pace among apocalyptic and millenarian trends in New Religious Movements and New Age Communities'. In other New Age circles, Christ was replaced by extraterrestrials who would lead humanity into a golden, spiritually awakened time (Partridge, 2005: 200).

However, as noted by Heelas (1996: 75) the idea of external agencies ushering in a utopia is not particularly widespread within the New Age Movement. Rather, the New Age would come gradually as spiritually awakened individuals, including New Age practitioners, would gradually change the world through unlocking their own spiritual potential. The effects of this change in each individual would have far reaching effects, as Heelas explains (1996: 75-76): 'Inner spirituality is seen as serving to bring about a world of harmony, peace and bliss', and was even credited by some for ending the Cold War. While New Age millennialism may therefore be considerably more optimistic for the fate of all humanity compared to catastrophic millennialism, this search for utopia and the need for change demonstrates a dissatisfaction with the present as is seen in more pessimistic manifestations.

Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is undeniably catastrophic and exclusive in that only the faithful will be saved. It will be brought by divine powers and utopia will only be established by the work of non-human agencies. However, while not undermining those fundamental points, occasionally within his apocalyptic narrative, Shaykh Nazim describes the end in ways far more familiar to the progressive millennialism of the New Age. As will be expanded upon in Chapter

Five, the utopia he describes is one in which the fulfilment of human spiritual potential is emphasised. Moreover, in regards the dawning of the new age, Shaykh Nazim also appears to make concessions to alternative spiritual backgrounds. He speaks, for example, of a coming change that implies an awakening, a preparation before the time of Jesus.[83]

Indeed, this willingness to be flexible with terminology is demonstrated in the following exchange with a listener. The listener asks whether he believes there is truth in the idea of a coming change in consciousness, which he describes as 'a big hope for many people' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 89). Shaykh Nazim acknowledges this is 'an important question' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 90), and formulates his response in a way that both acknowledges the validity of this belief and re-positions it in line with his own more catastrophic apocalyptic outlook:

> We are expecting and seeing that in a short while there will be a common change, physically and then spiritually. Perhaps it will be physical for some people and spiritual for others, but time is over now. Time is over and therefore you have been prepared for something, just like all nations, all humanity is being prepared for something that is approaching. These are huge events, unexpected huge events' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 91).

Overall, however, such references to the new age consciousness are relatively rare in Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse.

Nature

The themes of returning to nature and the problems of the artificial and technological, as well as rural vs urban, are present in many ways throughout Shaykh Nazim's teachings. Returning to nature, renouncing modern technology, and living away from cities are necessary ways of surviving the collapse of civilisation in the coming catastrophic war. Most importantly, Shaykh Nazim stresses that being close to nature is advantageous to spirituality. On the

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[83] See for example, 'When the Last Days approach, there will be an opening for people to come on such levels and to understand. They will find out things they have never heard about before' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 13), 'These are some secret power which we are now allowed to speak about. Time is about to be changed. The winter sleep is finishing and the water of spirituality is starting to move in the bodies of people. The second millennium is coming closer and you will witness unexpected strange events' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 42) and 'The time now until the year 2000 is a preparation for everyone to be woken up, for them to understand that the next millennium will belong to Jesus Christ (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 56).

physical level, for example, he states 'we have been created from earth and we must try to be close to earth. This will give you a good character and make you more humble. If you sit on strange chairs, you think you are important' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 102).

Closely related is the concept that living with nature means living a simple life. As such, the Shaykh teaches 'it is not easy for people to follow a way which asks them to lead a simple life closer to nature and becoming more humble. People usually want to be proud not humble. They don't want to be simple, but to be complex' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 59). What is clear, then, is that being close to nature helps cultivate spiritual qualities, but not necessarily because of any innate spirituality within the natural world. However, Shaykh Nazim's teachings on nature are also expressed in ways that very closely relate to the language of contemporary Western spiritual trends, as is described in three examples below.

Earth as mother

In the many trends of contemporary Western spirituality, nature spirituality is perhaps one of the most significant. Such spiritualities range from engagement with neopaganisam to neoromanticism to deep ecology.[84] Within 'green' spiritualities, the concept of nature as mother, complemented by the 1970s Gaia hypothesis[85] is particularly significant. As noted by Partridge (2004: 63) 'the notion of Earth as Mother is...ancient' and today, 'permeates popular culture and environmental discourse' (Partridge, 2004: 64). In spiritualities which draw on such imagery, the earth is seen to be alive, a sustainer and nurturer, who in some eco-spiritualities, is suffering due to human neglect.

While the Qur'an is clear that God has provided the earth to serve man through His mercy (Rahman, 1980: 79)[86], Shaykh Nazim seems to explicitly reference this mother nature discourse. He states, for example, 'be friendly with nature, which is like your mother who gives everything without tiring' (*Sohbats 2013*

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[84] As summarised by Lee (1997: 123-124) deep ecology refers to the ideology that humankind needs to radically change how it sees its place in the environment and ecosystem. Rather than seeing humanity as a privileged and unique species, humans should be seen as no different to any other life, and should thus work to protect and cultivate all life.
[85] The Gaia hypothesis was proposed by scientists James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis in the 1970s. Referring to the Greek goddess 'the Mother of All', this thesis proposes that Earth is seen as a mother, and thus nurtured and respected as such (Partridge, 2005: 61-63).
[86] See for example *sura* 2:29, 31:20; 45:12-13.

[2011]: 2077) and 'nature is the mother of mankind' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 8732). As such, the idea of nature as sustainer is also emphasised. Yet, by engaging with this, Shaykh Nazim is also able to make this spirituality Islamic as he suggests that while nature may be a conduit to spiritual power it is not a self sufficient spiritual source as in paganism, as can be seen in his teaching: 'Nature gives mankind love and mankind gives nature love. They take this love from their Creator. He gives His Divine Love to nature and nature gives it to you and you love to get it' (al-Haqqani, 1995b: 2).

Nature vs. the artificial

The concept of nature as sustainer is also expressed very clearly when the Shaykh speaks out against the artificial. While the artificial products of modernity are seen to circumvent the will of God they also damage human flourishing and well being. The Shaykh encourages his *murids* to 'eat as much organic food as possible' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 79) and to avoid foods which have been affected artificially. In doing so, *murids* will gain freedom from those who want to control them through food and drink (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 80).[87]

Similarly, on natural medicine he states 'people think different pills, syrups, injections or laser treatments will cure them...But the fact is, these methods do against our natural being...Chemicals destroy our bodies like poisons, because they are not of the same substance' (al-Haqqani, 2012: 15). In contrast, God has given us natural medicines found in creation such as herbs, which, if God wishes it, will cure illness, as can be seen in his teaching, 'when people use herbs and everything which belongs to wild nature and hasn't been changed, they will find the best medicine' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 83) and 'if man eats that which comes from nature, the way it is, it is the best medicine for physical bodies' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 82).

The 'holistic' milieu is one of the most significant spiritual trends in the contemporary Western world. In this understanding, all things, physical and spiritual, individual and global, are connected. By engaging with the 'natural', free from artificial manipulation, one can improve one's physical and therefore spiritual health. Partridge (2004: 20) notes organic food is promoted as

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[87] This should not be read as indicating a conspiracy. Rather, it more likely refers to Shaykh Nazim's view that consumerism and focus on the material all but enslaves people to their egos.

'fundamentally hoslitic'. Free from chemicals it benefits the individual and the environment. Natural medicines and the healing power of nature, are likewise holistic and increasingly popular. Within the holistic milieu, there are often descriptions of energies both within the universe and within the individual. If these energies are synchronised, wellbeing will flourish, if not, ill health will result. Shaykh Nazim again reflects such beliefs, describing how artificial fibre such as nylon and concrete take away energy (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 5547).

Problem with cities

Finally, the benefits of nature are promoted when he describes cities as 'poisoned' and artificial (see for example, *Sohbats 2013* [2007]: 1056). As has been seen, there are practical and spiritual reasons to leave the cities, but it is worth noting the atmosphere of well being the Shaykh Nazim promotes in line with the values of holism. The Shaykh teaches, for example, 'concrete buildings disturb people and give them trouble. Therefore I am advising you to run from cities and run to nature, to mountains, valleys, fields and villages...But through cities everything is artificial, which is not suitable for our bodies...They are slaves to technology and until they leave it and come back to nature they will never be happy or live a sweet or good life!' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 5548).

Apocalyptic nature

Given the prevalence of eco themes in new spirituality and non-religious concerns over global destruction caused by humanity's actions towards nature, such as wide scale deforestation and global warming, it is perhaps not surprising that there exist eco-apocalyptic movements. Earth First!, for example, predicted that a major disaster, brought by the industrial-governmental complex, would cause the collapse of civilisation. Following a millenarian pattern of thought, Earth First!ers argued the wilderness must be protected, as following this catastrophe, nature would again reassert itself, with or without human existence (Lee, 1997: 126).

Nature is prominent in Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse as a place of safety during global catastrophe. However, nature is also used itself to imply apocalypse, perhaps more familiar to those with an awareness of environmental spirituality. The Shaykh implies a number of times that nature itself can be apocalyptic, and

not just because God can use it to His ends. For example, he states 'as long as you are against nature you will die, you will kill, you will suffer, and it will not diminish...When Man is against nature through technology, nature is also coming against Mankind', a viewpoint remarkably similar to those who see the destruction of our planet as destruction of ourselves (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 2076). Moreover, he refers to the familiar reciprocal relationship: 'if you are going to be friendly with nature, nature protects you. If you come like an enemy to nature, nature fights you also' (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 7551) as well as 'When you neglect her [Mother Nature], poison her, insult her, she won't give back to you in return. Nature will then be an enemy to humans and because the mother of all kinds of germs and viruses – she'll attack people' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 8732).

The removal of technology, that 'man will be forced to come back to nature' is a message that God will reassert his dominance, that man will be forced to live as He intended within His creation, removing the arrogance of man with technology. Yet this theistic theme is complementary to those within eco spiritualities and environmental movements concerned that humanity lives out of balance with nature.

Nuclear apocalypse

The previous chapter outlined how Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse differs from previous Muslim apocalypses by being millenarian and absolutely catastrophic. Combined with his pessimism that humanity cannot change and avert the end, this is an apocalypse which therefore very much parallels popular formulations of the end of the world in the contemporary West. One of the most characteristic elements of twentieth and twenty-first century apocalypse in the West is the idea of global worldwide destruction caused by nuclear weapons.

As we have seen, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is expressed as a new reading of the Amuq tradition, where a global war wipes out the majority of humanity before the return of the Mahdi. While the exact nature of the weaponry that will be used is unclear, Shaykh Nazim draws on nuclear apocalyptic imagery, as he frequently refers to a 'fire' which will spread throughout the world (al-Haqqani, 1994: 68; sufismus-online, 2014c [1999]). Moreover, he refers directly to nuclear weapons, stating for example: 'we are pleading with the Heavens to

send us someone with miraculous powers. Otherwise those dangerous atomic weapons will remove the whole civilisation from East to West and kill billions of people. We cannot stop it' (a-Haqqani, 1997a: 89). He similarly refers to nuclear imagery: 'They'll fly like dried tree leaves in the air. One in five survive' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 3907) and describes cities turning to ash (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 34).[88] As this quote demonstrates, whatever the exact nature of the weaponry used, the war will be absolutely catastrophic. It is described as 'Armageddon...the last and biggest war which will be in history' (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 520) and it will 'destroy billions…the biggest war which will be on earth before the last day' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 40) and it will destroy all civilization (al-Haqqani, 1997a: 89).

Given their capacity for widespread destruction, it is perhaps not surprising that nuclear weapons should feature in many contemporary apocalyptic scenarios. Indeed, as Cook (2005) has observed, nuclear weapons are employed by many contemporary Arab apocalyptic writers. However, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse differs from Cook's apocalypticists in that the war he describes is globally catastrophic, not just directed at the West. Moreover, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is steeped in Cold War imagery, not just in its use of nuclear imagery, but in the central position given to Russia who, as we have seen, will be the ones who ultimately initiate World War Three.

These images of fiery, planetary destruction, and the significance of Russia, are powerful images which resonate with the Western apocalyptic milieu. The destruction of World War Two, which culminated in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, had a profound impact on the global consciousness. As Strozier (2005: 269) outlines 'something shifted in our consciousness in the middle of the twentieth century which was directly associated with the presence of nuclear

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[88] However, this nuclear imagery has not always been clearly implied. In one recording, for example, Shaykh Nazim tough 'During that first night without technology, billions of people will be dead by morning – without atomic bombs, nuclear bombs. No need for them. Because if nuclear bombs are used they will poison the earth and I don't think that permission should be given to allow that. But in another way people may die, in billions, because technology will stop, or they are going to crazy, to go mad, and in a short time they will also pass away, so that those who never ask spiritual or Heavenly Support are not going to live' (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 6275). While in general, a use of nuclear weaponry is more often used by Shaykh Nazim, the above teaching does not mean Shaykh Nazim should be seen as completely inconsistent. This version of destruction stresses the reliance of humanity on technology, and the mystery of the exact content of the coming days. Even if the war is not necessarily nuclear, it will be catastrophically destructive in a way that has only been previously seen in visions of atomic war.

weapons in the world. We don't need God any longer to end it all. The power is entirely within us and in our arsenals. We alone possess it'. This shift in consciousness was reflected in twentieth century apocalyptic traditions as Wojcik (1997: 98) outlines: 'Since the end of World War Two, visions and beliefs about the end of the world appear to have become increasingly pessimistic, stressing cataclysmic disaster as much as previous millenarian visions emphasised the imminent arrival of a redemptive new era'.

As we will see in the following chapter, the mid twentieth century saw a rise in Marian apparitions, many of which stressed the likelihood of nuclear disaster if humanity did not change its ways. For dispensationsalists, evidence for the inevitable nuclear disaster was found in the prophetic verses of Joel, Revelation, Ezekiel and Zechariah (Boyer, 1992: 123). Hal Lindsey, for example, argues Zec. 14: 12, which reads 'And this shall be the plague where-with the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem. Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth' (KJV) is a clear reference to a nuclear explosion (O'Leary, 1994: 163).[89] While *hadith* vividly describe catastrophic wars before Qiyama, this fiery apocalyptic imagery is less readily available, and it should therefore not be seen as inevitable that nuclear imagery should appear in Muslim apocalyptic writing.

The effect of the nuclear age upon popular psychology was apparent outside of Christianity in a variety of new spiritual movements which gained momentum in the post war years. While many aspects of new spirituality, particularly those associated with the New Age Movement are essentially world-affirming[90] or

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[89] This translation is by no means universally accepted. The New International Version translation of this verse reads 'This is a plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth'. This translation is thus less indicative of a nuclear holocaust.

[90] The terminology of 'world-affirming' is given by Roy Wallis, who devised a three-fold typology to describe new religious movements. Firstly are those groups described as 'world-rejecting', organisations or movements who see the world as corrupt, impure or dangerous, and who thus advocate as little contact with it as possible. Second in the typology are 'world-affirming' groups who do not reject the world, but rather seek the fulfilment of human potential within it. Finally are the 'world-accommodating' groups who do not promote an exlusive path, but rather seek to provide 'highly experiential techniques that can be utilised by people in order to revitalise their spirituality more generally' (Fox, 2005: 329). In a modification of this model, Heelas (1996: 30) describes New Age activities as falling on a spectrum between world-rejecting to world-affirming, where world affirming refers to spirituality as being utilized 'as a means to the end of experiencing the *best of the outer world*, rather than being intrinsically valued'. The majority of

expressed as a positive and transformative millennialism, a number of new spiritualities expressed a more pessimistic outlook of humanity's future and progress. This is most notable in the spiritualities around UFOs which emerged in the 1950s. Very much a twentieth century spirituality which combines the need for rationality with the need to be saved, Landes (2011: 391) argues 'UFOlogy comes in the shadows of Hiroshima: now that humanity can destroy itself; superior aliens will intervene to save us from ourselves'. While the pessimism surrounding humanity is not limited to nuclear weapons (destruction may well be ecological and materialism), many early UFO movements nonetheless, demonstrate a strong concern about the technological developments of humanity and its lack of spiritual and emotional maturity to manage them.

Sister Thedra (1900-1992), whose movement would become the subject of the famous study by Festinger et al (1956)[91], for example, claimed to receive messages from benevolent 'space brothers', who had joined to Earth to guide humanity away from the likelihood of nuclear war. Themes of pessimism surrounding humanity's ability to avoid destruction without listening to Sister Thedra dominate the messages: 'The people of Earth are rushing, rushing toward to the suicide of themselves...To this we are answering with signs and wonders in the sky' (Clark, 2007: 33). Similar themes are present in the Raëlian movement, as outlined by Sentes and Palmer (2007: 64) who describe Raël as addressing the profound trepidation evoked by the threat of a global nuclear holocaust by criticising our aggressive abuse of the fruits of science and technology'. Again, disaster will only be averted by heeding the advice of the advanced extraterrestrial beings.

While these spiritualities and new interpretations of classical Christian texts and Marian apparitions gained in prominence during the Cold War, the threat and

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New Age activities and groups, he argues, fall between the two extremes, seeing that inner spirituality can be cultivated without being a means to an end, whilst maintaining complete detachment from the world is not a requirement for spiritual attainment.

[91] *When Prophecy Fails* (Festinger *et al* 1956) is a classic study of the impact of prophecy failure in religious groups. Festinger *et al* studied a small UFO movement who taught the coming of an imminent apocalypse. After the apparent failure of the prophecies, Festinger *et al* described the actions and processes the group went through to resolve their cognitive dissonance. Importantly, this did not involve abandoning the belief but increasing proselytisation so as to convince more people of the truth of the message (Dein, 2013: 28). However, subsequent research has challenged this theory, demonstrating a much wider range of responses to failed prophecy, suggesting Festinger's group were actually quite unusual.

position of nuclear imagery in Western apocalypse has not diminished in recent years. Rather than states, the perceived nuclear threats come from terrorist groups (Strozier, 2005: 270). Indeed, Wojcik (1997: 151) argues 'the end of the Cold War has had little effect on prophecy beliefs about nuclear apocalypse, revealing how deeply embedded they are in a wide range of catastrophic millennialist traditions...As a permanent fixture in the American cultural and religious landscape, the bomb will remain an ominous end times sign until the day nuclear war is no longer a possibility'. The unease around technology and manmade destruction was also expressed in the less enduring threat of Y2K, or the millennium bug.

<u>Y2K</u>

Perhaps the moment which held the most millenarian potential in living memory was the approach of the Year 2000. Indeed, on this expectation Thompson (2005b: 246) observes 'early in the 1990s academics working in several disciplines came to believe that the approach of the year 2000 would bring about compulsive changes in religion and society'. Such expectations were widely echoed in wider media, waiting for an outbreak of millennial chaos. In actuality, the year 2000 saw less apocalyptic activity than was expected. As Newport (2006: vii) notes, even within Christianity there was no particular reason for the year 2000 to be seen as significant as there is little theological reason to assume the millennium would dawn in line with a calendar which many Christian themselves acknowledged to be arbitrary, although it is has an interesting symmetry for those interested in sacred time.[92] Indeed, a popular book placed the return of Christ in 1988 (Boyer, 1992: 130), a date which Lindsay likewise obliquely referred to (O'Leary, 1994: 152).

Nonetheless, interest in the Year 2000 was by no means absent. As early as eighteenth century America, for example, postmillennialists such as Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) saw the newly independent nation as the place that would prepare the way for Christ's millennium, which he saw as beginning around the year 2000 (Boyer, 1992: 74).

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[92] While there is little tradition that encourages 2000 as Christ's return, it nonetheless is a date with an appealing symmetry for those Christians with an awareness of sacred time. The year 2000 would be the year 6000 where there were 2000 years between Creation and Moses, 2000 years between Moses and Jesus, and now, perhaps, 2000 years between Jesus and the Eschaton (Thompson, 2005b: 146).

In the twentieth century, those Christians interested in 2000 tended to be from the evangelical-Pentecostal-fundamentalist traditions (Thompson, 2005b). Indeed, Thompson (2005: 148) observes 'while the mainstream churches were vaguely conscious of "owning" the year 2000, they could not agree on how to assert their ownership'. In contrast, evangelical Christians embarked on an evangelising mission to convert the world, hastening Christ's return (Thompson, 2005b: 148-149).

The appeal of 2000 was also felt outside of Christianity, and indeed the date held as much significance in the secular world view as the religious. Newport (2006: viii), for example, notes this somewhat irrational fascination, finding 'something in the individual and collective consciousness simply would not give in to the dictates of plain reason. The number with those many noughts on the end surely must herald the event of something, even if most were not sure what'. The year 2000 was speculated over as an exotic and fantastic time. Writing in 1967, Bell (1967: 640) outlines some of the expectations surrounding 2000 at that time including the US Atomic Energy Commission promising a future where housewives are supported by a robot maid, the prediction of Isaac Asimov that humanity will be living underground and exploring the far reaches of the solar system, and speculation from *The New York Times* on the fashions of millennial women.

As the millennium drew nearer, millennial anxieties focused on the Y2K or millennium bug phenomenon, the belief that a coding error meant computer systems would malfunction or cease to function entirely, affecting everything from banking to civil organisation to utilities provision. The predicted affects of this malfunction varied 'from a few days inconvenience, similar to a bad snow storm, to that of complete global shutdown and resulting chaos over a much longer period of time' (Tapia, 2002: 267).

Billions were spent in fixing the problem and the fear of Y2K entered the public imagination in popular books, websites, and newsletters which warned 'people to prepare for crisis' (Tapia, 2002: 267). As Tapia (2002: 267) observes, the problem of Y2K was culturally significant as 'the year 2000 computer software problem threatened the reliability of the computer and, as a result, threatened

the stability of the dependent relationship', that is, the dependence humanity has on the computer.

The possibility of Y2K became both a secular and religious apocalyptic event. Andrea Tapia documented the response to Y2K in the American secular context by analysing the response of a group she terms militia-patriots, who might otherwise be described as survivalists. While not always religious, those who engage in survivalism are often heavily influenced by millenarian patterns of thought. In contrast to religious apocalypticists, survivalists believe the apocalypse to be entirely man made, 'brought about by social and economic collapse, environmental degradation, and/or civil or nuclear war' (Tapia, 2003: 490). Tapia's (2003: 489-490) group in particular were motivated by the 'fear of the disintegrating "Old World Order" and declining American wealth and influence in the world'. Additionally, they 'possess a deep-seated mistrust of government officials, an obsessive hatred of federal authority, a belief in far reaching conspiracy theories, and a feeling that Washington bureaucrats have utterly discarded the US Constitution'. As such, they recommend self-sufficiency and the honing of survival skills. The Y2K threat was predicted by this group to cause widespread social chaos and 'viewed as part of a larger conspiracy led by the national and international governments to upset the normal technological stability of the country enough to declare martial law and take away liberties' (Tapia, 2003: 501).

Some Christians likewise showed interest in Y2K. As observed even within dispensationalism[93], Y2K does not fit readily into the Christian apocalyptic scenario. Nonetheless, a small group of Christians found interesting ways to make Y2K a Christian apocalyptic event, demonstrating the malleability of apocalypse in fitting with wider cultural fears and expectations, as well as the apocalyptic power of Y2K. McMinn (2001: 215) refers to these Christians as adopting a 'Noah' strategy in that they both found the need to prepare an Ark (in terms of self sufficient communities in the wilderness) and that they associated Y2K with judgement:

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[93] The dispensationalist author David Hunt, for example, argued that while Y2K may well cause a problem, it could not be considered part of the traditional apocalyptic scenario as the Anti-Christ would require computers to fulfil the prediction of the 'mark of the beast' for buying and selling' (Cowan, 2003: 74).

> What made Y2K powerful as an eschatological event was that it combined an apocalyptic date with an apocalyptic event (potential social/economic meltdown due to over dependence on technology) that could be interpreted as judgment on a world that had replaced worship of God with idolatry of science and technology. Y2K offered a tangible fear to attach to abstract anxiety about a world perceived as becoming increasingly evil (McMinn, 2005: 211).

Here, there are considerable similarities with Shaykh Nazim's own vision on the ills of the modern world and its dependence on technology.

Importantly, for these Christians, Y2K was made an Christian apocalyptic event because it would facilitate the possibility of certain apocalyptic events, such as the rise of cashless society, necessitating a tattoo with a number on the hand to trade (Cowan, 2003: 76).

While much religious apocalyptic speculation outside of Y2K began to die down as the millennium approached (Thompson, 2005b: 151), Shaykh Nazim's interest was not diminished. While acknowledging 2000 to be a Christian date (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 69), he nonetheless repeatedly taught that massive change was imminent. Shaykh Nazim's 2000 narrative can be understood as consisting of three areas: anxiety and uncertainty about what to expect after 2000, themes of oncoming chaos and destruction and descriptions of a millenarian vision of a radically changed world, which together reflect the broader millennial imagery and anxiety which more popularly crystallised into descriptions of Y2K and uncertainty over the new millennium.

On evoking millennial anxiety, for example, Shaykh Nazim reflected 'everyone is afraid of the coming days. Everyone is wondering what the coming millennium will bring' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 21) and in December 1999, 'Fifteen days to the millennium...and then you should find yourself in another world. In other unknown conditions. Such conditions that no-one know can anticipate' (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 521). Shaykh Nazim also gave 2000 as a date for the chaos and destruction for the war to start.[94] Finally, he describes 2000 and

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[94] See for example, 'We are reaching the second millennium. What is going to happen? If we do not change our direction, no doubt it will be terrible' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 22) and 'There are only 2 more years until the year 2000 when unexpected huge events will happen, terrible and horrible wars, because people are following satan and devils and are trying to make even more evil' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 69). Alternatively see 'People cannot imagine the tragedy which will

beyond as a time of change, indeed, the time of Jesus Christ (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 56). In this period democracy will be replaced by monarchy (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 81), and the world will be full of spiritually enlightened people, with materialism eradicated.[95] In short, 'everything is just going to stop, to finish at the end of 1999, a new time is going to open for all mankind' (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 5305).

That the Haqqaniyya were aware of the power of millennial anxiety and uncertainty is reflected in their engagement with the Y2K discourse. A number of times Shaykh Nazim referred to Y2K and the expected computer errors as fulfilment of the Naqshbandi predictions that in the last days technology would end. While by no means the dominant element of his 2000 predictions he stated, for example, 'On the New Year's night, at midnight, the technology is going to be finished' (sufismus-online, 2014c [1999]) and 'when Grandsheikh said that technology is going to finish, no one was believing him. But now they are saying the same, scientists and computer specialists are speaking about it, that the life of mankind depending on technology is going to finish with the last day of 1999' (sufismus-online, 2014f [1999]). Here, like Christian Y2K believers, Shaykh Nazim appropriates the Y2K discourse to fit his own apocalypse, extending the destruction to all technology, not just the computer.

The Haqqaniyya also engaged with the survivalist element of this narrative. Nielsen *et al* (2006: 112) observed sections of survivalism guides were lifted from survivalist websites, and my own research suggests preparing for the destruction of Y2K was taken very seriously, at least by a small group of *murids*.

There is considerable synchronicity between Y2K and Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic predictions regarding the fallibility of technology. However, Y2K does not readily fit his most consistent apocalyptic expectation, as rather than a sudden end of technology in the midst of ordinary life, Shaykh Nazim sees the

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happen in the war to come. It can come in 1996, or in 1997, or in 1998, or in 1999. It will not wait for the year 2000 to come' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 116).

[95] See for example, 'In these days when we are approaching the year 2000 we need blessings more than anything else. There is a new century in front of us where everything will have to be changed. We will have to move from materialism into spiritualism, because our souls are fed up with the dirt and the nonsense of materialism' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 102) and 'The next century will only be for True Ones. It will start with the coming of Jesus. No one can change that. He will follow the *Sharia* of Muhammad and for 40 years this world will be like Paradise: with justice, respect, worshipping, love, mercy, blessings, lights...' (al-Haqqani, 1997a: 91).

end of technology as preceeded by a global catastrophic war, something not present in popular Y2K narratives.

In the lead up to the millennium it is therefore possible to see some attempt to reconcile the popular narrative with Shaykh Nazim's more long term apocalyptic speculation. In 1999, for example, the Shaykh argued the war would start within the year. It would end 'on New Year's Night, at midnight', as the Mahdi ended the war and technology (sufismus-online, 2014c [1999]).

By December of 1999, the Shaykh was more ambiguous about the relationship between the millennium and his apocalyptic vision. While he stressed that in fifteen days at the start of the New Year *murids* would find themselves 'in another world. In other unknown conditions. Such conditions that no-one now can anticipate', driven by the end of technology[96], it seemed implied that some technology might remain to wage the war early in 2000 (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 521-522). Here, we can thus observe an attempt by Shaykh Nazim to maintain Y2K relevance, without compromising his own apocalyptic vision.

Discussion

An examination of the symbols and expressions used in Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse reveals the complexity of his engagement with the spiritual atmosphere of the West. Of the above discussion, I believe we can discern three strands: a deliberate engagement with the language of alternative spiritualities so as to appeal to interested Westeners, an appropriation of themes in the Western apocalyptic milieu, and finally, a use of apocalyptic imagery which, while familiar to a Western audience, is by no means unique to the Western mindset, and may represent a shared global vision of the end peculiar to the modern world.

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[96] This *sohbat* is not entirely clear but it does imply that there will be a massive change at the New Year because of the end of technology. The Shaykh outlines: 'Therefore the authority that Allah Almighty granted to people to carry them once more to their Lord, but which they use for opposite purposes, they use technology against the Lord of Heavens, and they fight against Allah Almighty's orders; therefore now, first of all that authority that was granted to them, this electricity will be taken from them. It is not only taken from earth, through computers, but from the sun, waves, magnetic waves will come and, like a hoover take away all electricity, and I fear that it is going to affect our bodies, that there will also be some electric waves on our bodies. So many people are going to die from that, because it is taken away. Only those who are protected, people with heavenly protection, those who are under protection, will not be harmed, no harm can come on them' (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 521).

It is clear Shaykh Nazim is aware of Western spiritual trends, and I would suggest that his references to new age consciousness show a deliberate reference to these beliefs without indicating a full acceptance. Rather, they are reframed and appropriated to Haqqani teachings and as such are consistent with previous observations on the Shaykh's flexibility when seeking a Western audience.

However, in regards the millennium and Y2K I would suggest Shaykh Nazim engages with Western spiritualities in a slightly different way. Rather than reframing alternative beliefs to an Islamic orientation to appeal to Westeners, Shaykh Nazim and the Haqqaniyya fully embraced Y2K and 2000 as apocalyptic events. Despite requiring some reworking to fit the most consistent apocalyptic predictions, the similarities between popular survivalisim, expectations of the end of technology and oncoming chaos, and Shaykh Nazim's own predictions meant the end was considerably more plausible than perhaps at any other time. It was expressed by Shaykh Nazim, but supported by wider cultural expectations. Perhaps more obviously than any other engagement with the apocalyptic milieu, Y2K and 2000 demonstrated a truly hybrid and eclectic manifestation of contemporary belief.

The nature element of Shaykh Nazim's teachings likewise demonstrates a complex engagement with the spiritual atmosphere of the West. Here it is relevant to introduce the concept of occulture as developed by Partridge (2004, 2005). Drawing on Campbell's concept of the cultic milieu[97], Partridge (2004: 67) argues 'occult' most 'accurately describes the contemporary alternative religious milieu in the West' and as such 'includes those often hidden, rejected and oppositional beliefs and practices associated with esotericism, theosophy, mysticism, New Age, Paganism and a range of other subcultural beliefs and practices, many of which are identified by Campbell as belonging to the

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[97] The cultic milieu was used by Campbell to refer to 'deviant' ideas including 'spiritualism and psychic phenomena', mysticism, aliens, lost civilisations, faith healing, and natural medicine. It is where 'deviant science meets deviant religion'. Importantly, the ideas are shared through networks of 'magazines, pamphlets, lectures and informal meetings' and unified by 'a common ideology of *seekership*' (cited by Mayer, 2013: 262).

cultic/mystical milieu and by Stark and Bainbridge as belonging to the occult subculture' (Partridge, 2004: 68).[98]

Importantly, occulture is 'not a worldview, but rather a resource on which people draw, a reservoir of ideals, beliefs, practices and symbols'. This eclectic set of beliefs is drawn upon, not just by spiritual seekers, but 'producers of popular culture searching for ideas, images and symbols' (Partridge, 2004: 84-85). Because of this, occulture permeates popular culture (film, TV), creating a circle in which popular culture feeds spiritual belief and spiritual belief in turn feeds popular culture.

The significance of identifying an occultural reservoir, and its pervasiveness in Western culture, is that it explains why alternative images may be appropriated by religions which are in no way self-consciously eclectic and open, like well-being spirituality or the New Age Movement. For example, in *The Late Great Planet Earth,* Lindsey refers to occult practices such as non-Biblical prophecy, astrology and psychics as satanic. However, as Partridge (2005: 313) explains, he 'absorb[s] many popular occultural understandings, even accepting, for example, some psychics may be able to forsee future events'. For Sufism, this means occultural symbols may be picked up consciously or unconsciously without necessarily being indicative of a turn to universalism or postmodernism or a deliberate strategy of making concessions to Westerners.[99]

Shyakh Nazim's nature teachings do not appear to be a deliberate appropriation of familiar spiritualities in order to appeal to Westeners. As will be seen in the next chapter, his distrust of technology is theological and his support of returning to nature is fundamentally driven by his interpretation of how to cultivate Sufi values of humility and servanthood. Yet, his descriptions of earth

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[98] The occult is therefore not considered to be a single concept. Instead, 'Western occulture includes a range of "deviant" ideas and practices' including 'Magick (as devised by Aleister Crowley), extreme right-wing religio-politics, radical environmentalism and deep ecology, angels, spirit guides and channelled messages, astral projection, crystals, dream therapy, human potential spiritualities, the spiritual significance of ancient and mythical civilisations, astrology, healing, earth mysteries, tarot, numerology, Kabbalah, *feng shui*, prophecies (e.g. Nostradamus), Arthurian legends, the Holy Grail, Druidry, Wicca, Heathenism, palmistry, shamanism, goddess spirituality, Gaia spirituality and eco-spirituality, alternative science, esoteric Christianity, UFOs, alien abduction, and so on (Partridge, 2004: 70).

[99] Indeed, this tendency to reference occultural imagery and interests is likewise seen in the Arab apocalypticists described by (Cook, 2005), who have managed to synchronise mysteries such as UFOs and the Bermuda Triangle into Muslim apocalyptic expectation. Cook (2005: 82) argues it is the very mystery of UFOs in the West that makes them powerful tools for apocalyptic writers, as they demonstrate the West's technological knowledge is not unlimited.

as mother and sustainer, the spiritual power of nature, nature as superior to the artificial, and the destructive power of nature are all familiar occultural concepts in the West. These teachings may be expressed in this way to appear familiar and provide additional plausibility, or they may represent a less deliberate engagement.

In either case, these references ensure the familiarity of Shaykh Nazim's message to a potentially vast audience in the West. While this audience includes non-Muslims, it may also include British born Muslims seeking a Sufism that is spiritually focused, rather than one which serves as a 'boundary mechanism primarily concerned with the transmission of cultural and religious traditions' (Geaves, 2014: 45). While Shaykh Nazim's teachings are likely to be familiar to a young British Muslim audience through the occultural reservoir, whether they will ultimately be considered problematic for those seeking an authentic British Islam will be interesting to observe (Geaves, 2009: 106).

The nuclear apocalyptic imagery of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is one which likewise undoubtedly has a strong resonance with the Western apocalyptic tradition. However, here it seems to me that Shyakh Nazim's engagement with nuclear imagery is not necessarily indicative of a deliberate attempt to engage Westeners as do other areas of his teaching. The nuclear threat is global, and cannot be seen as belonging solely to the Western-Christian apocalyptic tradition.[100] As we will see in the following chapter, Shaykh Nazim both considers technology to be satanic and humanity incapable of change. Combined with his vision of a millenarian shift in which the world must radically change, the destruction of nuclear imagery is a natural resource for an apocalyptic vision. His apocalypse is therefore one which is distinctly modern, shaped by a universal global threat, and thus recognised throughout the world.

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[100] This is evident not just in contemporary Muslim apocalyptic literature mentioned in chapter two, but in New Religious Movements around the world. Shoko Asahara of the Japanese NRM Aum Shinrikyō predicted a large scale destructive scenario including a nuclear war between the USA and USSR (Reader, 2000: 141). Aum is also an interesting example of a non-European/American group with an apocalyptic millennial interest as this nuclear war, caused by 'evil energy' would happen in 1999, unless 30,000 believers could transfer this evil energy into positive energy. Asahara's vision ultimately changed to be far more pessimistic (Mullins, 1997: 316).

<u>Conclusion</u>

In conclusion, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is one which, despite being firmly rooted in traditional Islamic apocalyptic imagery, resonates with many aspects of the rich and diverse apocalyptic milieu in the West. This chapter has identified these as references to New Age progressive millennialism, apocalyptic nature, Y2K and the millennium, and the idea of nuclear destruction which reflects a common but distinctive millennialism prevalent in contemporary Western visions of the end.

Given his well established precedent for acknowledging alternative spiritualities as a way of engaging with non-Muslim Western spiritual seekers, this chapter considered whether Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic vision might be accounted for as a way of likewise appealing to Westeners.

In terms of Shaykh Nazim's overall apocalyptic interest, it seems extremely unlikely as Shaykh Nazim's interest in the apocalypse began by all accounts before he was sent to the West.[101] In terms of accounting for the distinctive aspects of his apocalypse, there is some evidence that Shaykh Nazim deliberately referenced elements of the Western apocalyptic tradition when communicating with a Western audience. This appears most evident in his few references to new age millennial shifts. Narratives around nature similarly reference occultural themes that while based in Shaykh Nazim's theology, may well be expressed in such a way as to be familiar to a Western audience.

The narratives around Y2K and the millennium, while undoubtedly familiar to a Western audience, represent a slightly different type of engagement. Rather than reference end time beliefs but ultimately refocus them to a Haqqani position, Y2K in particular shaped the Haqqani end time narrative of the time, demonstrating true fusion of Islamic and wider cultural apocalyptic expectation.

This reflection of wider apocalyptic thought is also seen in the imagery of planetary, millenarian destruction associated with nuclear weapons. These images are a universal symbol of destruction, one which is at the centre of

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[101] Indeed, one *murid* described to me how important the *Mahdi* teachings were to Shaykh Nazim when he met Shaykh Abdullah: 'The first things Shaykh Abdullah talked about was the *Mahdi* and the end of times and that Shaykh, this was something Shaykh Nazim had been yearning to hear about. That he'd never met anyone who was actually thinking about that reality. So that was very important to him.' (Interview with 'Yunus', 12/04/14).

pessimistic apocalyptic thought throughout the world. While again, very familiar symbols, Shaykh Nazim's turn to them cannot be accounted for soley as the *tariqa* adapting to the West. Rather, as the next chapter demonstrates, his nuclear interest must be seen in the context of both his understanding of modern technology and the necessity of global punishment on humanity.

Chapter Four: Apocalypse and the Crisis of Modernity

Introduction

Chapter One outlined that historically Muslims, and particularly Sufis, have turned to apocalyptic imagery as a way of invoking reform against the perceived corruptions of their societies. However, Chapter Two acknowledged that Shaykh Nazim is quite unusual among contemporary Sufism in the manner and frequency of his apocalyptic expression. In the previous chapter, I suggested Shaykh Nazim's unusual catastrophic millenarianism may be seen as part of a trend of pessimism in the face of possible nuclear destruction. While this may account for one distinctive aspect of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse it does not account for Shaykh Nazim's general intrest in the apocalypse, nor why he would turn to it in this period.

The following chapter therefore attempts to answer this question, and one of the primary research questions by questioning whether Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse can be seen as a reaction to the global dominance of Western secular modernity in the twentieth century. In this way, this chapter refers to dimension two of the methodological framework.

This chapter therefore opens by discussing what modernity is. In order to place the analysis of Shaykh Nazim in a wider context, this is followed by three sections which outline firstly, Sufi responses to modernity, secondly, the possibility of Islamism as a response to modernity, and finally, contemporary American Christian apocalypticism as a response to modernity. This final section therefore provides a model to which Shaykh Nazim may be compared. By analysing the link between Shaykh Nazim's commentary on the modern world and his apocalypse, this chapter therefore also further answers the first part of research question one – what characterises the apocalypticism of the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya?

Modernity

The past three centuries saw a global period of rapid social change, frequently described as modernity. While an essential concept in modern humanities, social sciences and critical theory, there is no universally agreed consensus over what modernity is or even when it began. The sociologist Anthony Giddens

(1990: 1), for example, describes modernity as the 'modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence'. Hall (2009: 119), in contrast, places the advent of modernity a little later, at around the time of the French Revolution.

Defining modernity is equally contentious. However, it is possible to identify broad trends that characterise these new modes of social life and organisation, or as Woodhead (2002: 4) describes modernity, 'a number of different processes which many operate together or in some combination, in different parts of the world and at different times'. While this description usefully highlights that not all peoples will have the same experience of modernity at the same time, and that modernity is not synonymous with the global homogenization of Western developments, due to colonialism the Western experience of modernity was spread throughout the world.

This Western modernity was characterised by changes in the functioning of society, driven by new epistemologies. Of the latter, rationality, humanity, the universal, and the values of the Enlightenment project, were given prominence. Heelas (1998: 2) explains: 'modernity is characterised by the attempt to "pin down", to establish the determinate, to find order by way of classification, to explain how things work by distinguishing between essences and finding relevant mechanisms of operation'.

These values would have a particular influence on both religion and politics. Politically, the new Western nation states, a form of organisation very much associated with modernity, were to be secular. The institutions of the state were rational and bureaucratic, driven by market economy, with little official role for religion (Woodhead, 2002: 7). This is symptomatic of wider differentiation in society. Modernity saw the distinction between the private and public realms, driven by new forms of egalitarianism. As Bruce (1998: 24) outlines in his analysis of Gellner (1983), occupational mobility meant employment and occupation were no longer the sum total of a person's identity, or their legal and social status. As he explains, 'people no longer did the job they always did because their family always did that job. Occupational mobility made it hard for people to internalize visions of themselves that suppose permanent inferiority.

One cannot have people improving themselves and their class position while thinking of themselves as fixed in a station or a degree or a caste in an unchanging hierarchical world'. This egalitarianism was underscored by standards in education, which eventually would be extended to increase opportunities for women and a change in gender roles as a whole.

The values of education, democracy, egalitarianism, rationality and greater economic freedom, contributed to a trend described as the 'turn to self'. As Woodhead (2002: 9) describes, 'modernity tends to be corrosive of tradition – of authorities which lie outside the individual self and claim to be higher. The authority of the past, the authority of a clerical elite, the authority of established institutions and practices and even the authority of a transcendent deity all come into question'. Instead, authority now lies with the individual's 'own reason, conscience or intuition'.

However, new developments in social thinking suggest we may be moving into a period beyond modernity, characterised by a loss of faith in grand narratives and the privileging of rational knowledge, termed postmodernity (Giddens, 1990: 2). Rather, truths are relative, the world and its future uncertain. While there are elements of this world view present, the extent to which we can speak of living in a postmodern world is contentious. As Heelas (1998: 9) notes, 'the argument, in this regard, is that virtually everything discussed in the present context under the heading "postmodernity" can be found within the setting of modernity', while Giddens (1990: 51) argues 'we have not moved beyond modernity but are living precisely through a period of its radicalisation'.

While an interesting debate, for the purposes of this chapter it is enough to note that defining the modern period is complex, full of contradictions and tensions. In the following sections, modernity is used to encompass changes to aspects of public social life that gained prominence in the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries such as the secular nation state, gender and sexual equality, the marginalization of religion, capitalism and consumer culture, urbanization, rationalisation and the drive for the improvement of human life through technology.

Context 1: Some Sufi responses to modernity

In the mid twentieth century, the general trend of thought amongst sociologists was that the rapid changes in modernity would lead to a decline of religion. The rise of secular states, the elevated place of rationality and reason[102], new prominence given to personal authority and new socially diverse populations, would all contribute, it was predicted, to the gradual erosion of religion from human life altogether. Berger (2002: 291) succinctly summarises this theory: 'most sociologists looking at this phenomenon have shared the view that secularization is the direct result of modernization. Put simply, the idea has been that the relation between modernity and religion is inverse – the more of the former, the less of the latter'. However, while religion has certainly changed, and in many cases adapted to the new conditions of modernity, with some exceptions, there has not been a significant decline in religious belief.[103]

Sufism was particularly seen to be incompatible with the values of the modern world due to deference given to shaykh authority and perceptions of elitism and superstition. Exploring one model of this thought in the work of Gellner, van Bruinessen (2009: 139) explains 'the advent of modernity brings irreversible changes – political centralisation, urbanisation, education – that marginalise the tribal periphery and therefore erode the social foundations of popular Sufism. The final swing of the pendulum towards scriptualist rigorism or fundamentalism is definitive this time, and there is no turning back'.[104]

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[102] Max Weber (1864-1920) famously referred to this as the 'disenchantment of the world' in which a 'network of social and intellectual forces' such as rationalisation and secularisation would erode religious belief' (Partridge, 2004: 8-9).

[103] In terms of the significance of religious life, Europe has seen increased secularisation as well as lowered church attendance. However, this does not necessarily indicate the decline of religious, or at least spiritual, belief. Indeed, Heelas (2002: 360) notes that the vast majority of people in Britain can be described as 'betwixt and between', that is neither regular church goers nor atheist and agnostic. Rather, we have seen an increase in what Heelas (2008: 25) describes as 'spiritualities of life' – 'those "teachings" and practices which locate spirituality within the depths of life. Spirituality is identified with life itself, the agency which sustains life; spirituality is found within the depths of subjective life, our most valued experiences of what it is to be alive'. Conversely, religions which emphasise traditional, more authoritarian beliefs are likewise thriving in some parts of the Western world. Charismatic Christianity is a good example of this as Woodhead (2002: 10) describes: 'some of the most successful [traditional forms of religious life] – like Charismatic Christianity – demonstrate a remarkable ability to combine a traditional emphasis of a transcendental truth, with a much more modern emphasis on the importance of individual experience (in this case the experience of the Holy Spirit)'.

[104] Predictions of the decline of Sufism, and even its necessity, were also seen from within Islam. Reformists such as Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and modernists such as Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979) argued Sufism in its current form was incompatible with a modern, socially active Islam (Sirriyeh, 2004: 121).

However, assumptions of Sufism's incompatibility with the modern world and its inevitable decline were shown to be inaccurate. Rather than fading into obscurity, *tariqas* throughout the world have adapted to the challenges of modernity, ensuring their relevance in a variety of multifaceted ways, as the (very) brief following overview attempts to demonstrate.

One of the major developments predicated to be particularly challenging to Sufism was the power of the secular nation state, combined with mass education and new politics, particularly for *tariqas* in Muslim majority countries. However, in many nations, Sufism has adapted well. In Indonesia, for example, shaykhs have engaged politically, mobilising votes in general elections and taking on government patronage to increase their followers, while in Senegal and Mali, the patronage of a saint can be a great asset to a political candidate (van Bruinessen, 2009: 141). Similarly in Uzbekistan, Naqshbandi Sufism since the fall of the Soviet Union has become a way of forming national identity, even while government authorities remain generally wary of *tariqa* political activism (Weismann, 2007b: 163).

Likewise, Sufi *tariqas* have shown themselves willing to adapt to the nation state. In Syria, for example, Ahmad Kuftaru (1915-2004) allied with the Ba'th party, seeing it as the only way to safeguard Islam under the authoritarian regime. Kuftaru proposed a reform of Sufism that would seek to build a bridge between Sufism and Salafism. As Weismann (2007a: 119) illustrates, Kuftaru 'stressed the need to interpret Islam in a reasonable and activist manner, to fight religious innovation and superstition', yet reproached Salafis for interpreting scripture literally and rejecting the spiritual necessity of Sufism for Islam in the modern world. To compromise, he suggested a Sufism stripped of its classical terminology and many practices, and presented a Sufism based in Qur'anic precedence (Weismann, 2007a: 119). Radical adaptations may likewise be seen in Turkey in the Naqshbandi-Mujjadidi who in response to Turkish secularism radically changed their organisational structure (Jonker, 2006: 74).

In non-Muslim Western societies, many *tariqas* have made particularly interesting adaptations to the Western modern context as the previous chapter outlined. These adaptations range from adapting to Western cultural sensitivity

as Lewisohn (2006) noted in the Ni'mutallahiyya who in the Western context do not encourage veiling or gender segregation, to an engagement with the new spiritual atmosphere in the West. In his comparative study of the Qadiriyya and the Haqqaniyya, Draper (2002), for example, found a willingness to engage with neo-shamaic spiritualities and the language of new spiritual movements which seek the universal true spiritual reality behind all things.

The reasons for the continuing interest in Sufism are vast and complicated, and will vary according to *tariqa* and the social context. One interesting theory is put forward by Voll (2007). Rather than a reaction to modernity from traditionalists, or an alternative expression of Islamic identity to Islamism, Voll argues some types of Sufism, particularly those who make considerable efforts in to be compatible with New Age and Western New Religious Movements (NRMs) must be seen as an expression of resistance to modernity, particularly those parts of Western culture which are postmaterial in that they challenge the modern values of consumption. He terms this type of Sufism postmodern.

As Voll (2007: 297) illustrates 'For many urban middle-class professionals [in the Middle East] as well as those seeking alternative lifestyles, a major part of the appeal of Western Sufism is the provision of resources for spiritualist escape from materialist society'. And further, 'postmodern *tariqas* are distinctive but they also can be seen as part of broader global patterns of adaptation to conditions in which the agenda of modernity is no longer as dominant as it was in the earlier era of modernization'.

To an extent, I am hesitant to fully agree with Voll. The values of his 'postmodern' Sufism, which resist values of secular Western modernity, have been around, in one form or another, since the Romantic Movement (Heelas, 2008), and as we have seen, can be seen as a natural expression of the turn to self, a process very much associated with modernity. Moreover, it is important to clarify that while new spiritualities do challenge the assumption that consumption and materialism alone can bring fulfilment, they are not generally fully resistant to all aspects of modernity.[105] These reservations aside, his

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[105] Taji-Farouki (2007: 378 n27) provides a good summary of research in this area, noting the difference between world-rejecting NRMs and world-affirming NRMs. Most NRMs, she explains, seek economic wellbeing whilst also cultivating aspects of wellbeing which are not materially dependent.

analysis is useful in highlighting that some Sufis have found a useful position in the modern world by resisting the marginalisation of religion and spirituality.

This resistive yet adaptive stance is also expressed in what is controversially termed neo-Sufism. While Voll's 'postmodern' *tariqas* adapt by engaging with the new Western New Religious Movement culture, neo-Sufism challenges the modernity values of secularisation and the marginalisation of religious knowledge by demonstrating the relevance of Sufism and Islam in the modern world in a way very akin to Muslim reformers. As such, it is important to acknowledge the active role of Sufism in the wider revivalist and reform movements (Weismann, 2007a: 115). The above has mentioned one example in Syria, but to an extent Sufi reform is taking place in the West, as has been charted by Hamid (2014) in the 'Traditional Islam' networks. Primarily articulated by converts such as Hamza Yusuf, this Sufism stresses the importance of *tasawuuf*, while stressing its legitimacy through the *sharia* and the Qur'an. As such, it provides an alternative to Islamism and Sufism tied to ethnicity, and also demonstrates an awareness of the values important to young Western Muslims (Hamid, 2014: 188). It therefore also challenges the marginalisation of religion and the spiritual life whilst itself being modern.

Context 2: Islam and modernity - Islamisim

The above section demonstrates that predictions about the incompatibility between religion and modernity are flawed. It also highlights that, while adaptive, some Sufis have actively resisted some aspects of Western secular modernity. The following section expands on this resistive element of modern religion by exploring the phenomenon of fundamentalism, with special attention to its manifestation in Islam. This will provide a wider context in which to place Shaykh Nazim's own engagement with modernity, and set the scene for the following section, which discusses the relationship between apocalypticism and modern resistance.

The hugely controversial term fundamentalism has its origins in early twentieth century American Protestantism. However, it is also used widely to describe a particular type of religious beliefs and attitudes throughout the world, particularly in the Abrahamic religions.

There is no universally accepted definition of fundamentalism, and indeed, it is more appropriate to talk about fundamentalisms (Lawrence, 1998: 98). However, in following Milton-Edwards' (2005) and Ruthven's (2007) example, we can employ a phenomenological, family resemblances approach to speak of key features. For Milton-Edwards (2005: 2), these include religious idealism, a cosmic struggle, demonising the opponent, reactionary thinking, enemy of modernisim and not gender neutral, while for Herriot (2009: 2) they include beliefs which are reactive, dualist, scriptualist, selective, and millennialist. Moaddel and Karabenick (2013: 4-5) opt for a slightly different approach, arguing fundamentalism is an 'orientation towards one's own religious beliefs', including that God is disciplinary, scripture is literal, inerrant and infallible, that one's beliefs are superior to all others and holding an intolerance of other religious beliefs.

In all three models, reaction is held to be a defining feature of fundamentalism. Moaddel and Karabenick (2013: 17), for example, argue fundamentalism in the Middle East is likely to manifest under conditions of 'besieged spirituality'. That is, when individuals feel oppressed by their most likely secular state and where they feel otherwise helpless. In other interpretations, thinkers have argued fundamentalism manifests in a response to an encounter with secular modernity, particularly those elements which challenge traditionally held values such as gender roles, and the marginalisation of religion to the private sphere.

Bruce (2008: 96) for example, argues 'the term "fundamentalist" is better kept for movements that are self-consciously reactionary, that respond to problems created by modernization by advocating society-wide obedience to some authentic or inerrant text or tradition, stripped of the debris it has assimilated, by seeking the political power to impose the revitalised tradition'. Similarly, Lawrence (1998: 95-96) argues this reaction to modernity must be understood as a counter cultural ideology, a protest against modern culture. As such, he states 'global fundamentalisms reject not only civil religion but all its trappings. Fundamentalisms are anti-relativists, opposing the corrosive acid of modernism with values that they uphold as eternal and absolute, God given and spiritually empowered'. Importantly, because they respond to modernity, fundamentalist belief should be considered a modern phenomena, and indeed, is not anti-

modern as such, but anti-modernist. That is, opposed to the values of Western secular modernity.[106]

The causes of fundamentalism are complex and in each case should be understood in the context of its own socio-political situation, motivated by particular religious traditions. In Islam, the equivalent to Christian fundamentalism is generally considered to be Islamism (Milton-Edwards, 2005: 3). Again, a difficult and contentious term, Islamism generally refers to the view that Islam can, and indeed should, be understood as a total system which has dominion over all aspects of human life, including the political. The reasons individuals take refuge in Islamism are complex but historically, Islamism as a modern phenomenon is considered to have arisen out of dissatisfaction with Western secular modernity that was imposed on Muslim majority countries first in the colonial period, and secondly in the twentieth century by new secular elites who associated modernization with westernization.

As a form of protest, alternative voices emerged with a different vision of Islam's place in the modern world. Rather than marginalised to the public sphere, Islam was to take a central place, guiding all aspects of public life. The most well-known and perhaps influential movements to work towards these goals in the twentieth century were the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jamaat-i-Islami in South Asia.

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) in 1928. In the early twentieth century, Egypt was subject to rapid social change. Improved public hygiene led to a large population, resulting in a movement to the cities, whilst new modes of social organisation led to changes in professions and social statuses (Commins, 2005: 127). However, the colonial influence also brought western culture, adopted by Egyptian elites, seeing Westernisation as synonymous with progress and modernity, and traditional Egyptian Muslim culture with backwardness. Commins (2005: 128) therefore remarks, 'an

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[106] While this opposition may be a common theme, we must be careful not to see this as the sole characteristic of fundamentalist movements. Munson (2005: 352), for example, argues 'to speak of all groups that have a fundamentalist dimension simply as 'revolts against modernity' is inadequate insofar as it tends to downplay or ignore the nationalist and social grievances that often fuel such movements'. He acknowledges, however, that 'this is not to suggest that religious outrage provoked by the violation of traditional religious values cannot induce people to take political action'.

observer of Egyptian society during the 1920s might have concluded that the tide of Western secular culture would soon sweep away Egypt's Muslim culture'.

To Banna, this was intolerable. Associating Western culture with immorality, materialism and atheism (Commins, 2005: 133), he sought to re-establish Islam's central position in Egyptian society. Banna understood Islam to be complete, perfect and self-sufficient, a viable alternative to communism or capitalism, and proposed by returning to the Islam of the Qur'an, *sunna* and *Salaf*, and implementing it at all levels, the Muslims world would again experience prosperity (Esposito, 1998: 137).[107]

As described by Milton-Edwards (2005: 30) these early Islamists were characterised by 'an unyielding suspicion of the West, modernity, aspirations for Islamic statehood and governance, resistance and armed struggle, a transnational appearance and recognition that Muslims must make Islam relevant to all aspects of their lives'. As she further explains, Islamism does not seek to restore the medieval period, although it sees certain parts of the past as influential, but rather 'Islamists advocate change within their own societies. They call for justice, liberty and a practical order based in their interpretation of the holy scriptures of Islam as a political framework for modern society of governance' (Milton-Edwards, 2005: 134). This call for justice is significant, as it suggests Islamists feel they need an alternative to the current situation, and indeed Voll (1987) argues Islamic fundamentalism must be seen as a response to the failure of this modernization process.

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[107] Banna's position was extrapolated upon by another writer in the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). Like Banna, Qutb believed emulating Western ways for a Muslim was a mistake. He saw the West as built on 'hedonistic egoism', and acknowledged that while it had contributed to material developments it led both to 'deplorable moral conduct' and a society which was 'soulless, rootless and empty' (Tripp, 2005: 166). In emulating the West, Qutb argued Muslims were living in a second state of *jahiliyya,* but that by implementing a pure *sharia*, Muslim societies would again flourish under divine law and God's justice. Qutb's vision of the Islamic state was to be implemented by undertaking *jihad* against secularists and all those who opposed an Islamic government (Esposito, 1998: 144). A similar influential figure was Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979). Mawdudi lived in India and after growing dissatisfied with Western models of statehood, argued for an alternative, the Islamic state. Here, Islam was conceived of as a complete system that would govern over all aspects of life. In this model, God is the absolute sovereign, the perfect rule maker. By contrast, humans have shown themselves to be imperfect, unable to govern without divine guidance (Esposito, 1998: 152).

Context 3: Apocalypse and modernity

The rise of politically engaged Islam which actively opposes much of the Western model of modernity is evidence of the continuing relevance of religion in the modern world. Another interesting form of religious belief to (re) appear, particularly in America, throughout the modern period was apocalyptic belief. Considered in the past to be the refuge of the disenfranchised (Cohn, 1993), it might be asked why apocalyptic beliefs have seen a twentieth century revival in those whose lives are very much removed from medieval peasantry.

As with fundamentalism and definitions of modernity, the answers are complicated and it would take more than a single thesis to do justice to each manifestation of contemporary apocalyptic belief. To take a broad-brush approach, however, it seems apparent apocalyptic beliefs have the power to address social anxieties and establish a sense of identity. Indeed, on the recent 2012 phenomenon, Barkun (2013: 24) argues 'much of this prophetic material – particularly the accelerating interest in the 2012 apocalypse – coincides with a rising concern about the fate of America in the modern world', in this case, driven by a sense of the US losing power, the economic crisis, American wars in the Middle East and the perceived rise of China as a world power. He parallels this to a spike of apocalyptic interest in the 1970s, coinciding with the oil crisis and rise of Japan. As such, 'prophetic voices speak to both rising anxiety and the increasing need for new explanatory narratives'.

However, the sense of crisis to which Barkun alludes is not limited to anxiety about where a society stands in relation to the wider world. Rather, in American apocalyptic history, Christian apocalypticism has represented a reaction to certain changes brought about by modernity, or at the least, the modern period. The following section, which presents the last contextual section of this chapter, will trace two of these manifestations, drawing out key features in their engagement with modernity. This will provide room for a comparative analysis to consider whether it might be plausible to likewise consider Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse as a response to modernity, and whether it shares any similarities with these Christian manifestations.

Rapture ready

The first manifestation considered is in the fundamentalist Protestant tradition. While it should not be assumed that all fundamentalists hold apocalyptic beliefs, their earliest years are closely entwined. This form of fundamentalism is essentially premillennial, and heavily influenced by John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). In a time of unemployment, rising food prices and poverty after the Napoleonic Wars, Darby provided hope of a release and a time of happiness, through the development of dispensationalism (Partridge, 2006: 289).

In this reading, the revelation of God's will to humanity and his actions in the world are not uniform throughout history. Rather, human history is divided into periods, dispensations, in which God acts and gives revelation in particular and often unique ways. The final dispensation is the age of Millennium, the utopia of Christ's reign on earth, referred to in Rev. 20: 1-15. We are currently in the Age of the Church, but before the millennium, humanity will endure a period of tribulations. Darby placed particular emphasis on the idea of the rapture in which true believers would be taken up into the heavens to avoid the sufferings of this tribulation period, leaving hypocrites and sinners behind to suffer (Frykholm, 2004: 17).[108]

Darby's understanding of eschatology was not readily embraced by church authorities, but rather those lay people and itinerant preachers who 'saw themselves as marginal to both the church establishment and to American culture more broadly' (Frykholm, 2004: 17). Primarily, these readers were protestants who would become known as fundamentalists, named after the movement in early twentieth century America to defend the fundamental beliefs of Protestant Christianity which included 'the inerrancy of the Bible; the direct creation of the world, and humanity, ex nihilo by God (in contrast to Darwinian evolution); the authority of miracles; the virgin birth of Jesus, his crucifixion and bodily resurrection, the substitutionary atonement (the doctrine that Christ died

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[108] The idea of the rapture has scriptural support in 1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17 which reads: 'For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, when the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever'. The interpretation of the faithful being saved from the trials of the end of time is therefore not obvious in scripture and indeed, many denominations interpret this passage as referring to the resurrection of the dead.

to redeem the sins of humanity); and his imminent return to judge and rule over the world' (Ruthven, 2007: 7).

Those partaking in the fundamentalist movement in the early twentieth century experienced rapid social changes as Hall (2009: 153) explains: 'during the first half of the twentieth century, conservative Protestants who opposed a whole series of modern developments – Darwin's theory of evolution, socialism, the League of Nations and so on – began to consolidate a broadly evangelical premillennial fundamentalism centred on biblical inerrancy, the divinity of Jesus, and the promise of Christ's Second Coming'.

Frykholm (2004: 18-19) likewise links the growing Protestant interest in the end of time with rapid social change finding, with 'two related trajectories of modernity – urbanization and immigration', as well as changing gender roles and consumer culture, long held values were challenged and as such, many conservative Protestants experienced a loss of a sense of cultural security and control, and importantly, cultural power. As such, 'dispensationalism became a form of virulent antimodernism that expressed alienation from the institutional structures of modern life' (Frykholm, 2004: 17). The rapture thus provided both hope of an 'escape' and 'a way for these Christians to reject a disorientating new social terrain' (Frykholm, 2004: 19).

Crucially, this apocalyptic worldview was not amoral. The modern world and its new social forms were seen as corrupt, deserving of punishment (Frykholm, 2004: 19). While Frykholm notes that by the late 1940s and early 1950s there was something of a softening towards culture (2004: 20), the apocalypse as a means of expressing protest at the state of the modern world, has remained present in Protestant dispensationalism.

The most notable example of this is seen in rapture fiction, most popularly in the *Left Behind* series. A fictional account of what happens after the rapture and during the tribulation period, the *Left Behind* novels have been studied by a number of academics for what they might reveal about fundamentalist dispensationalist hopes and fears. As the rapture takes true Christians and depicts the rise of true evil, the books provide an opportunity to reflect what their writers consider to be the ills of modern society. As Jones (2006: 104) describes *Left Behind*, 'LaHaye and Jenkins image forth a vision of contemporary America

as "a nation of overweight alcoholic drug abusers and sexual perverts who cannot control our desires and passions", and who are thus sorely in need of the moral cleansing of Armageddon'. He further argues that the *Left Behind* series thus represents a 'defensive retreat' into moral absolutes in the face of rapid changes and that *Left Behind* therefore essentially represents a 'right wing revenge fantasy of wiping out all liberals' (Jones, 2006: 112).

Again, the moral dimension of contemporary apocalypse is apparent in the hope of ridding the world of the contemporary evils in modern society. However, the extent to which the apocalypse is caused by humanity's sinfulness in protestant dispensationalism is unclear. Yet, it is very much apparent in contemporary Catholic apocalypticists, whose visions of the end are prompted by perceptions of the decline of traditional values within the church and society as a whole.

The Great Chastisement

In 1917, three Portuguese children from the village of Fatima, Lucia dos Santos, and Jacinta and Francisco Merto, reported the Virgin Mary appeared to them six times, imparting a three part secret message. The apparitions were pronounced as authentic by the Catholic Church in 1930, but it was not until 1941 that the first two parts of this secret were revealed. This secret was distinctly apocalyptic, as Cuneo (1997: 180) outlines:

> The first part of the secret, according to Lucia, consisted of a terrifying vision of hell, and in the second part the Virgin Mary requested (among other things) that Russia be consecrated to her Immaculate Heart. As the Virgin herself apparently put it to the three young seers: "If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; various nations will be annihilated" (quoted in Zimders-Swartz 1992, 199).

Given the sense of crisis surrounding Russia it is perhaps not surprising the Fatima prophecies became particularly popular in the United States in the 1950s in the Cold War (Cuneo, 1997: 181)

Since the Fatima apparitions there have been a number of Marian apparitions throughout the world, many claiming an apocalyptic message. Importantly, many of these appeared after the Second Vatican Council, and expressed a

fear of losing traditions as well as a deep dissatisfaction with modern society as a whole (Luebbers, 2001: 222, 236). Indeed, Cuneo (1997: 178-179) puts forward a family resemblances model of contemporary Catholic apocalypticism. While not all groups will have all characteristics, we can observe general trends: 1) The approaching chastisement – the world is on the brink of destruction due to ungodly behaviour, 2) holy elites – a special group is appointed to help convert the world, 3) political passivity/premillennial fatalism – while believers are happy to undertake conversion exercises, ultimately only God can save the world, 4) anti-communism, 5) conspiracy mentality, 6) Catholicism in crisis – since the Second Vatican Council 'the papal throne has been occupied either by exceedingly weak or vulnerable men – or by outright imposters, and 8) contain a sectarian impulse – believers see themselves as separate from the institutional church.

The first of these points, the coming chastisement, highlights the moral dimension of this form of apocalypticism. As Luebbers (2001: 230) explains, 'It is important to understand that the imminence of the End Times is viewed as a consequence of society's actions, not merely a predetermined fulfilment of scripture', as for example was seen in the Millerites. These apocalypses are therefore rooted in the contemporary era, reflecting contemporary concerns.

Luebbers (2001) draws on the model of apocalypticism developed by Wojcik (1997). In his study of contemporary American apocalypticism, Wojcik (1997: 209-210) distinguished between two types of apocalyptic beliefs; that in which the apocalypse could be averted (conditional apocalypticism) and that in which it could not (unconditional apocalypticism). Crucially, the two differed based on humanity's actions. In conditional apocalypticism the end could be averted by humanity undertaking certain actions, whereas in unconditional apocalypticism this was not possible, and believers should prepare for individual salvation, such as the rapture.

Wojcik drew on two case studies to illustrate these two groups. In unconditional apocalypticism, he drew on Hal Lindesy and the modern Christian dispensationalists. In this apocalypse, events are set in motion without thought to how humanity is acting. As Wojcik illustrates, 'the predictions of dispensationalists such as Hal Lindesy...interpret the signs of the End as

noncausal markers on a foreordained timetable of irreversible doom. Repentance, prayer, righteousness are encouraged by Lindesy, but not as an effectual means of averting the end of the world' (Wojcik, 1997: 91).

In contrast, his case study in conditional apocalypticism was Veronica Leuken (d. 1999), an American catholic who received visions of the Virgin Mary bringing warnings of God's punishment that was about to fall on humanity for its immoral and ungodly actions. Here, the apocalypse is caused by 'God's wrath toward those who deviated from a divinely prescribed sacred order and plan for humanity' (Wojcik, 1997: 92). There is hope for humanity if the Virgin's warnings are heeded and humanity returns to the behaviour prescribed by God. If not, the planet 'will continue on a sinful pattern of destruction'. As such, this apocalypse is both less fatalistic and deterministic than Hal Lindsey and the dispensationalists.

In particular, the Baysiders, the followers of Veronica Leuken, represent a response to the liberalizing of Roman Catholicism in the Second Vatican Council and 'is a response to a sense of religious and cultural crisis, and especially a sense of loss – the loss of one's religious heritage'. Wojcik (1997: 88) explains: 'like many traditionalist Catholics, most Baysiders regard Vatican II as heretical or the result of a conspiracy and rejects its modernist theology, its liturgical changes, and its sacramental rights'. As such, Mrs Lueken warns a return to traditional Catholic teachings is necessary. In regards the church and wider society, this is considered a time of social crisis: 'Mrs Lueken's visions enumerate the ways that traditional Catholic attitudes about God, morality, community, family, sexuality, and the roles of women and men among other things, have been challenged or destroyed'. If the great chastisement of World War Three and a 'fireball of redemption' in the form of a comet that will wipe out 75% of the world's population is to be avoided, humanity must repent and return to traditional values.

Luebbers observes a similar phenomenon in the movement surrounding the Catholic visionary John Leary, a retired chemist who is believed by his followers to receive messages from Mary and Jesus (JohnLeary.com, 2012), many of which are apocalyptic in nature (Luebbers, 2001: 223). As in Wojcik's study of the Baysiders, Luebbers found believers in Leary's messages were

experiencing a sense of alienation to modernity. Traditional society was seen to be in crisis, with particular emphasis placed on changing gender roles undermining the traditional family structure (Luebbers, 2001: 226). Moreover, Luebbers found that the sense of decline of this traditional structure meant that God felt less visible, the sacred is perceived to be removed from the world. However, the End Times look to re-establish the sacred in the world, through the conversion of the world and therefore 're-establish the legitimacy of a traditional or sacred 'Catholic' ethos' (Luebbers, 2001: 223).

To conclude these preparatory sections, it appears the developments of modernity had the potential to be deeply challenging to some religious traditions, undermining long held beliefs and authorities and the way society is organised. Sufism, despite initial assumptions that it would flounder, has in many cases thrived in the modern world. By taking a broad-brush approach it seems that Islamism can be understood as a response to the perceived inadequacies of imposed Western modernity, providing hope of a better society through re-embracing religion. Similar dissatisfactions with modernity may be seen in Christian apocalypse, which may manifest in the contemporary period when society is seen to be in crisis. In contrast to the modernity imposed on many Muslim nations in the case studies this section has outlined, this contemporary crisis is perceived by more conservative believers who see themselves at odds with the social liberalising developments in modernity.

In both Protestant apocalypse and Catholic apocalypse the coming destruction is directly linked to the sinfulness of humanity in deviating from God's plan. While for Protestants the apocalypse is not necessarily caused by humanity's actions, it nonetheless represents hope of a purification of sinfulness and therefore a resolution to the problem of modernity. It is thus more politically pessimistic than Islamist responses, seeing hope of change only on the individual moral level. In Catholicism, the moral dimension is more pronounced, the apocalypse being the direct result of humanity's sinfulness in modernity. Apocalypse may therefore be seen as one way of responding the challenges of modernity. With these characteristics in mind, the following examines whether Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse can likewise be seen as a similar way of resolving modernity, by first discussing his teachings on the modern world, and secondly

whether his apocalypse has a moral dimension that is linked to how people act in the contemporary world.

Shaykh Nazim and modernity

In his thesis, Atay (1994) noted the strong anti-modernity element of Shaykh Nazim's teachings, based on his rejection of technology, secularisation and the primacy given to scientific knowledge and reason. While an interesting and valuable outline, if we are to position Shaykh Nazim's teachings in the context of wider Muslim and Sufi responses to modernity, I believe we must separate Shaykh Nazim's dissatisfaction with the current world into two interrelated strands of dissatisfaction with the modern, Western secular state and its values, and dissatisfaction with the technological and material developments of modernity.

To begin with the former, one of the most characteristic elements of Shaykh Nazim's teachings is his rejection of democracy. Repeatedly, Shaykh Nazim is uncompromising that democracy only leads to chaos and suffering (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 39, 41). Indeed, elections and democracy are the work of Satan and ego: 'Until the beginning of the twentieth century our countries were governed by sultans and it was an excellent style for governing people. But Satan tells people not to leave a king or sultan to govern all, but instead there should be elections and in that way everyone can be a sultan!' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 80). At the heart of this is Shaykh Nazim's conviction that there should be deference to proper authority, and in the case of politics, such a person is a sultan or a royal. Monarchs are selected by God, and as such Prince Charles and Queen Elizabeth are under Divine Protection (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 107; al-Haqqani, 1995a: 62).

In a private interview with a *murid*, Shaykh Adnan extrapolates upon what makes the royal families so special. Shaykh Adnan reveals that blood has mystical properties, that it carries within it the breath of God from when He first blew life into Adam. Within the blood are angels, as Shaykh Adnan explains: 'the angels are the spiritual side of the blood which Allah the Almighty has made so that every single atom of the blood is controlled and ruled by one angel praising and glorifying Allah the Almighty so that this atom of blood can survive' (private interview, 2004).

However, prophets and the royal families, who are descended from the prophets, have a different type of angel. Referring to angels as beings of light, Shaykh Adnan explains this difference:

> Like a lamp, for example. If we use 100 watt...' [interviewer]: 'they have a thousand...' [Adnan]: 'Thousands! Some of the prophets, like the five big prophets have millions or billions of watt. You see, of course different *Malaika*. So their elements must be qualified to carry this powerful station of Allah Almighty. Because of this they have different power, different elements. And since the blood is the main important thing in the body, the element of their blood is like a big heavenly station from Allah Almighty, so that from this station it can be given to mankind from them.

Thus, the royal families, through the prophets have a stronger connection to God. This includes the British royal family who are descended from the Prophets David and Muhammad.

Closely related to the idea of deference to proper authority is Shaykh Nazim's distrust of the Western emphasis upon science and rationality. Throughout his talks, Shaykh Nazim stresses that there is a dichotomy between science and 'real' knowledge. Real knowledge, the only knowledge that can ultimately bring happiness, comes from the heavens, mediated through scripture and the Holy Books. Science, in contrast, contains little to no knowledge of any value. On the end of the world, for example, Shaykh Nazim states:

> We are believing that there is an end for this life on this earth. We do not believe what some scientists say, that the last day will come when the sun finishes. No! That is not real knowledge. It is all imagination, nothing else. Life will reach its last station, according to the Holy Books. We take our knowledge from the Holy books. We are not scientists. No! All scientists nowadays are atheists. They say that we come from monkeys. We do not come from monkeys, we are from mankind. But those people are very happy to be monkeys and grandsons of monkeys. Do you accept that? What kind of honour is that, to be a monkey? (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 23).

Moreover, Western knowledge challenges Shaykh Nazim's more esoteric teachings. The world of Shaykh Nazim is one in which good and evil are active, and the unseen lives alongside our world. The best example of this is in his frequent teachings on *jinn*. In Natural Medicines (al-Haqqani, 2012), for example, Shaykh Nazim reports that cot death may be caused by *jinn* and steps

murids can take to avoid upsetting them. In my fieldwork, one of my participants reported a story of Shaykh Nazim inducting *jinn* into the Naqshbandi way.

While Shaykh Nazim often praises the UK for its tolerance of diversity, ultimately, he is suspicious of untempered liberty. He describes freedom as being 'the greatest foolishness of the twentieth century', that without guidance people lose their way, becoming like animals (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 8, 22). One interesting extrapolation of this is Shaykh Nazim's unease with changing gender roles. Shaykh Nazim argues women are happiest at home, preferably as mothers (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 73), without needing to work. Indeed, he describes the pressure put on women to work as 'cruel' (al-Haqqani, 2012: 49). This change of gender roles in the West is thus indicated to be against nature. He states, for example, 'women like these [powerful Western women] will not be women. They will be strange creatures, useless for man and useless for women. Men must be men and women must be women. Everyone must keep to their rooms...men don't have female sides and females don't have male sides' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 115, 116).

The final dissatisfaction with modern Western secular society is spelled out less explicitly than the above but is no less important. As we will see in Chapter Five, Shaykh Nazim teaches the world is in darkness because people are turned from God. To follow God, therefore, is the best way for humanity, and indeed, Shaykh Nazim describes Islam as perfection (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 90). This means an Islamic system at all levels, including the political, is best for humanity. However, unlike Islamists, Shaykh Nazim does not call for this to be implemented.

As was mentioned above, Islamists and other revivalists who share Shaykh Nazim's concern with secular modernity are not anti-modern. Rather, they embrace technological advances and many of the other benefits of modern society. For Shaykh Nazim, however, modernity in all its forms has far less to offer. This is because they are very much damaging to humanity's spirituality and encourage humanity to act in a negative way. One of the most damaging advancements in the modern world is the pursuit of technology. Technology is 'satanic' (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 552), 'a veil' between God and mankind (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 325), and the cause of all troubles in the world (*Sohbats*

2013 [2005]: 3850). So damaging is technology to the world that, as has been seen, it will be removed by the Mahdi, having no place in his utopia.

Technology is damaging for mankind for a number of interrelated reasons. To begin, technology circumvents the will of God. For example, Shaykh Nazim argues women shouldn't have ultrasounds as it damages foetuses (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 109), and that birth control and fertility treatment are anti-Islamic as only Allah can decree when someone has a child (*Sohbats 2013* n.d: 10). Moreover, it is a cause of pride (*Sohbats 2013* [1991]: 528), which leads to the danger of mankind forgetting who is the true power behind creation. In his *sohbats*, a sense of warning is present as Allah is telling people their faith in technology is misplaced. On the Japanese tsunami, for example, Shaykh Nazim states: 'I am asking proud Mankind, with your technology and bombs, with your 1000 nuclear powers, can you stop it? Where are these Europeans and Americans that are so proud of their technology? (Did you prevent) what is happening in the Far East, in Japan? What is the top point of your power? (This massive disaster is) showing you that your power is nothing!' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 9387). Indeed, Shaykh Nazim considers this to be a direct warning from God: 'O People! That is a heavenly warning from Allah Almighty saying "Come to Islam, *ahlan wa sahlan*, welcome. Who is keeping heavenly orders may be in safety here and hereafter, or I will send on you so much heavenly cursing to take you away!"'

This passage thus reveals that technology is a veil to God, and also provides evidence that the apocalypse is related to the ways humanity is acting in the pursuit of modernity. Indeed, this *sohbat* concludes with Shaykh Nazim warning of the nearness of Armageddon, and for *murids* to take safety.

Closely related to Shaykh Nazim's distrust of technology is a sense that God's creation is being perverted, that mankind has turned to the unnatural. This extends from buildings made of unnatural materials such as concrete to wearing clothes with artificial fibres to unnatural foods (*Sohabts 2013* [2011]: 5547; sufismus-online, 2014f [1999]). He states, for example, 'technology is trying to bring artificial turkeys, artificial hens, artificial chicken, artificial cows – and everything that is artificial is against the Heavenly Rules of the Lord of Heavens, and all troubles are coming after the involvement of man' (*Sohbats 2013* [2005]: 3850). Modern medicines are also considered to go against the natural being

(al-Haqqani, 2012: 15) and Shaykh Nazim argues that God has provided all cures in nature.[109] Modern medicine is therefore not only for the most part unnecessary, but damaging. Like true and false knowledge, the dichotomy between authentic and inauthentic ways to live runs throughout Shaykh Nazim's works.

The focus on the material world and its consequences is one of the most common themes in Shaykh Nazim's teachings. Repeatedly, he states that chasing after the material world is a cause of suffering. He finds, for example, 'it is because of this physical existence that man is suffering, not because of his soul. All problems and miseries belong to our physical being. It represents our ego which belongs to darkness (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 14). And further, 'mankind is now closed up within materiality. They have been imprisoned by having walls of materialism and they cannot move' (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 1265). Indeed, it is materialism that leads to violence (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 1109).

In short, for Shaykh Nazim, modernity has brought the world into a state of crisis, a state of *jahilliya* (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 1905). As he states, 'in our time every moral value is turned upside down. People can no longer distinguish between good and evil' (*Sohbats 2013* [n.d.]: 2053), reflecting a deep unease with many values and principles of modern Western society. His sense of crisis is driven by the fact secular Western modernity has undermined the widespread acceptance of deeply held beliefs. As we have seen, within theories of apocalypticism a sense of dissatisfaction with the modern world, and thus a search for meaning, is not unusual. Shaykh Nazim's time of crisis moves beyond what might be expected to aspects of modern Western society that are perhaps even unquestioned such as democracy and technological progress. The following section thus examines the extent to which this crisis of modernity is linked to the coming Armageddon.

A global punishment?

When Shaykh Nazim describes the approaching end times there seems to be little ambiguity that human beings have created the time of crisis that is leading to end time events, particularly because they have turned from God to the

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[109] An extensive collection of Shaykh Nazim's understanding of cures found in nature, as well as an exploration of the dangers of modern Western medicine can be found in the Haqqani publication *Natural Medicines* (al-Haqqani, 2012).

works of Satan and are pursuing the destructive technologies that will result in Armageddon (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 48). That humanity has responsibility is also implied though the language of punishment. He states, for example, 'soon huge events will come on earth because we are supporting Satan and his kingdom. As a punishment for our support, a strong fire will come...That is the punishment for humanity because they are supporting the kingdom of the devils on earth now. And they are supporting the Anti-Christ' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 68), as well as, 'as long as people are refusing the Seal of the Prophets, trouble is going to be never ending and punishment never stopping' (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 5302).

Particularly prominent in this is the language of divine revenge, punishment and cursing. He states, for example, 'now divine revenge approaching people. For a few days now I am seeing the sky red. It signs either war or an earthquake' (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 2418) as well as 'when the Divine Revenge comes how it will take the bad ones and leave the good ones' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 23), and 'now adults are very afraid of the coming war...they must be punished. Heavenly punishment coming now' (al-Haqqani, 1995b: 15).[110]

What is not clear, however, is the extent to which God is active in taking revenge and giving punishment. As will be more fully outlined in Chapter Five, Satan is generally considered to be responsible for causing suffering and evil in the world and also that humanity brings suffering upon itself by failing to heed the warnings of the prophets. Indeed, the Shaykh warns that World War Three will be of our own making and even that 'this nation will not be punished from above, but from within themselves...People are in different groups, in different camps, becoming enemies of each other and killing each other. That is the punishment this time' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 66).

Such statements, given the satanic context, may therefore imply that the Heavenly Punishment is to allow these events to take place, sparing only those who believe. Punishment of the individual does not necessarily imply that God is active in claiming retribution. Rather, punishment can be seen as what happens when one fails to protect oneself from satanic events. They are

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[110] The language of punishment used by Shaykh Nazim indicates reference to a punishment that takes place in this world, rather than the next. The punishment is death, earthly suffering, and not living to be with the Mahdi. Conversely, reward will be earthly and experiencing the coming utopia.

Heavenly in that God is ultimately in control of all creation. Indeed, God's dominion is total, and as may be seen in the context of the world being purified, the ultimate outcome is the one ordained by him. This purification and restoration of justice has already begun with the removal of tyrants in 'Tunis, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Damascus, Palestine, Iraq, Turkey, Hijaaz (*Sohabts 2013* [2011]: 4512).

However, at other times, Shaykh Nazim more clearly indicates that God is taking a more active role in the chastisement of the community. Bird Flu, for example, is a sign from God that his anger is coming (*Sohbats 2013* [2005] 3854) and 'earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes' are also signs from Heaven that 'terrible days...will come on people' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 4500). Importantly, these signs are warnings to correct behaviour, but punishment is also associated. This is most noticeable in his reference to the punishment of earlier communities which demonstrate that God is active in punishing humanity within history. He reveals, for example, 'I fear the Divine Revenge which is mentioned in the Holy Books. From time to time nations are being taken away by Divine knowledge when they do not keep their services' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 23).

The Qur'an relates a number of stories of communities who were punished because of their rejection of the prophets God sent to them, including Salih (26: 141-159; 27: 45-53), Shu'ayb (26: 177-191), Moses (23: 45-48) and Noah (54: 9-16). Indeed, Fadel (2014: para 1) argues 'considering the numerous Qur'anic stories of divine punishment meted out to those who rejected God's prophets, it is clear that divine chastisement – in this world and the next – is one of the most important topics in the Qur'an'. In their simplest form, these stories relate 'God sends a messenger; the messenger is rejected [despite shows of God's power]; the unbelievers are punished' (Marshall, 2014: para 8), for failing to heed the warnings. Typically, the punishment is destruction through natural disaster, such as earthquakes in the case of Salih (7: 78) and Shu'ayb (7: 91). These punishment stories therefore both show God is active in the world and warn in the context of the revelation that 'a punishment from God would fall upon the Meccan unbelievers if they did not repent and accept Muhammad's message' (Marshall, 2014: para 13). By alluding to these communities, Shaykh Nazim

reminds his listeners of a precedent ascribed in scripture – that God can and does take action against those who reject the prophets.

This is elaborated upon in his frequent references to Noah. In his study of the Qur'anic account of Noah, Abdel Haleem (2006: 51) makes the compelling case that while an important element, punishment is not the primary theme of Noah's prophethood, arguing instead the Qur'an highlights God's mercy, protection of believers and Noah's forbearance in the face of difficulties. He even argues punishment as a theme in this story is not prominent in popular Islamic culture (Abdel Haleem, 2006: 54).

Shaykh Nazim does use the story of Noah to highlight God's mercy and protection of believers (*Sohabts 2013* [2013]: 3227), stressing that Noah was saved because he was Muslim and that contemporary *murids* too can have a place on his metaphorical Ark (*Sohabts 2013* [2013]: 4283), but he ultimately sees punishment not only as the main message of Noah's story, but also analogous to our times. For example, he directly refers to Noah in the following *sohbats*: 'but those missiles should fall from the skies, destroying so many countries and taking away so many people as a revenge from the Lord like in the flood in the time of Noah a.s. That was a flood of water, but this is fire now, carrying everything away...(sufismus-online, 2014c [1999]), as well as 'why is the story of Noah mentioned, about a flood taking them away? If nations, including the Muslim world, are not arranging their lives according to the Lord of Heavens order to them, floods will be sent; not merely flood waters, but fire and blood will come with it!' (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 1767).

The story of Noah, then, is one in which unbelievers are punished by God for their lack of faith, and is doomed to be repeated. This time, however, God will not send a natural disaster, but allow Satan, devils and ultimately the worst aspects of humanity to wreak chaos, ensuring only believers are protected. Here, Shaykh Nazim diverges from the Qur'anic precedent, away from natural disasters and repeated warnings, to a more final resolution.

From the Haqqani texts, it seems Satan, through humanity, will cause the final great war. Yet, as God is the ultimate power in creation all things work to his end, and those who are deserving of punishment receive it. Regardless of the extent to which God is active in punishing humanity, the ultimate message of

this part of the apocalyptic narrative is that it is absolutely essential to follow God's plan. Without this, Satan flourishes, and as he has done in the past, God may once again chastise his creation.

The recurrent emphasis on apocalyptic punishment combined with Shaykh Nazim's commentary on the modern world and how it has deviated from God's plan suggests that like Veronica Lueken and John Leary, Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic narrative can be understood as a response to certain developments in modernity. Indeed, it is modernity, in its pursuit of technology, combined with untempered ego and the following of satanic ways, that will lead to Armageddon, whether directly through God's actions or humanity's own foolishness.

Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse provides hope of a resolution to the unfavourable developments of modernity. Invisible worlds will be proved to be real, the authority of religious knowledge will be uncompromisingly shown to be correct, and in the coming war only those who understand where true protection comes from will have a chance of survival. In the post-apocalyptic utopia, there will be both a restoration of the natural way and a fulfilled future where everyone reaches their spiritual potential.

As such, I must respectfully disagree with Atay (1994) and argue we should not too readily draw parallels between Shaykh Nazim's rejection of modernity and the postmodern critique of Western scientific rationality. Shaykh Nazim resolves modernity not by challenging the possibility of certainty but by emphasising a grand narrative that will establish truth through the apocalypse. Furthermore, Atay suggests the disengagement with modernity is primarily ideological, as in practice, the *tariqa* is quick to embrace new technologies and is not concerned with separating from society as a whole. I would agree with this. However, I would also suggest that by placing Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse in the context of a response to the modernity project, we come to a better understanding that Shaykh Nazim's adaptation is not necessarily indicative of acceptance of modernity. Indeed, his imminent apocalyptic vision of all things being made right may well be indicative of how a (short term) compromise with technology can be justified.

If we accept Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is a manifestation of crisis in modernity, it must be asked why he has so explicitly taken refuge in apocalypse while others opposed to secular western modernity, like Islamists, have not, preferring to reform the world through political engagement. Firstly, I would suggest Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic heritage from Shaykh Daghestani makes interpreting the world in an end time scenario plausible. Secondly, I would suggest Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse must be seen in the context of how he sees himself in comparison to other Muslims. As will be demonstrated subsequently in this thesis, Shaykh Nazim feels that the Muslim world is deviant, and importantly, that it has lost any form of legitimate authority. Thus reform without divine intervention is both unlikely and unappealing. This is reflected in the pessimism of his apocalypse and the question over whether the apocalypse can be averted.

An inevitable end

Prior to the year 2000, the emphasis upon Shaykh Nazim's warning of the coming catastrophe suggested that if humanity changed and turned to God then the apocalypse may be averted. He taught, for example, 'The future of mankind is very dark. If nations will not change their directions, they will fall into the worst condition from which they will not be able to save themselves, nor will technology' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 26) and 'if they do not change their direction a worst end is waiting for them. Everything on earth may be destroyed and most people will be killed and those who survive will be on ruins' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 48).[111] As it was, the apocalypse did not come in the year 2000, and as noted by Nielsen, Draper and Yemelianova (2006: 107), one likely explanation given within the *tariqa* is that 'God was persuaded by Shaykh Nazim's prayers to have mercy on humanity'.[112]

Yet, since the millennium, Shaykh Nazim seemed to feel increasingly pessimistic regarding the likelihood of this change. In 2013, for example, the Shaykh revealed 'this month will become very intense' because of divine revenge (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 8773) and in 2011 that 'troubles continue in all nations everywhere and now this is happening between people and within

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[111] See also al-Haqqani (1998a: 22, 31) and *Sohbats 2013* ([2008]: 3874)
[112] In my own research, an alternative explanation is that he was simply misunderstood at the time.

nations...No one can stop this from coming; all those are terrible signs for terrible days that will come on people' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 4500). This is fitting as he predicted 'this world must change. The last limit for this change to take place is the year 2000. If people want to continue in this way after then this world will finish' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 48). Moreover, in 2012 he argued that Earth is 'finished' and the chance to change has passed (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 811).

The inevitability of apocalypse is also suggested in two other ways. Firstly, reference to a prophetic time frame suggests we are in the last generations and secondly, it is seen in the importance placed on the arrival of the Mahdi.[113] The utopia of the post apocalyptic period is bought by the divine powers of the Mahdi and Isa. It is clear that humanity cannot reach this state without divine help. This is also reflected in a pessimism of humanity's ability to change and improve the world prior to the start of Armageddon. As Shaykh Nazim argues, 'until the last world war comes the times will get worse and worse' (sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]) and frequently calls on God to send the Mahdi, because, for example, 'if he does not come there will never be any good on earth and instead there will only be fighting, killing, destroying, burnings, earthquakes, storms and hurricanes' (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 2321).[114]

Given this pessimistic view and the visions of the utopia, the hopes of purification, a new community and a final resolution, it might be asked why one would want to avert the End Times. For those who are prepared, the apocalypse is something to look forward to, only unbelievers have anything to fear. His apocalypse therefore, like previous Sufi apocalypses, is a form of protest, but demonstrates a lack of faith in all agencies including Muslims to

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[113] On the nearness of the Mahdi according to the Prophet, the Shaykh reveals: 'Don't think that this world will last more than this century. According to the *hadith*, Muhammad, who knew everything about his nation until the end, was telling us, that if his nation would keep the rules of the *Sharia*, He would grant them one day. If they would go against the *Sharia*, He would give them half a day. Muhammad explained, that in the accounts of Allah, one day is equal to 1000 years. So it means that his nation, the people of Islam, would be on this earth for 1500 years. No more than that'(al-Haqqani, 1998b: 83).

[114] This need for divine assistance is recurrent in Shaykh Nazim's talks and is emphasied in describing the *Mahdi* as a Saviour. See also, for example, 'I am one of the people who are expecting a Saviour and who is looking in the morning and in the evening to hear His news. That is the only news I am waiting for, the news of the Saviour because I see that people have fallen down in a deep valley and have no means to carry them from the bottom of the valley to the top. I am looking for a Hand from heaven to reach to the bottom of the valley and to take people out' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 104).

change the current situation. It is an apocalypse which is fundamentally pessimistic, seeing no other option but to wait for an external, divine agent.

In this way Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse does not fit neatly into Wojcik's (1997) model. While the apocalypse is undeniably caused by human sinfulness and has a pronounced element of punishment, as in his 'conditional apocalyptic' category, the inevitability of the apocalypse, that it cannot be readily averted, fits his 'unconditional apocalyptic' category. This therefore demonstrates the necessity of undertaking cross-cultural studies to further develop our understanding of the varieties of apocalyptic belief in the contemporary period.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has outlined that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, characterised by a sense of punishment for deviating from the divine path, demonstrates a response to the developments in modernity that he sees as deviant to how humanity should be acting. In turning to the apocalypse he parallels the manifestations of apocalypse in contemporary Christianity. Like both contemporary Protestant and Catholic apocalypses Shaykh Nazim appears dismayed by the advances of the modern world which undermined traditional values and religious knowledge, and thus that the current world is in crisis. To Shaykh Nazim and these Christian apocalypses, the apocalypse is therefore a global punishment from God, although unlike contemporary Catholic apocalypses, Shaykh Nazim seems doubtful this punishment will be averted. His apocalypse further diverges in that he sees all aspects of modernity, especially technological advancements, as against the Will of God, rather than limiting his concerns to socio-moral deviances.

Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse provides hope of a resolution for the perceived time of crisis because, unlike Islamists, he is deeply pessimistic about the possibility of reform. In this way, his apocalypse is therefore pessimistic and represents an apocalypticism which is somewhat removed from the earlier politically-motivated Mahdi movements, and indeed his apocalypse is rather more socially passive than contemporary Catholic apocalypses, although he shares the same distrust of political institutions. Whether this observation on turning to apocalypse when one feels reform and political engagement is not

possible can be extended to other contemporary Muslim apocalyptic writers is unclear, but it would present an interesting avenue for future research.

In terms of the research question of what characterises the apocalypticism of the Haqqaniyya, this chapter has demonstrated that the apocalypse is very much a moral one and that it is one which, despite early suggestions that it could be averted, now seems inevitable.

The unusual passiveness of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse may be explained by his utter disdain for modern life and technology, and thus unlike past reform-focussed Mahdi movements, it requires a millenarian shift into a new mode of history in order to be resolved. This pessimistic vision that humanity cannot change, that we will bring about our own destruction, reflects global apocalyptic concerns, and indeed these themes of crisis and resolution touched on in this chapter appear recurrently in apocalyptic movements, as dimension three of the methodological framework suggested. The following chapter therefore continues this theme by discussing whether Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse might serve to explain evil and current events, and what additional message this may reveal.

Chapter Five: An apocalypse of hope: theodicy, meaning and identity in Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse

Introduction

The previous chapters have identified some of the more distinctive elements of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism and how these might be accounted for. This chapter returns to the phenomenological framework proposed in the methodology section and considers dimension three, 'narrative', to identify further characteristics of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism. The question of why individuals turn to apocalyptic thinkers and movements, in whatever their form, remains one of the most intriguing in the study of eschatology and apocalypse. The dimension this chapter explores is based on the premise that the appeal of the apocalypse lies in its ability to give meaning to suffering, to explain the existence of evil, and as we have seen in Chapter Four, provide a means of navigating the challenges of modernity in the contemporary period. In short, the appeal of apocalypse lies in its ability to convince people their lives have meaning.

This chapter thus examines why this argument is convincing and how apocalypse has been seen as a form of theodicy as well as more recently, a means of addressing anxiety and insecurity in the twentieth century. In doing so it also explores what benefits believing in apocalypse can bring such as meaning to world events and individual lives. It then questions whether Shaykh Nazim can be seen to follow this pattern by examining whether he likewise uses the apocalypse to explain the existence of evil, suffering and why the world is as it is. As such, this chapter will analyse whether Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic narrative has any resemblance with this part of the Western apocalyptic tradition and therefore whether, theoretically at least, there might be some explanation for the appeal of his apocalypse. More widely, it will also discuss the implicit political vision of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, how this compares to other contemporary Muslim apocalypticists, and the subsequent role of the apocalypse in Haqqani identity.

Theodicy and meaning

Within the Abrahamic religions, accounting for the existence of evil and suffering within the world has had particular theological importance, as

theologians have attempted to reconcile the existence of an omnibenevolent, omniscient creator with the existence of large, seemingly unjust suffering. Indeed, in Christianity and Judaism in particular, the existence of evil has even been seen as a problem, as succinctly summarised by David Hume: 'Is [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?' (O'Leary, 1994: 34).

Within Western thought, the specific type of theology that examines evil and its relationship with God is theodicy, defined by Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) as the '"justification of the ways of God" in the light of evil' (Peterson, 2008: 518). That is, theodicies seek to solve the problem of evil by explaining how God's characteristics are compatible with the existence evil and suffering.

While not all theodicies are necessarily eschatological, eschatology is closely associated with addressing evil and its place in creation. While some thinkers such as John Hick (1922-2012), have found eschatology a useful vehicle for elucidating on God's purposes in allowing evil and suffering[115], the relationship between eschatology and theodicy is generally one that allows for the mystery of evil and suffering in the current time, and the hope of God's purposes and plan finally being revealed in the future. Christiaan Beker's study of Paul illustrates such a theodicy, finding that suffering 'can only be resolved in God's coming eschatological glory when through the tears of suffering we may nevertheless confess in hindsight that "all things work together for good to those who love God"' (Mostert, 2005: 114). In addition to the revelation of the purpose of creation, hope is also significant in eschatology where there is the hope that good will triumph over evil, that evil will be ultimately defeated and order restored.

However, as has been noted previously in this study, eschatology and apocalypse are not interchangeable, distinguished by the immediacy of

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[115] Hick, for example, argued that evil and suffering are necessary for soul forming. While this may be justified for those who live a long life, Hick acknowledges this is problematic for those who die without sufficient moral and spiritual development. For these, he argues soul forming must continue in the world to come. Here, then, eschatology is necessary to continue the work that begins on earth (Peterson, 2008: 522).

apocalypse and its earthly collective focus. These features ensure that the theodicy of apocalypse is likewise distinct and that through it there are distinct ways believing in it may benefit a believer. Apocalypses explain why suffering and evil are present and importantly provide hope for an imminent resolution. This immediate and often earthly (or at least material) resolution is often accompanied by vindication for suffering, a dimension far less pronounced in eschatology.

While not the first scholar to suggest a link between apocalypse and theodicy, O'Leary puts forward an interesting argument. O'Leary (1994: 34) argues that evil is one of three essential topoi (recurring themes) in apocalypse and is so significant that it 'appears as a topos in the symbolism of every human community to the degree that all communities are arranged to shield their members from these phenomenon and to soften their pain'. Importantly for O'Leary, the theodicy of apocalypse is effective because it is 'accomplished though discursive constructions of temporality' (O'Leary, 1994: 14). That is, O'Leary proposes apocalyptic theodicies are successful because they resolve the problem of evil through temporal existence and in human time.

In O'Leary's thesis, this is done because by interpreting events in an apocalyptic framework, apocalyptic speakers provide an explanation for why things are the way they are. Importantly, they are as they are because God has a plan. To an extent, this plan has been revealed in scripture and so by interpreting current events as those predicted, believers in the apocalypse can see that there is a certain amount of order to what is otherwise seemingly meaningless. However, apocalypse also points to the fact that all of God's plans will be revealed: 'to claim that the end justifies the means, that is, that evil will be justified in the ultimate destiny of creation is to imagine a temporal resolution to the problem, one that will be revealed at some indeterminate future point' (O'Leary, 1994: 41). Through both of these elements accounting for the existence of suffering provides a sense of hope. Believers can be persuaded 'that their lives do have meaning and purpose in the face of apparently meaningless suffering and evil' (O'Leary, 1994: 42).

Gutierrez (2005: 47) likewise puts forward a similar argument. Noting the importance of sacred time, she argues apocalypticism can be understood in

relation to narrative form; finding 'millennialism is a form of religious sense-making; by foregrounding the coming end of time, millennial groups adopt a narrative understanding of history'. As such, 'history itself is seen as having a distinct beginning, middle and end, with all historical vagaries subsumed into necessary events for the plot of time. The threat of chaos or meaninglessness is conquered, all suffering is recast as historically necessary and divinely sanctioned. In short, time becomes trustworthy'.

While useful, the understanding that apocalyptic theodicy functions by looking forward to hidden plans being revealed is not necessarily fully indicative of how apocalypse has the power to provide meaning to life through confronting the problem of evil. An alternative model is put forward by Bernard McGinn (1994b). Like O'Leary, McGinn argues that apocalypse provides explanations for evil by explaining it in terms of a cosmic plan and the importance of hope that evil will pass. However, he also provides an additional psychological motivation for seeking refuge in apocalypse by acknowledging the need for vindication, perhaps even compensation, for enduring evil.

McGinn argues that one of early Judeo-Christian apocalypticism's indispensible characterises is that it follows a 'predetermined pattern of crisis-judgement-vindication that marks the end' (McGinn, 1994b: 10). This, he argues, can be seen as a 'triple act drama'; one that in all apocalyptic eschatologies has already begun. In the first act, believers find that the time they are in now is a time of crisis, a time that has never been so bad, normally because evil is growing and importantly, believers perceive themselves to be suffering or persecuted as a result.

However, the feelings of despair and persecution can be managed by looking forward to the second act when the wicked are judged and punished. Here, it is clear that moral evil and its consequences are of primary concern, more so than suffering caused by natural disasters. This in turn leads to the final act, 'vindication', when those who have suffered are effectively rewarded for maintaining their faith through suffering by both being proved right and by living though a divine utopia. Ultimately, suffering is not meaningless, and indeed 'apocalypticism gives particular meaning to the present' (McGinn, 1979: 13).

While similar to O'Leary's account, the additional depth of McGinn's model makes for a more useful approach to understanding the appeal of apocalyptic eschatology. While O'Leary emphasises the hope that things will become clear in time, McGinn's model acutely recognises that in addition to the existence of evil being explained, there is a need for the restoration of justice and the just to be vindicated. As he describes 'above all, it is the relation of this hour to the imminent end, the decisive transformation of the world that involves the vindication of the just and the destruction of the wicked, that gives apocalyptic believers the courage to endure the brief evils they face' (McGinn, 1979: 14). This restoration is as much a motivator for hope as the coming of a utopia without evil and suffering. As shall be demonstrated, Shaykh Nazim very much follows this pattern.

Two additional points can be made in relation to McGinn's model. Firstly is that within apocalyptic movements or groups which hold apocalyptic beliefs, there may be considerable scope for building identity. Adherents are part of a special group, unique in their perception of the true nature of history and privileged in their ability to survive.[116] Secondly, his descriptions of a world transformed hints at the political nature of apocalyptic thought. The world is to be made anew, overthrowing the status quo.

In contemporary Western society, apocalypticism has provided meaning to lives beyond explaining suffering by providing security in the uncertainty of modernity. As we have seen, apocalypticism may be one response to coming to terms with the rapid changes of modernity. However, it may have a further relationship with apocalyptic thought, particularly in reference to one aspect of modernity defined by Giddens (1990). Giddens argues that modernity brings new types of risk to the world, and that military violence in particular has changed. Risk, threat of harm, is no longer confined to specific geographical areas. Rather, it is global, due to the persistent threat of nuclear war, climate change and population growth.

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[116] This pattern appears to be recurrent among many apocalyptic books. Zeller (2006: 76), for example, argues that within the apocalyptic New Religious Movement Heaven's Gate, a soteriology developed 'that emphasised the unique status of Heaven's Gate's members as the few select souls among a mass of vegetative humanity'.

Moreover, it is different in intensity. While before the advent of modernity the threat to an individual or even society would not necessarily mean a threat to the species, that is now changed with globalised risk. Such a feeling, whether the majority is conscious of it or not, threatens our sense of security and order in the world and challenges our sense of 'ontological security', a phrase which refers to 'the confidence that most humans have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action' (Giddens, 1990: 92).

Using a secular framework, Giddens argues that one way anxieties are addressed is by a resurgent interest in fate, and a 'pragmatic acceptance', which he explains as 'balanced against the deep anxieties which circumstances must produce in virtually everyone is the psychological prop of feeling that "there's nothing I as an individual can do and that at any rate, the risk must be very slight" (Giddens, 1990: 147). People resume an attitude of 'business as usual'.

However, Giddens neglects the possibility that religion and in particular apocalypticism, may also provide a means of negotiating feelings of individual powerlessness in the face of global destruction. In his study of contemporary American apocalypticism Wojcik, like Giddens, notes that the nuclear age produced an anxiety so profound that it's legacy is not diminished by time: 'the initial feelings of imminent crisis, fearfulness and fatalism that arose at the dawn of the atomic age continue to pervade and influence American culture and consciousness today' (Wojcik, 1997: 137).

For Wojcik, apocalypses are a means of addressing feelings of crisis and the destiny of the individual. Most importantly, he argues that religious apocalypses are appealing because they explain that events since the nuclear age are not random, but part of a meaningful, divine plan. This in turn directly addresses feelings of anxiety and pessimism as by providing a sense that the future, to an extent, can be known and that there is a utopia to look forward to. As Wojcik (1997: 142) explains: 'by placing current crisis within a divine pattern, religious apocalyptic beliefs explicitly address feelings of helplessness and uncontrollability, converting them into an optimistic vision of worldly redemption and salvation'. In contrast to Giddens, for whom a sense of control (but not

order) is gained by putting trust in impersonal fate, for Wojcik this anxiety is addressed by faith in God's plan.

A very similar point is made by Boyer (1992: 312) who argues refuge in an eschatological view of history reflects a 'profound dissatisfaction with "secular" visions of history' as eschatological history has 'purpose and meaning'. All events are leading to a pre-planned point and 'best of all this pattern and goal can be known'. As such, he finds 'this mode of ordering past, present and future into a coherent whole offers both emotional and aesthetic rewards. Chaos gives way to coherence, randomness to meaning' (Boyer, 1992: 314).

Extrapolating upon the importance of a sense of control in the face of chaos it may additionally be argued a sense of control is regained by taking actions to ensure one's own spiritual safety by directly facing the possibility of the end. Indeed, the need to make the right choice at the personal level itself gives meaning to individual lives. Believers living at the end have a unique and specific role written many thousands of years ago. They must stand firm against evil, even if it means suffering. More so than any, their lives therefore have purpose and meaning both for their individual role and the ultimate cosmic plan.

To conclude this section, apocalypses have been seen to have appeal in their ability to convince followers that their lives do have meaning. This is done both through exploring the existence of evil and suffering and by addressing feelings of insecurity, powerlessness and anxiety by accounting for events as part of the divine end time plan, returning a certain amount of order and security when chaos is perceived. Apocalypses provide tools for psychological strength as they assure followers their lives are not meaningless but following a plan. Moreover, they provide hope to those suffering that they will be vindicated, that suffering will soon cease and the mystery of suffering and evil will be revealed. Finally, as believers have understanding of the true meaning of events they are not only in a position to expect more events, as outlined in scripture, but are in the best possible position to make the right choices for protecting their souls when the final end does come. As such it can be argued the appeal of apocalypse lies in a perception of control.

The following section examines the extent to which Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic narrative likewise serves to provide a sense of meaning to world events and

individual lives and whether this encourages similar beliefs such as hope and endurance to believers. It therefore begins by examining how important explaining the prevalence of evil and the state of the world is within the apocalyptic narrative, by assessing whether Shaykh Nazim follows elements of Western apocalypticism noted by O'Leary, Wojcik, and McGinn.

<u>Explaining evil and suffering through the End</u>

Both O'Leary and Wojcik argue that the power of apocalypticism lies in its ability to explain evil, suffering and the events of the world by removing their seemingly random nature and placing them in a meaningful, divinely ordered plan. In the Abrahamic religions it is revealed in scripture that the world will end and to various degrees there are expected events that will herald this end. Matching current events with these signs is often a key way apocalyptic speakers gain interest and within Western apocalypticism reading signs is a particularly well developed aspect of the tradition.

Before the twentieth century this is perhaps most notable within the Adventist tradition, where William Miller's (1782-1849) eschatological hermeneutic that the coming of Christ could be known by those who could correctly read scripture inspired several further generations of prophetically minded churches, including the Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Both of these groups built an eschatology based on calculation and augmented their argument with proof from current events.[117]

In the contemporary period, Hal Lindsey is perhaps the greatest populariser of reading Biblical predictions in current events, yet he is hardly unique among millenarian Christians. The Rapture Index website, for example, contains a list of categories extracted from the Bible that are seen to indicate apocalyptic activity, including false Christs, the economy, global turmoil, and earthquakes. The likelihood of apocalypse is scored according to global events that fit these categories. At the time of writing (March 2015), the index is rated at 181, the highest possible category, due to an increase in UFOs, students in Florida

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[117] For the Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, the messianic kingdom was established in 1914, resulting in Satan being banished to earth. Since then, we have been living in the final days, of which ample evidence, including World War One, was found by thinkers of the period (Partridge, 2005: 291-293).

paying for lunch through a palm reader (a sign of the Beast Government), Kings of the East (China and Japan) trading, conflict at the Temple Mount, and drought in California. Given the broadness of the categories it might be asked if the index could ever drop significantly.

This free ability to draw on events in the modern world and interpret them as those predicated in the Bible has been termed 'semiotic arousal' by Landes (2006: 15). As he explains, '[apocalypticists] become semiotically aroused – everything is a sign, every event is a message about the unfolding drama, every encounter is destined'. Partridge (2005: 294) elaborates: 'even the smallest incidents are invested with eschatological significance and interpreted as "signs of the times" thereby indicating the imminence of Armageddon...while their [apocalyptic thinkers] theological methodology is ostensibly based on biblical exegesis, it also includes semiotic analysis'.

The identification of signs is important for any apocalyptic narrative that tries to convince its listeners that world events, and therefore their lives, are not meaningless but part of a divinely ordered plan. Shaykh Nazim does look to connect current events as signs of the end, and repeatedly warns that time is short as 'signs are appearing'. The most frequent signs of the end he refers to in passing are war, chaos in the world and natural disasters.

However, he also refers to more specific events as signs of the end of time. In 1996, for example, Shaykh Nazim argued 'there is a very thick black cloud over Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. It will not go until Mehdi comes' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 85). In the intervening years, however, while vague signs were referred to as well as general warnings, he rarely referred to specific signs. This changed in the 1990s and since then he has once again began interpreting specific events within an apocalyptic framework. In reference to the terrorist attacks on September 11 2001 in New York, for example, he stated, 'my heart is sad, very sad about what happened. But we cannot stop what is Allah Almighty's Will because the Last Days we are in it and such unexpected events should yet appear, yet more coming. Keep yourself with your Lord and you should be in safety' (*Sohbats 2013* [2001]: 4954). This is one of the few times in the literature that the Shaykh appears reactive, using the end of time explicitly to reduce anxiety.

Shaykh Nazim has been particularly concerned with the Arab Spring and its significance. Repeatedly, he is unambiguous that it is a sign of the coming end times: 'I saw when it began in Egypt or Tunis that it is the start of Armageddon, beginning with these tyrants being taken away and then heavenly power will come. The period [of tyrants] is finished now, and no one after this one. They will be taken away from Tunis, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Damascus, Palestine, Iraq, Turkey, Hijaaz, all of them' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 4512). Indeed, so significant were the events of the Arab Spring that Shaykh Nazim reports that a man on a green horse, Khdir, had been sighted in Cairo (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 102).[118]This, he argued, was a sign that the age of miracles was beginning, an age which belongs to the Mahdi. Most recently, he has turned to the ongoing civil war in Syria, finding 'the fire that started in Syria will bring Armageddon' (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 8773).[119]

Non-political signs the Shaykh mentions include Bird Flu (*Sohbats 2013* [2005]: 3854), earthquakes and floods (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 81) and the Japanese Tsunami. Significantly, these natural disasters are predominantly considered by him to be sent by God, if not as a punishment, as a warning for things to come: 'The Lord of Heavens is sending warnings, like a tsunami, earthquake or hurricane, but people are not taking care that He is not happy with what we are doing' (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 7998).

As discussed in Chapter Four, these themes of warning and punishment indicate a strong moral dimension that is extremely significant to the purpose and motivation of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism. Yet, beyond these few political and natural events, Shaykh Nazim does not particularly draw on specific world events and interpret them in an apocalyptic framework. If semiotic

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[118] The legend of *Khd*ir is found in sura 18 (59-81) of the Qur'an, and describes Moses meeting an enigmatic figure, *al-Khdir*. *Khdir* performs a series of inexplicable actions and is challenged on them by Moses. Upon explanation, it is apparent *Khdir* was acting with divine wisdom Moses did not understand. *Khdir* has thus had importance within Sufism, where he is regarded as a *wali*, and in some traditions, if appealed to 'protects men against theft, drowning, burning, kings and devils, snakes and scorpions. He has miraculous powers and is immortal' (Wensinck, 2012a). As far as I am aware there is not a strong expectation that he will appear at the end of time, although Sands (2006: 82) notes al-Qurtbui cites those who say *al-Dajjal* will finally kill *Khdir*. However, by referring to *Khdir*, Shaykh Nazim thus evokes the idea of a coming change in which mythical, hidden figures become apparent, a foreshadow of what is to come.

[119] The significance of Syria is one small example of prophecy revision within the *tariqa*. Prior to the outbreak of the civil war, the Shaykh reported that Syria, or at the least, Damascus, would be safe, and indeed, I was told unrest from the Arab Spring would not spread to Syria. As far as I am aware, there was little explanation into why the prophecy had changed or attempt to reconcile this development.

arousal is understood to be the matching of current events to those predicated in religious tradition, it is not particularly strong in the teachings of Shaykh Nazim. Indeed, while he is undoubtedly aware of the signs laid out in *hadith*, Shaykh Nazim rarely directly refers to their fulfilment as proof of the end of time. As such, in contrast to the Christian apocalypticists described by O'Leary and Wojcik the language of a plan is not emphasised, although it is implied.

However, while not referring to specific events fulfilling scriptural end time expectations is a point of difference between Shaykh Nazim and the Christian apocalyptic tradition it does not mean that his apocalypse does not provide meaning or explain the state of the world. This is particularly evident when examining the position of evil and theodicy in his apocalypse.

With the exception of certain natural disasters noted above which are sent by God as warnings, in the cosmology of Shaykh Nazim the majority of suffering and evil in the world is caused directly by Satan. At a superficial reading the apocalypse of this theodicy is not immediately noticeable. Yet on closer examination it is a keystone of understanding the current state of the world.

While Satan or Iblis has been a figure of interest for Sufis for a number of reasons[120], for Shaykh Nazim Satan is a relatively straightforward character, being the cause of evil in the world and utterly irredeemable. Indeed, he is explicit: 'all crisis, suffering, and terrible happenings through life on this planet are the result of shaytanic teachings' (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 1030). The Shaykh is not being metaphorical. While the ego is also a cause of suffering, and perhaps the greatest danger to the individual's spiritual life, there is little suggestion that Satan is a symbolic manifestation of the ego or *nafs*, although the two are intimately linked, as it is due to the weakness of the ego that Satan influences human beings. Rather Satan is a genuine force to be feared, and indeed, a number of Shaykh Nazim's texts contain protective chants and instructions to perform *zikr* to ward off his influence.

Satan's ultimate goal is to destroy mankind. Everything he does is to this end:

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[120] The Sufi interest in Satan is rich and complex, as has been demonstrated by Awn (1983) and more briefly, Schimmel (1975). Both note the varied roles Satan has had to play, not just as a metaphor for poor spiritual practice, particularly pride, but also the tragic figure of the perfect monotheist, who would not bow to anyone but God.

> Since the beginning of time people have been warned that Satan is their number one enemy, but they don't want to know. They consider him to be their best friend...billions of people are supporting Satan and his kingdom. He has established his kingdom now and his wish is to destroy everything: all of Europe, all of America and the other continents. The fire is everywhere. Anytime it can explode and Satan will come and sit on a hill of ashes and laugh, "finally mankind is finished. It was because of them that I was thrown out of Heaven, now I got rid of them!"' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 151-152).

Satan's influence can be seen to dominate over both individual life and the wider social sphere. The effects of Satan on the individual are very damaging. Indeed, for Shaykh Nazim, people's lives are like hell because they follow Satan (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 47). He draws people away from God and their purpose (*Sohbats 2013* [2004]: 2876).

More widely, Satan is also revealed to be behind much of the social unrest in the world, including the Iraq war (*Sohbats 2013* [2003]: 7608) and the Arab Spring (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 384). In general, Satan drives people to war and encourages people to make the destructive weapons that will eventually in Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, destroy the world (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 45). The other social ills Satan causes are perhaps more surprising, but for the Shaykh they are as problematic for the existence of evil in the world. Satan is responsible for democracy and elections, a political institution Shaykh Nazim sees as destined to bring problems to the world. It is Satan who causes governments to make the decisions that cause suffering to millions and the development of technology: 'that is the worst teaching for Shaytan to mankind and they think by doing everything with technology instead of man power brings them happiness. Every trouble on Earth is coming through the expansion of technology!' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 2075).

Satan's influence over the world is total (*Sohbats 2013* [2004]: 2581), there is no one safe from his reach. Repeatedly, Shaykh Nazim notes the Muslim world is in the grip of Satan, but more widely this whole time is one that has been given to devils. Such statements imply a sense of crisis and it is perhaps the closest Shaykh Nazim comes to conspiracy. He even uses the language of conspiracy, speaking of 'secret groups' who manipulate world events and that there is a true

power, Satan, behind world troubles (*Sohbats 2013* [2004]: 2142).[121] This sense of unseen powers in all spheres not only explains the existence of evil but encourages a sense of wariness for *murids* as the majority of institutions and people they meet will be agents of Satan (*Sohbats 2013* [2008]: 413).

There are a couple of implications that may be drawn from such teachings. Firstly, a sense of deep unease with the modern world, a pessimistic view on its future, is revealed, and secondly, that subscribing to a conspiratorial narrative such as this may have implications for self image, a sense that one is part of a privileged group that alone is listening to the warnings and is actively aware of the true dangers in the world.[122] From this, a sense of control may be gained, as an individual can see what is truly going on in the world and take steps to navigate it successfully. This in turn may combat what Partridge (2005: 324) describes as 'the problem of powerlessness in the face of widespread evil' that both conspiracy culture and Anti-Christ eschatologies seek to address.

A theodicy that relies on explaining evil due to the existence of Satan need not necessarily require an apocalyptic dimension. Yet, Shaykh Nazim's theodicy does find its ultimate meaning in the apocalypse. The prevalence of Satan, the extent of his dominion, is due to the proximity of the end of time. As he explains, 'It is mentioned, that when the last days are coming and the Day of Resurrection is approaching on earth, the good quality people will loose control of the world and the control will be in the hands of worst-quality-people who are against anything heavenly' (al-Haqqani, 1995b: 29) and 'when people approach the Last Day, Satan will approach them and make them deny all heavenly things'. As has been mentioned above, the Shaykh is clear that these events have already begun. While Satan has worked for millennia to build discord amongst people it is now that things reach their crux, and his plan comes to fruition (*Sohbats 2013* [2003]: 7606). Indeed, as people are controlled by Satan, they are also being

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[121] The relationship between conspiracy and Western apocalypticism is close. Partridge (2005: 316-315) argues this is for five key reasons: 1) biblical end time texts are ambiguous and open to interpretation 2) the Anti-Christ operates in secret and brings about the New World Order covertly 3) millenarianism encourages a dualistic world view in which all evil comes from a single source 4) following the previous point, all events are connected 5) millenarianism often takes place outside of institution theological discourse and is therefore much more likely to engage with heterodox cultural ideas such as conspiracy culture.

[122] O'Leary (1994: 6) makes a very similar point, finding 'conspiracy strives to provide a spatial self definition of the time as set apart from the evils that surround us'. However, he finds that apocalypse is different as it 'locates the problem of evil in time and looks forward to its imminent resolution'.

controlled his agent, the Anti-Christ, who is already active on earth (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 14).

The prevalence of evil in the world, then, is not only explained by the existence and action of Satan, but given context by being placed in an end time scenario. On this the Shaykh is unambiguous: 'we are not at the beginning of this world, we are reaching the end of this period. The Last Day must come, it is coming... That is why there are so many suffering everywhere' (sufismus-online, 2014i [1993]). The extent of evil in the world is explained because at the end of time Satan's dominance is total.

Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic drama I: Crisis

Describing Satan as being at the height of his power is just one element Shaykh Nazim uses to make the present seem a time of unprecedented darkness and crisis, a theme which dominates his teachings. As mentioned above, McGinn notes that building a sense of crisis, a sense that things have never been so bad, is the first part of a pattern present in Judeo-Christian apocalypses. The following section therefore continues by examining Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse within this framework.

For some apocalypticists a sense of crisis may be built by reading the signs predicted in scripture as being fulfilled in current events and society. Yet, as has been demonstrated, this semiotic approach is not particularly strong in Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism. Rather, he builds a sense of crisis in two other principal ways.

To begin, Shaykh Nazim explicitly describes the present times in terms that are exclusively negative. He also repeatedly describes our times as dark: 'the whole world is just covered with a darkness' (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 287) and that our times are dangerous 'in our days you cannot find anyone who isn't cheated and there are very few people who do not cheat' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 84), 'these are dangerous times. No one knows what is happening outside now...These are dark and dangerous times' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 83). Such statements are usually followed by a call to pray for protection, a warning to correct behaviour, or expressing hope of the imminent arrival of the Mahdi who will correct the wrongs of the world. Indeed, the Shaykh himself directly talks of crisis: 'the

crisis is increasing. There are troubles, sufferings and fire everywhere' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 22), and 'I have been travelling through this world during this century and I am observing that the life of mankind is getting more and more difficult. The crisis is increasing and so is the suffering of people' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 40).

So deep is the crisis that the Shaykh repeatedly refers to the idea that this is a time that is unprecedented: 'we are living in a time unlike any before. It is the most difficult time mankind has ever experienced' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 57), 'this twentieth century is the worst century since the beginning of time' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 74), 'now we are living in the worst times because people each one making trouble for the second one' (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 358-359) and 'we are becoming worse than any other nation that has passed away' (al-Haqqani, 1995b: 18). The reason for the dark times is that we are in a 'second period of *jahiliyya'* (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 359), something that is directly related to the end of the world: 'when the Last day is approaching people going to be like before – the period of ignorance, once again' (*Sohbats* 2013 [2007]: 3323).

Such statements both build a sense of anticipation and leave no ambiguity as to what the Shaykh thinks of the current time. As noted above, there is very little attempt to convince his listeners of this crisis by looking to apocalyptic signs in *hadith*. His argument and ability to make such statements seems to be in his authority as a Shaykh with privileged knowledge. While authority is explored in detail in the following chapter the importance of the Shaykh's interpretive power is evident when examining the second element of how a crisis is created; through Shaykh Nazim's commentary on the modern world.

As Chapter Four outlined, the modern world is full of darkness and troubles because nobody is trying to please God (*Sohbats 2013* [2001]: 209). Indeed, because true happiness will only come through servanthood, the cause of depression and unhappiness in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is because people don't follow God (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 22). They neglect their spiritual health, focusing instead on the impermanent and unfulfilling material world. From materialism to the evils of technology to democracy, Shaykh Nazim indicates a deep unease with many values and principles of modern Western society, and indeed, he is unambiguous: 'These are the conditions prevelant in

our time; every moral value is turned upside down so that people can no longer distinguish between good and evil' (*Sohbats 2013* [n.d]: 2053). His apocalypse does more than explain current events, but provides a resolution to this specific period of modern crisis.

Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic drama II: Judgement

In McGinn's structure this period of crisis is followed by the period of judgement. While judgement is an essential element of Qur'anic eschatology, Shaykh Nazim does not explicitly refer to it frequently. Rather, it is implied through his much greater emphasis on punishment and purification, when the world is finally rid of evil. This sense of punishment looms large in Shaykh Nazim's eschatology.[123] Frequently, he makes statements that cruel and envious people will be killed (al-Haqqani, 1994: 53) and 'for those who harm humanity and have enemies and are destroying the creator, they must be killed. That is their punishment' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 54).

The moral imperative is even brought when interpreting a classic *hadith*: 'In the last days, so many men will be killed that there will be forty women for every man. This is because men are mostly cruel people' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 128). It is clear, then, that God will judge those living on earth at the end and only those found deserving will be allowed to survive the final war. The next century will be for 'True Ones', those who love God and resist Satan (al-Haqqani, 1997a: 91). This is particularly revealed in his teachings on surviving the war.

Purification: Who survives Armageddon?

When Shaykh Nazim speaks of the apocalypse and the new society founded by Jesus and the Mahdi, a theme of purification, that all the darkness in the world will be removed leaving only the good, is prominent. The language that accompanies images of purification is that of cleanliness. Shaykh Nazim states, for example, the 'whole world is going to be cleaned' (*Sohbats 2013* [2003]: 4365) and that 'those who do not follow the "true ones" shall be taken away like rubbish is carried out from homes' (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 3133). This sense of

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[123] It is worth noting, however, that at this point judgement and punishment refer to being denied access to the coming earthly utopia. The final judgement, *Qiyama*, is yet to come.

purification implies a moral dimension, that those who survive will have done so based upon their moral character and actions, and indeed, Shaykh Nazim elaborates frequently upon who will survive Armageddon and how *murids* might improve their chances. The advice he gives is both practical and based in the necessity of more abstract spiritual improvement.

Beginning with the practical, one of the Shaykh's most frequent pieces of advice reinforces a sense that this is a time of crisis, as he advises *murids* to stay indoors and ask for protection.[124] He advises against all unnecessary travel, including at times to Cyprus (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 4512) and that one should only venture out for essential activities such as work (if male), and visiting the mosque. Anyone outside for any other reason will not return home should the great war begin (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 2417). Staying in the house does more than protect *murids* from the satanic influence of everyday life. It provides physical protection from the war, as Shaykh Nazim illustrates: 'If anything happens in the skies, one must go back home, make ablution, pray two prayer cycles on a prayer mat and sit there. Nothing would affect them. Those who stay inside don't need to worry, but those outside are prone to danger' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 3907).

Staying in the home in the pre-Armageddon period also provides a form of training for the dangerous time before the return of Jesus, during the reign of the Anti Christ. The Shaykh calls everyone to have a supply of up to three months food at all times[125] (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 759, sufismus-online, 2014c [1999]) which will help them survive when civilisation collapses, and ensures they don't need to go outside and risk seeing the Anti Christ. When he does

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[124] See for example, 'Whom they have their homes and their children, they must hurry through (this) holy Ramadan to get back to their homes and (do) what we said; they must close their doors, only (come out) for their obligatory services that they may do, (otherwise) they must be through their homes!' (*Sohbats 2013* [2008]: 3875); 'War will sweep them away...They should keep themselves in their homes and houses. From the mosque to home, from home to mosque' (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 8775) and 'Stay with your families, with your children, and try to be in the countryside, because big cities are under huge danger' (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 9388).
[125] The advised amount has recently been reduced to twenty days. While there is no explanation for this within recent texts, one of my interviewees explained to me this was in response to the Chilean miners incident in 2010, which demonstrated the power of faith in maintaining the physical body.

pass, they can say *bismillah* for added protection and also recite verses of *surat al-kaht* (Kabbani, 2003: 284-286).[126]

Staying in the home is closely related to Shaykh Nazim's other recurrent piece of advice which is to move to the countryside.[127] This is necessary and provides the best chance of surviving Armageddon because the cities will be bombed (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 84) and, without electricity, everything in the cities will cease to function (sufismus-online, 2014f [1999]) and people will be in chaos. In contrast, those in the countryside will be self sufficient and removed from the worst of the chaos and therefore reasonably safe.[128] Further practical advice hints at how what the Haqqani understand as correct Islamic practice will provide supra-human protection in the coming war, a pattern that is reinforced throughout the apocalyptic narrative as outlined below. The Shaykh advises men to wear turbans, for example, and women to wear *hijabs* as 'who wears a turban can't be touched, not by a bullet or anything. He will be protected and surrounded with heavenly powers because heavenly powers will be enabled from the beginning of Armageddon' (*Sohbats 2013* [1991]: 528).[129]

Far more prominent than this practical advice, however, is explanations of who will survive according to their spiritual and moral character. Primarily, the Shaykh repeatedly assures his *murids* that believers will be protected, teaching

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[126] It is interesting to note that in comparison to other contemporary popular apocalypse there is no 'escape' for believers such as the rapture. Rather, believers must endure this difficult transitional phase to the millenarian utopia. The necessity of endurance is highlighted by Kabbani (2003: 280) who claims those 'who keep their families on the path of righteousness and do not engage in the tremendous societal turmoil surrounding them' in the current period will be rewarded with the equivalent of fifty pious people. This reinforces again the importance of correct action, even against overwhelming odds, and how God rewards those who maintain their faith.

[127] See for example, 'I have always said that big cities are dangerous. I don't think that anyone living in big cities will be saved, because if they bomb the center of electricity everything is going to die. Therefore, I always say go to the countryside. These big cities are all dangerous and I don't like them. I say this to Turks in Istanbul also; don't be there (*Sohbats 2013* ([2011]: 84); 'My advice is to run to the countryside and to have a well, because life depends on water' (*Sohbats 2013* ([1999]): 5308) and The Prophet (s) is advising us by saying, "Don't leave the countryside; don't flow from villages to the cities." Places that are crowded have lots of incidents in them; every kind of immorality and even murder takes place. There is nothing you can gain by moving to the cities' (*Sohbats 2013* ([2011]: 7555).

[128] During my interviews it became apparent that very few *murids* have followed this advice, although it was stressed to me that, due to the dangers in the cities, more people have begun to see the wisdom of Shaykh Nazim's teachings.

[129] It is important to note, however that *hijabs* are only effective if people have belief, as Shaykh Nazim outlines: 'If they are believing in spirituality in Islam, it is useful for them, if they are materialist people, asking only for things from the material life they will not use it and there is no hope for them'. Here, then, Shaykh Nazim stresses the importance of the internal as well as external (*Sohbats* 2013 [1999]: 5308).

for example, 'it is impossible for believers to be killed during Armageddon or for people with good actions and good intentions. That is impossible' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 54).[130] Indeed, one can demonstrate one's faith in the power of God by praying to him for shelter and protection (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 4500; *Sohbats 2013* [2004]: 7228; *Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 289) and being aware of the influence of Satan, which may lead a believer off the right path (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 896).

The Shaykh is more explicit on who won't survive Armageddon and it is unambiguously non-believers, the majority of people on earth. He states, for example, 'billions of people will suffer Divine Revenge. They must be killed, because they are fighting the Lord of Heavens. Most people are going to be unbelievers' (sufismus-online, 2014c [1999]) and 'there is no shelter for unbelievers; nothing and no one can protect them' (sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]). Within the apocalyptic narrative who is classified as an unbeliever is further clarified. It is those who deny the Creator (al-Haqqani, 1994: 53), those who are cruel (al-Haqqani, 1994: 53; sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]) and those who are envious (al-Haqqani, 1994: 53).

Moreover, unbelievers are those who will be killed because they follow Satan, not Allah (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 3907) and those who are cursed because they follow their egos (*Sohbats 2013* [2008]: 3873). While these categories may seem simple, they are potentially large. As has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, the influence of Satan is considerable and impacts on almost all aspects of the modern world, including democracy and the advancement of technology.

Given the breadth of the danger, then, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse calls his *murids* to address their personal behaviour and values and take refuge in the special knowledge of the *tariqa*, which through correct behaviour, can address the problems of envy, cruelty, and in particular, the ego. This ensures *murids* are in the best possible position for the commencement of the end of the world and affirms the specialness of the *tariqa*.

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[130] See also sufismus-online (2014f [1999]) and 'Only believers should be protected, unbelievers should be taken away' *Sohbats 2013* ([2003]: 4366)

What is striking in this apocalyptic vision, particularly in comparison with other contemporary Muslim apocalypticists, is that while Cook's (2015) and Filiu (2011) writers envision a fantasy in which the West is humiliated and the Muslim Middle East is triumphant, Shaykh Nazim envisions a world in which any one from any nation is saved, so long as they love God.[131] Likewise, while maintaining a binary world view of good against evil, Shaykh Nazim does not depict the West as in league with evil, as is common in popular Muslim apocalyptic literature (see Cook, 2005: 150-171). While the triumphs of the secular West are destroyed, so is the rest of the modern world, including that of the Middle East. Unlike the Middle East apocalypticists, there is no easy distinction between the triumph of Muslims and the destruction of the West. Indeed, Shaykh Nazim foresees judgement and punishment falling on many in the Muslim world.

Wahhabis at the End

In Shaykh Nazim's vision, the world is in crisis and darkness. What is notable is that it is not just non-Muslims who are turned away from God. Rather, for Shaykh Nazim, the whole Muslim world is similarly heretical. The Shaykh's primary concern is that Muslims have turned away from their history, traditional methods and have become too much like the West. He states, for example, 'the Muslim people became millions, but have no value' (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 116), that 'the whole Muslim world is now caught in the trap of Shaytan' (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 131) and 'people are against truth now. The whole non-Muslim world is against truth and the Muslims themselves are also heedless and ignorant' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 65).[132]

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[131] This inclusive vision is likewise indicated in Shaykh Nazim's instruction that *murids* should call themselves *rabbanis*, not Sufis or Naqshbandis. This instruction, which came in the last years of Shaykh Nazim's life, was explained to me as referring to being a follower of God or a 'Heavenly one', and is explicitly inclusive, negating barriers such as Sufi and Muslim between believers. It is also an apocalyptic-eschatological title as Shaykh Nazim explains: 'This is the limit to make the *ummah* on one level, finished! No more Shi'a, no more other sects, no more Christian sects, no more Jewish sects...This has never been heard before; you can't hear it a second time, finished. The Day of Resurrection is just at the door' (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 964).

[132] This theme of ignorance is also highlighted when Shaykh Nazim refers to Khidr being seen in the Arab Spring. The Shaykh draws a comparison between Muslims and Christians finding 'The Christians accepted that it was Khidr (a), but the Muslims denied it. The Christians have improved in heavenly matters, but unfortunately, the Muslims' spirituality has descended from a high station to the lower station. It means the denial of Muslims is much more than the denial of Christians, because the Muslims deny the principles of the religion of Islam.' See also 'These times are very difficult for believers. Unbelievers have fallen into endless misery oceans of

The Muslims the Shaykh holds most contempt for, however, are those who within the *tariqa* are referred to as Wahhabi or Salafi. Within general usage, the term Wahhabism[133] is used to refer to a conservative revivalist movement that began in Saudi Arabia in the eighteenth century with its founder Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1702-1792).[134]

An associated term, Salafi, is also used extensively within the *tariqa*. Within academia, Salafism is often used to refer to a reform movement based in the thought of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-97), his pupil Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and reformist thinker Rashid Rida (1865-1935). Abduh and Afghani argued that Muslim socities were stagnant and required a revival by returning to the early sources of Islam. Abduh argued that Islam was not incompatible with the modern world or reason and that through a new interpretation it could demonstrate its relevance and cause the Muslim world to thrive (Esposito, 1998: 52). This interpretation was possible without shaykh intervention or the medieval philosophical traditions, as is illustrated by Waines (2003: 229): 'It was possible to read and meditate upon the contents of the Qur'an with the same clarity of the very first generation of Muslims. The modern reader could thus delve the same essential and inspirational content from the Book as the first Muslims had done, before the theological and legal rivalries injected the poison of factionalism into the community'.

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suffering. But the believers are following them and they are getting the same curse. We are seeing the Islamic world and seeing in which terrible times they are' as an example of references to crisis (particularly for believers), the problems of the Muslim world, and punishment that follows when God's ways are not followed (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 150).

[133] Wahhabism is not necessarily used by those whom it used to describe. Rather, the term *muwahhidun* (proponents of the only God) has been favoured (Yemelianova, 2010: 13).

[134] To an extent inspired by the earlier scholar Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), Abd al-Wahhab argued the Muslim community had deviated from the true Islam of the Qur'an and *sunnah*, by indulging in the practices of philosophical theology and popular Sufism, which he regarded as unIslamic innovations (*bid'a*) (Esposito, 1998: 37; Atay, 1994: 250). The latter was of particular concern for Abd al-Wahhab because of practices such as 'saint worship, pilgrimage to sacred tombs and devotional rituals' which were too closely associated with idolatry as "to worship anyone or anything whether it be a king, prophet, Sufi saint, sacred tomb or tree is to create idols" (quoted by Esposito, 1998: 37). As such, he sought to return Islam to its origin in the example of the Prophet and the early community, devoid of doctrines of intercession and anything but a literal reading of the Qur'an (van Bruinessen, 2009: 150n1). Abd al-Wahhab allied with local leader Muhammad ibn Sa'ud (d. 1765) and with this military and financial strength, followers of Abd al-Wahhab, began to attack local sites of religious importance including shrines and tombs. While initially suppressed by the Ottoman Empire, the movement re-emerged in the twentieth century and is primarily associated with Saudi Arabia.

Such thought opened up the possibility of a new kind of exegesis which removed the necessity of an educated or spiritually advanced teacher. This hermeneutic has been particularly significant in the twentieth century where the '"return" to scripture without the need for specialist credentials' has opened the possibility of autonomy in constructing religious knowledge and in so doing, challenged 'hierarchical concepts of Islamic intellectual authority' (Taji-Farouki, 2007: 215).

In general usage, however, the term Salafi is used broadly to refer to a position in Sunni Islam that is conservative and hostile to all practices defined as innovative, that is, anything not practiced by the early community (the *Salaf*). Like Abd Ibn al-Wahhab, Salafis have stressed a literal reading of the Qur'an and *hadith* (Kepel, 2006: 220), and hostility to the mystical traditions and as such, Wahhabism has been described as a type of Salafism (Yemelianova, 2010: 13).

Within the *tariqa*, however, the terms Wahhabi and Salafi are used frequently and interchangeably. In his ethnographic study Atay paid particular attention to the role the concept of Wahhabi played within the *tariqa* and found that the term was used to describe 'a bogus Islamic position which stands for everything and anything hostile to Sufism within Islam; it aims to destroy Sufism, that is to say, the true Islam. It is presented as a disgrace to the Islamic world' (Atay, 1994: 248).[135]

Atay finds a number of reasons for Naqshbandi hostility towards Wahhabism. Firstly, it undermines the sacred authority of the Shaykh, and therefore the idea that an individual can gain religious knowledge without guidance (Atay, 1994: 251). It attacks fundamental devotional practices such as visits to shrines and praising the prophet (Atay, 1994: 252) and finally he observed ethnic rivalries between Arabs and Turks that could fuel this antagonism (Atay, 1999: 467). However, within the *tariqa* this term was used to refer to 'widely different types of people, such as intellectual-modernist Muslims, Arabs, Turks from mainland

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[135] One text stresses how the Haqqaniyya consider Wahhabis to have misunderstood the nature of Islam and spiritually, defining 'Wahabis' as 'A political movement of Muslims in Saudi Arabia. They are against any spiritual powers connected to Islam, which is why they do not believe in Holy people or in any form of Holy Energy. They are trying to turn Islam into something intellectual, failing to recognise that it is the spiritual power which opens up people's hearts and makes them willing to submit themselves to the Rules of Allah rather than their own' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 109-110).

Turkey, religious scholars (the *ulama*) and even other Naqshbandis who have made allegiances to shaykhs from other branches of the fraternities' (Atay, 1999: 475). In short, anyone who was seen to be contravening the Haqqani worldview.

Atay noted that this discourse of Wahhabism had a couple of roles within the *tariqa*. Firstly, it played a role in ethical expression. As 'Wahhabi' was used as shorthand to describe Islamic practices the Naqshbandi disapprove of (Atay, 1994: 247), it could also be used to express 'an opinion about what is right or wrong' (Atay, 1999: 468). Secondly, it was fundamental in constructing a sense of self and identity (Atay, 1999: 474). Essentially, by creating an Islamic 'other' through labelling oppositional views as a position considered to be fundamentally wrong and un-Islamic, the community was able to assert a sense of self – they were everything the 'Wahhabis' weren't (Atay, 1999: 475). Unlike them, they were on the right path and have the 'correct model' (Asad, 1986: 15).[136]

Correlating to an extent with Atay's fieldwork, Shaykh Nazim's *sohbats* refer to Wahhabis, but also Salafis. Sometimes he warns them in statements such as, 'O Wahhabi people! Your end is coming', or undermines their authority by using phrases such as 'where is your knowledge?' (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 1003). Frequently, he also berates them for not warning people of the dangers the Shaykh himself speaks of such as the strength of Satan, the Day of Judgement and mortality, stating for example, 'O Salafi *ulamas*! Why are you not warning people. You must know that today you are approaching your lives' end by one more day' (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 517). Such statements therefore not only question the knowledge of 'Salafi *ulama*' but their suitability as leaders of the *ummah*. In contrast as a warner, Shaykh Nazim is doing the right thing, reinforcing his authority and therefore the correctness of being associated with him.

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[136] The suggestion that self is formed by contrasting with another is not unique to this situation, but rather has considerable weight in studies of anthropology, sociology and critical theory. It has had significant importance in building the theory of orientalism, where critics such as Said (2003: 300) argue building a binary model between East and West, where each culture was presented as being diametrically opposed, allowed the West to reinforce its identity in positive terms, such as rational and humane in contrast to undeveloped and inferior. Indeed, King (2005: 275) goes so far as to argue 'in the modern era, whether it is the threat of the "yellow peril" (Chinese communism) in the 1970s, or the militant Islamic fundamentalism of the 1980s and 1990s, the West has always maintained its own sense of cultural identity by contrasting itself with a radically different "Orient"'.

The apocalyptic narrative of the Haqqaniyya serves to resolve this antagonism both through explicit hope of vindication in the millenarian period and reinforcing the deviant position of other Muslims. Throughout his descriptions of the coming utopia, there is an overwhelming impression that things are being set right, that they are currently corrupt and the natural way has been perverted. Shaykh Nazim states, for example, 'truth is mixed up with untruth, goodness with evil, believers with unbelievers, dirt with purity' (al-Haqqnai, 1994: 22). This will change after Armageddon, however, as 'when Jesus comes he will put everything in its place, and no one will be able to object. The twentieth century will be the century of truth' (sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]).

Within such revelations is also hope of McGinn's final element, vindication, as well as a message of hope and endurance. The Shaykh states, for example:

> We must constantly ask for protection as we are living in a time which Muhammad has described..."when good people will be thought of as bad people and bad people as good"...we are asking our Lord Almighty to steady us on the Path of Truth and to help us adhere to it even if many people attack us and insist we are misguided...and because we have been informed by the Prophet Muhammad that true people will come under such heavy criticism in the last times we are heartened by such criticism and take it as verification of our being on a true way (*Sohbats 2013* [n.d]: 2053).

Here, then, is an indication that Shaykh Nazim feels Haqqanis and Sufis are persecuted for their true beliefs, attacked unjustly by those they term Salafis. However, when the Mahdi comes they will be vindicated when it is they who survive and are rewarded with the new utopia.

Outside of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, Shaykh Hisham likewise uses the apocalypse as a means of explaining current trials particularly with other Muslims, and through this affirms the correctness of the Naqshbandi position. Two chapters in *The Approach of Armageddon?* (Kabbani, 2003) are dedicated to convincing the reader that the predictions laid out in *hadith* have been fulfilled, heralding the apocalypse, and it is the second of these, 'Religion Becomes Strange', that presents an attack on Wahhabism. Taking a number of prophecies associated with the perversion of religion, Shaykh Hisham outlines their fulfilment in the modern world. He begins with the prediction in various

forms that 'Islam will become strange' and finds 'the believer will be debased in the Last Days, due to his strangeness in front of the evil doers' and elucidates upon this as 'today we see traditional Muslim scholars are harassed and persecuted by innovators' (Kabbani, 2003: 150 and 150n145).[137]

This sense of the righteous and true believers being misunderstood and the internal threat is continued in his next section, 'The Truthful One is Rejected', where 'In the Last Days, the one who is trustworthy in keeping the religion will be called a traitor, and the people will look at him as if he had betrayed Islam' (Kabbani, 2003: 152). On who is truly untrustworthy, Kabbani is unambiguous: 'everywhere on earth different groups of Muslims are destroying the religion because they have their own agendas. Muslim groups and individuals slander one another and though their corrupt behaviour support falsehood, while claiming to be believers' (Kabbani, 2003: 153).

Kabbani describes the Wahhabis as Khawarij arguing the term is ahistorical, referring to 'any and all who fall under that description by going out of bounds of the religion, declaring Muslims as unbelievers' (Kabbani, 2003: 163). The appearance of such people is a sign of the end of time, quoting the *hadith*, 'There will appear a group at the end of time who are found and have foolish dreams. They speak from the words of the Best Creation. Their faith does not even reach their throats and they pass out of the religion like an arrow passes through its prey' (Kabbani, 2003: 162). He concludes with a firm interpretation 'they apply the verses of the Qur'an and *hadiths* in the wrong manner, and set off in pursuit of their wild dreams. The Prophet described them precisely and foretold that they would reappear in the Last Days and this has come to pass', and as such, references a *hadith* calling for isolation from such groups (Kabbani, 2003: 164-165).

Kabbani's hermeneutic is based in symbolism and is used to creative effect in interpreting the prediction that Yathrib will be destroyed. Kabbani admits evidence appears to the contrary, as Medina is not destroyed, but he argues that Yathrib actually refers to the old city of Medina and 'all that it represents' (Kabbani, 2003: 172). As such, the Wahhabis have destroyed it, both by

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[137] Further example is given by Kabbani from a *hadith* which describes how those who follow the *Sunnah* will be called innovators – further evidence that religion has become strange (Kabbani, 2003: 166).

destroying the physical relics of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions but also 'the knowledge of Islam by poisoning the Muslims' understanding of their religion' which he argues was begun by al-Wahhab (Kabbani, 2003: 171).

By clearly linking Wahhabis with end time predictions in *hadith*, Kabbani not only explains why Sufism and Naqshbandis have been attacked during the rise of such reformist ideologies, but legitimises the Naqshbandi position by associating them firmly with the Prophet Muhammad and his predictions, providing further proof of the correctness of the Naqshbandi way. It is affirmed not just by *Sunnah*, but through the authority of the Prophet Muhammad which transcends time through predictive *hadith*.

<u>Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic drama III: Vindication</u>

McGinn's final dramatic element is vindication, something he defines in the Jewish and Christian tradition: 'God controls the keys to the future: good will be rewarded, evil punished, no matter how things appear now' (McGinn, 1994b: 12) – the just who have suffered are rewarded and they are uncompromisingly shown to be right. This reward is often the culmination of religious millenarian ideologies, the utopia, the new beginning that follows the normally catastrophic event that caused the old order to fall. The idea of this utopia, which in millenarianism is normally earthly, or at least material, is crucial to the functioning of apocalypse as a theodicy as it provides the hope to endure the current time of crisis, suffering and evil. Typically, these utopias are not described in detail, one of their defining features being that they are in a world so radically different from our own and so cannot be created without divine intervention.

Shaykh Nazim speaks frequently about the time of Mahdi and Jesus after Armageddon, although less frequently than the affects of the actual war. In keeping with the above, Shaykh Nazim does not present a detailed utopia, but it nonetheless can be split into three elements.

Firstly, Shaykh Nazim describes elements that are common across many religious and non-religious utopias. When Jesus slays the Anti-Christ evil is defeated and the world becomes a safer place. Shaykh Nazim describes it as 'like paradise' a number of times: 'it will be like Paradise with justice, respect,

love, mercy, blessing, lights' (al-Haqqani, 1997a: 91). Further, 'In that time all badness will be gone and only goodness will exist all over the world. The people above will be the happiest people that ever lived on this world. It will be like paradise', although he notes 'it will be in limits, only forty years' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 117). As 'everything belonging to Satan will be ended' (al-Haqqani, 1997a: 87), and only those who follow God are allowed to live, justice reigns. Indeed, justice and balance are recurrent themes. All women, for example, will have a husband, sent from behind Mount Qaf (sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]).

The elimination of moral evil is reflected in a change in the natural world. Here too violence is eliminated: 'violence will have finished. No more sadists will be left on earth and even the scorpions will not be harmful. Children will be able to play with them and with snakes and not be harmed. Lions will eat grass together with the oxon' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 15)[138].

Beyond this, his descriptions of the perfect society more heavily draw on Sufi imagery. As noted above, a sense of things being made right and things becoming clear is essential to Shaykh Nazim. This extends beyond revealing those who were right all along to personal spiritual action. The people living at this time will have a wonderful life because 'the obedience of people is going to be on a high level in the time of Mehdi' (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 1290). 'They will be perfect servants of Allah, living on prayer and dhikr and swimming in love oceans. We are created for that' (sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]). Indeed, the times will be 'enlightened' (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 1290) because there will be new levels of understanding revealed – the Qur'an will be perfectly understood (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 32), implying that those misunderstandings that cause such problems in the world will be eliminated. Likewise, he teaches 'when the Last Days approach there will be an opening for people to come on such levels and to understand. They will find out things they have never heard before. Your knowledge will appear to be rubbish thrown into the dustbin...A new level must come first. First Mehdi will come and then Jesus and they will address people in their own language on the highest level' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 13).

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[138] This interesting statement is reminiscent of the oft misquoted prophecy of Isaiah 11:6 which reads 'The wolf will live with the lamb/ the leopard will lie down with the goat/ the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them'. This may be a sign of the Shaykh's ability to draw on metaphors familiar to his Western listeners.

This new knowledge makes ordinary people like saints (sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]) and heralds the beginnings of many miraculous powers. Indeed, *zikr* will be so prevalent that people will not be interested in eating or drinking. Rather, 'everyone should take his share and *dhikr* should burn it, so there will be no need for toilets'. In this way 'the perfection of creation should appear in those days' (sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]). Moreover, 'every person will be given miraculous powers through Jesus Christ. And if He gives you permission, then you may put your step from here to the second hill of the mountain' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 106). Such will be the change that people will become 'spiritual beings' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 57).

This is a state of being that cannot be reached before this millenarian period, and when combined with the language of perfection, it does suggest that history has meaning, a point that it is working towards. Shaykh Nazim does not use the language of plans, but the elimination of evil and the revelation of true selves give a strong sense that there is one in action and that history and therefore individual lives are imbued with purpose.

The vision given by Shaykh Nazim is one of peace and harmony, enlightenment and spiritual fulfilment. It is an antithesis to the modern world, particularly with its emphasis on clarity and purity. For those who feel the world is degraded beyond hope, whether as a result of Shaykh Nazim's created crisis or not, the thought that they could be with Mahdi and Jesus and live in such a world would give hope to endure and vindication for their current suffering, even if an explanation or justification for their suffering is not particularly emphasised. Shaykh Nazim himself acknowledges that this is an *eschatology of hope*, stating 'we have been ordered to say some things about those miraculous times and happenings that are approaching soon, to be make you change your sadness to happiness to make you more patient and to give you the aspects of happiness' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 106). Yet he also provides a certainty for his followers – 'it is not only a hope. It is going to be a reality for you to be able to see Jesus Christ and *Mehdi*' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 106).

Before concluding it is worth noting his utopia also contains elements that once again, emphasise his dissatisfaction with the modern world. In regards the above, this miraculous utopia, which cannot be achieved without the arrival of

the Mahdi and Jesus, is another hint of his deep pessimism with the current world and ability of humanity to change without a messiah. Moreover, his emphasis on 'true' knowledge being prioritised in the new world must be seen in the context of his dismissal of all other forms of knowledge. This is reflected in his persistent emphasis that there will be no technology in the future (it will be unnecessary due to miraculous powers) and that mankind will again be close to nature. Finally in the destruction of the old order, all governments are finished. In their place will be kings, those Shaykh Nazim deems most suited and divinely ordained to rule, even in America.[139] Again, there is a strong sense that this is a reactionary utopia, one which reflects deep concerns and distrust with the modern world.

An apocalyptic identity?

As we have seen, there is an association between apocalyptic belief and the formation of identity, in that apocalypticism is inclined to self perception of persecution and righteousness. Within Haqqani literature, there is an element of feeling persecuted but that this will be resolved with the coming of the Mahdi. Before concluding this chapter, the following section further seeks to explore this theme by examining the other ways in which the apocalypse may provide identity. It does not seek to outline where the apocalypse fits within a complete picture of Haqqani identity, the mechanisms of building identity within the group, or speculate upon the extent to which this may affect the identities of individual *murids*, which would be more appropriately examined within ethnographic research.

The tariqa at the end of time

The first indication that the apocalypse is significant to how the *tariqa* understands itself is seen through Shaykh Nazim's position in the *silsila*. Until 2011, it seemed clear that Shaykh Nazim was considered by many within the *tariqa* to be the last in the *silsila* before the *Mahdi*, as can be seen from this UK publication:

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[139] The king of America and Great Britain will be Prince Charles, who will be a king with full authority (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 51).

> Originally there were 42 *tariqats*, but the *hadith*[140] has foretold, that at the end of time, these will all dissolve but one, which will unite all *tariqats* under *Mehdi*. It is essential that all these *tariqats* have a continuous line of succession leading back to Muhammad. In the case the Naqshbandiyya *tariqat*, Shaykh Nazim is the 40th Sheikh in this chain. We believe him to be the last one in this line of succession before the *Mehdi* (See for example, al-Haqqani, 1998a: 108).[141]

In his fieldwork, Atay (1994: 46) found this opinion to be prevalent among many *murids*, and it is not an unreasonable conclusion given the frequency with which the Mahdi is expected to come within months. Indeed, Atay observed a talk by Shaykh Hisham which further indicates the expectation that Shaykh Nazim will be physically present at the time of Mahdi, as he will be asked by him to lead the prayers in the Umayyad mosque, before the war against *al-Dajjal* begins (Atay, 1994: 212).

The Shaykh's own self-understanding was less clear. As has been noted, he mentioned a number of times that he expects the Mahdi to come soon, certainly within his lifetime. The Shaykh also recounted a couple of visions which may indicate how he understands his eschatological position. In line with the visionary tradition of *mi'raj*[142], the Shaykh recalled a vision in which he describes an ascent to the *Bayt al-Mamur*:

> There I saw 124,000 prophets standing in rows for prayers, with the Prophet Muhammad as *imam*. I saw the 124,000 Companions of the Prophet Muhammad standing in rows behind them. I saw the 7007 saints of the Naqshbandiyya order standing behind them for prayer. I saw the 124,000 saints of the orders, standing in rows for prayers. There was space left for two people directly on the right side of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq. Grandshaykh went to that open space, and he took me with him and we performed the dawn prayer (Kabbani, 2004: 465-466).

While this may be interpreted as a space being left for two visitors, the significance of Abu Bakr as first in the *silsila*, and the numerology as suggesting a full view of the spiritually significant people in creation, implies that with

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[140] I was unable to trace a *hadith* which would support this interpretation.

[141] This description appears in the glossary section and is replicated over multiple texts.

[142] The visionary tradition is hugely significant within Sufi tradition, and the model of the *mi'raj* has held particular importance from as early as Bayezid Bistami (d. 874). In his example, mystics have likewise recounted their own 'flights' in Heaven and 'applied the ascension terminology to their own experiences in the rapture of ecstasy' (Schimmel, 1975: 219). On the significance of the *mir'aj* in early Islamic history see Vuckovic (2005).

Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Dagestani, the assembly is complete. In another visionary account, the Shaykh further describes how on the Day of Judgement he saw 'The Prophet was on the right side of the Divine Presence. Grandshaykh was on the right side of the Prophet, and I was on Grandshaykh's right side (Kabbani, 2004: 476). Again, the absence of other figures is notable, indicating at least the *silsila* has reached its fulfilment with Shaykh Nazim.

However, in the later years of Shaykh Nazim's life, with the Mahdi failing to appear, thoughts turned to his successor. In November 2011 Shaykh Nazim's son Shaykh Mehmet Adil al-Haqqani was announced as Shaykh Nazim's *khalifa*. In the video of the announcement, available on YouTube, Shaykh Nazim states: 'He is my *khalifa*. He has been granted by our Grandshaykh. He is on our Golden Chain. He may issue an order to everyone, through East and West' (Saltanat, 2011).

The appointment of someone who may be a successor challenges the position of Shaykh Nazim as the last Naqshbandi master, and when looking at unofficial Naqshbandiyya websites it appears for some *murids* at least, this is a concern. As such, there are a couple of strategies used to reconcile this apparent contradiction without challenging the immediacy of the apocalyptic narrative. One solution is that Shaykh Mehmet is not part of the *silsila*, that he is only acting on behalf of Shaykh Nazim, who remains the last Shaykh, as the Mahdi will soon appear. Perhaps more interesting, however, is the suggestion that Shaykh Mehmet is actually the Mahdi. Replicated on a couple of websites, the writer lists thirteen reasons Shaykh Mehmet could be the Mahdi as he matches the classical descriptions, including that he has green eyes, he is not Arab, and he has a mole on his left cheek (Rabbani, 2014). If Shaykh Mehmet is the Mahdi, the contradiction of Shaykh Nazim appearing not to be the last in the *silsila* before the Mahdi is resolved. He is the last, as his successor is the Mahdi.[143]

This flexibility in reassessing apocalyptic predictions, both among the *tariqa* leaders and the *murids* is characteristic of the order, and one of the principle

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[143] Shaykh Mehmet is not the only figure within the *tariqa* to be considered by some to be the Mahdi. Atay (1994: 217) observed some *murids* considered Shaykh Nazim himself to be the Mahdi. By looking within the *tariqa* for the Mahdi, *murids* demonstrate both the esteem in which the shaykhs are held, and the high opinion of the *tariqa*. It is the preferred vehicle for the *Mahdi* to work within and no outside groups are therefore required to contribute to this soteriology.

reasons the *tariqa* has managed to maintain this apocalyptic expectation.[144] While not supported by the shaykhs, the longevity of this theory is considerable as it could last the length of Shaykh Mehmet's lifetime. It will be interesting to see if it takes hold within the *tariqa*, how it is managed by Naqshbandi leadership, and if it can be reconciled with Shaykh Nazim's earlier teachings about the Mahdi.[145]

A special community

The association of Shaykh Mehmet with the Mahdi suggests that there is a certain superiority to the Naqshbandi order, as it is the *tariqa* favoured by one of the most significant spiritual figures in Islamic tradition. Within the *tariqa* in general, this sense of superiority is pronounced, and the apocalyptic narrative serves to reinforce this and build a sense of group identity.[146] Indeed, regardless of the interpretation of Shaykh Mehmet, Shaykh Nazim himself claims 'Sayyidina Mahdi a.s. and his seven Grand Wizirs, 99 Caliphs, and 313 Grand Murshids are all in the Naqshbandiyya Tariqat' (sufismus-online, 2014a). It is not just this association that implies a sense of superiority. The Shaykh is doubtful of the ability of the other *tariqas* to safely guide people in this time of crisis, revealing in the same passage 'in these times, there is no power for other Tarqiats to carry people all the way to the ultimate goal'.

The principal means of establishing a sense of being part of a superior group, however, comes through association with the Shaykh, primarily because of his knowledge, status and connections. In regards the latter points, the Shaykh clearly states he has had contact with the Mahdi, recounting: 'so and so many years ago, we were on Arafat with the Saviour...The Saviour was present and 124,000 saints too. We were all giving our allegiance to the Saviour' (al-

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[144] Nielsen, Draper and Yemelianova (2006: 107) found the explanation most given to explain the prophecies regarding the millennium predictions was that 'God was predicted by Shaykh Nazim's prayers to have mercy on humanity'. In my own research, one of my interviewees explained that it isn't unusual to misunderstand Shaykh Nazim's insights until later events make their meaning apparent. Such an explanation means Shaykh Nazim's predictions don't need to be taken literally, but can be deferred as a mystery or reinterpreted until events support a favourable interpretation.

[145] Interestingly, when I mentioned this theory in my fieldwork it was met with dismissal. The *murids* I spoke with made the point that Shaykh Nazim has repeatedly said that *Mahdi* is living in the Empty Quarter, that he is Arab, and of a specific lineage. To them, these already established details meant Shaykh Mehmet was a very unlikely *Mahdi* candidate.

[146] Shaykh Nazim describes it as the 'highest of all Sufi ways' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 1) and that he has mastered the knowledge of all other orders (Kabbani, 2003: 466).

Haqqani, 1994: 125) and moreover, implies that he is still in contact with hidden powers, stating for example, 'we have been ordered to say some things about these miraculous times and happenings that are approaching soon' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 106).

Closely associated with this point is the sense that the Shaykh has privileged knowledge, both in what is really happening, and what will happen, in the world and in his understanding of how to survive Armageddon. In terms of demonstrating his privileged knowledge, for example, Shaykh Nazim states, 'Grandshaykh is giving me a guarantee for people during Armageddon. He is saying that there are three points. If they are kept, the person cannot be hurt in the wars' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 53). As noted by Atay (1994: 220), narratives around the Mahdi and end time expectation help to 'justify the Shaykh's power and authority', due to his unique and special knowledge. Moreover, they bolster the self esteem of the community as the only ones truly preparing for the arrival of the Mahdi and listening to Shaykh Nazim's message (Atay, 1994: 220).

The significance of the association with Shaykh Nazim at the end of time may also be seen in the Shaykh's identity as a warner. Repeatedly, the Shaykh warns of the troubles to come both on a global scale and in their own individual lives. Simultaneously, he asserts he has a role to play in response: his 'mission is to warn people' (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 2319), 'it is the command of my Grandshaykh for me to call people to the right path to look after them until Mehdi comes to clean everything' (al-Haqqani, 1997a: 85), and more generally, 'the duty of the *awliya*, as inheritors of the Prophets, is to remind, give glad tidings (*bushra*) and to warn (Kabbani, 2003: xx). Combined with his imperative to make the west Muslim, an end time task, this implies the Shaykh has a special role at the end of time and that those associated with him are therefore in safe hands.

Finally, the importance of Shaykh Nazim is seen in the idea that all *tariqas* will become one at the end of time, mentioned in the above quote. Importantly, they will become one under the Mahdi, but the work is already being begun by Shaykh Nazim. In 2013 the Shaykh began referring to 'Shah Mardan', whom he reveals is Ali, the Prophet's nephew. In the initial talk where this began, Shaykh Nazim appears to be addressing Shah Mardan, who is appearing before him.

The majority of the talk appears to be in response to the civil war in Syria, in which Shah Mardan berates the Alawis for their actions. However, there is also end time significance. Shaykh Nazim appears to interpret Ali's appearance as indicating 'the time is near, Mehdi will come from his pure line, that is clear, this (inspiration) comes to me so strongly' (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 1829). One of my interviewees explained to me the appearance of Shah Mardan is an opening in which Shaykh Nazim brings in the Shi'ites and all those *tariqats* with lineages to Ali. When Shah Mardan appears to Shaykh Nazim, he thus implies his blessing and authority for him to speak, and carry all peoples safely to the Mahdi.

Conclusion

In conclusion, believing in the imminence of apocalypse has been seen to have considerable benefits within the Western apocalyptic tradition. It explains why world events are happening and provides hope of an imminent resolution in which God's plans are finally revealed and those who were faithful are vindicated. Events are not meaningless. Rather, they are part of a divinely ordered plan. This brings order to perceived chaos and may convince a believer that their individual life is not meaningless, but likewise part of this divinely ordered plan.

In reference to research questions one and two, a study of Shaykh Nazim's teachings reveals that he does, in general, follow in this pattern. While not as immediately apparent as in the Western tradition, his persistent emphasis on signs appearing, warnings and a utopia in which humanity reaches 'perfection' suggests history does have a goal and that God is active in seeing his plan come to fruition. Moreover, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse can be seen to act, to an extent, as a theodicy. While the Shaykh does not promise that evil and suffering will be explained, he does promise a resolution in their elimination. Further, while evil is unequivocally the work of Satan, the Shaykh explains the extent of perceived evil in the modern world as a result of Satan's strength at the end of time. As such, by explaining the cause of evil in the world and describing the utopia to come, Shaykh Nazim can convince his *murids* their lives have meaning, that God is in control, and provide them with hope to endure the current time through the hope of an imminent utopia.

This chapter has also argued Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse follows McGinn's three dimensional model of apocalypticism. Shaykh Nazim builds a sense of crisis through references to Satan, times being unprecedented in their darkness, and evil in modernity. The second dimension of judgement reveals that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse resolves this crisis, and particularly addresses the problem of what the *tariqa* terms Wahhabism. However, the hope of justice and vindication could potentially be deferred until the eschaton; it does not necessarily require an earthly or immediate resolution, although this arguably makes hope significantly more potent, particularly in regards the utopia Shaykh Nazim presents.

The extent of evil in the world, the pervasivness of Satan and his influence in all aspects of modern life mean a resolution must be found, it cannot continue nor can it be changed with human intervention. Thus, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, while resolving the problem of Wahhabism and providing vindication for current suffering, is ultimately made necessary because of the much bigger and unresolvable crisis present in contemporary society.

This chapter has also noted the unusualness of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse in that he places emphasis on morality in surviving Armageddon, over the identity of being a Muslim. His apocalypse represents a triumph of Islam and truth, but not with the end of humiliating the West, nor to the indiscriminate benefit of Muslims. Within his apocalypse is thus reflected Naqshbandi antagonism towards Salafi Islam that the end time narrative helps resolve.

This is significant to our understanding of contemporary Muslim apocalypticism as it demonstrates the diversity of Islam and the conflict between Muslim groups. Rather than the vision of the Muslim world against everyone else, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is more inclusive, but ultimately no less 'political' than the apocalyptic writers described by Cook (2005) and Filiu (2011). This inclusivity is supported by the role the Shaykh gives to Europeans as entering Islam at the End of Time, and thus potentially being with the Mahdi. In this way, it is an apocalypse which also reflects the transnational nature of the *tariqa*.

A recurrent theme through this chapter has been identity. This chapter has argued that apocalyptic thought is valuable in making sense of events when one feels persecuted and provides a powerful hope of vindication. This chapter thus

concludes by outlining that the apocalypse does appear to be important to Haqqani identity, as it implies them to be a special, privileged group. The primary way this is achieved, however, is through association with Shaykh Nazim and his unique and privileged esoteric knowledge. The following chapter thus continues this theme of authority by examining how it is used to maintain and justify the apocalyptic narrative of the Haqqaniyya. It thus turns to dimension five of the phenomenological framework in order to further our knowledge of what characterises the apocalypticism of Shaykh Nazim and the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya.

Chapter Six: Authority

Introduction

The apocalypse, by its nature, is an event that is shrouded in symbolism and the mystery of the future. Nonetheless, both Islam and Christianity have sought to read the signs of its coming and make this future known. In order to speak of the hidden, and importantly be believed, an individual must establish his authority, whether as a prophet, visionary, or interpreter, as O'Leary (1994) has convincingly argued. While more work is required to understand the process of authority building in apocalyptic groups, preliminary research would suggest it is important that a speaker is an authority recognised by the group. In this respect, if we are to understand how apocalyptic ideas are given credence by groups, it is fruitful to look at what authorities are appealed to, how their authority is communicated, and who is expected to be persuaded by it (Thompson, 2005b: 10). In doing so, we also gain insight into who or what an apocalyptic speaker or groups holds to be important.

The following chapter therefore opens by discussing how authority is built in the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya, with particular emphasis on the charisma of Shaykh Nazim. It follows by analysing what authorities are called upon to legitimise the apocalyptic teachings, how this relates to the position of the charismatic shaykh, and how this changes when the likelihood of apocalypse is communicated to a potentially much wider audience. It thus seeks to address one of the primary research questions by further establishing key characteristics of apocalypticism in the Haqqaniyya and in so doing, provide insights that may be used for comparative work, whilst also providing some groundwork for the final chapter of this thesis.

Understanding authority in *tariqas*

At first glance, the most obvious and principal source of authority in Muslim religious life is the Qur'an, believed to present the eternal will of the ultimate authority in the universe, God. The Qur'an reveals that God, in his mercy, has sent messengers throughout history with 'Books' that show humanity 'the Way', that is, the correct way to behave so as to please God (Rahman, 1980: 9). The messenger of the Qur'an was of course the Prophet Muhammad. However, in

Muslim tradition Muhammad was understood not simply to be the carrier of the Qur'an. Rather, he was 'its first interpreter' and as such, 'provided Muslims an exemplary model to revere, venerate and attempt to emulate in their own lives' (Waines, 2003: 11, 23). The recordings of the Prophet's sayings and practices were recorded as *hadith* and *sunnah*, forming the second major authority source within Islam.

However, neither *hadith* nor the Qur'an are necessarily self evident and require interpretation and mediation. The considerable importance of correct interpretation links the right to produce religious knowledge closely with power and authority. As such, Krämer and Schmidtke (2006: 1) outline the different forms religious authority can take when they define it as 'the ability (chance, power or right) to define correct belief and practice, or orthodoxy and orthopraxy, respectively; to shape and influence the views and conduct of others accordingly; to identify, marginalize, punish or exclude deviance, heresy and apostasy and their agents and advocates'. Within Islam, the power to interpret the will of God has fallen to the *ulama*, whose knowledge comes from the correct interpretation of scripture.[147] However, the authority to provide guidance in how to lead a good religious life is also found in an alternative form in the Sufi *tariqas*.

While there may be many authoritarian structures within a *tariqa*, some of which may compete or be complicated by the transnational context[148], the greatest immediate authority in most *tariqas* is the shaykh. In contrast to the *ulama*, the shaykh's authority is based 'on their claim of being a link between the here and the hereafter, between the profane and the Divine' (Böttcher, 2006: 241) and as such, many studies of Sufism have explored the workings of authority in *tariqas* with reference to shaykhs as examples of charisma.[149]

Charisma was notably explored by the sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920). Weber (1947: 139) describes charisma as 'a certain quality of an individual

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[147] In the modern period this has become more complex. With no unifying political structure or theological authority there is something of a fragmentation in Islamic authority (Atay, 1999: 456). Beyer (2009: 11) notes this is a particular development of globalisation as 'religions are no longer...regional affairs which can be understood primarily with reference to a particular core region, a region that serves as the centre of authority and with respect to all else is peripheral, marginal and comparatively inauthentic'.
[148] See for example Atay (1994) chapter ten.
[149] For example, Buehler (1998), Werbner (2003), Gilsenan (1973).

personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities'. These powers are not available to everyone, and for religious authorities, are of divine origin. Importantly, Weber noted that charisma is essentially a relationship between a charismatic leader and his followers. Charisma must be recognised by followers and proved by leaders (Weber, 1947: 140), it cannot exist in isolation. With this in mind, studies of Sufi charisma may thus be concerned with how charisma is created and maintained by shaykhs and their followers.

Weber considered this type of charisma to be 'pure' charisma and that as such, it must stand apart from the everyday world, including traditional modes of authority. It is not institutionalized or permanent and is revolutionary in that it breaks with the past and the traditional (Weber, 1991: 248, 250). It can, however, be routinized, becoming bureaucratic and part of an institution.[150]

At first glance, Weber's description of the charismatic person appears to fit Sufi shaykhs well. In Werbner's (2003: 22) words, the saint 'is believed to be a unique, exemplary individual, *wali*, or friend of God, physically and mentally purified of all desires. Through him, it is believed, flows the divine light, grace, and power of blessing emanating from Allah'. He has privileged knowledge and with God's grace can perform miracles (*karamat*) as vast as walking on water, foretelling the future, helping believers, healing the sick, bringing rain in times of drought, taming wild animals, and punishing evil-doers (Abun-Nasr, 2007: 77).

However, Weber's view of pure charisma being antithetical to tradition is challenged by shaykhs who, in addition to their charismatic abilities and qualities, derive their authority from their lineage and being a prophetic example (Buehler, 1998: 10). Yet, their authority cannot be dismissed as being entirely inherited. Rather, as Werbner (1996: 329) has observed, movements around Sufis 'wax and wane', reappearing periodically with their own creative force and energy, driven by a new charismatic individual. As such, Werbner argues 'Sufi

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[150] Charismatic power can be passed on to another individual in a number of ways including being seen to share important characteristics with the charismatic person (as are searched for when looking for the reincarnated Dalai Lama), the recognition or 'election' of the community (as when Popes are selected), transmission by inheritance, and transmission by ritual (Weber, 1947: 142-144). When it is associated with an office or takes on 'the character of a permenant relationship forming a stable community of disciples or a band of followers', and so changed from its pure, but impermanent form, it is considered by Weber (1947: 142) to be routinized.

cults thus exemplify the existence of a mediating third term between charisma and routinization, where the rise of charismatic individuals is a recurrent phenomenon, which assumes predicable cultural patterns' (Werbner, 2003: 25). With this in mind, the following section discusses how Shaykh Nazim can be understood to fit this modified understanding of charisma. Before this, however, it is worth briefly noting the relationship between charismatic authority and apocalyptic thought.

The twentieth century saw the birth of a number of apocalyptic movements based around charismatic leaders such as Bo and Peep of Heaven's Gate, Sokoto Asahara of Aum Shinrikyo and Mrs Keech of Festinger *et al*'s study, *When Prophecy Fails* (1956). Some of these groups notably turned violent, whether internally or externally, and as such, commentators and academics turned to theories on charisma and the charismatic relationship to explain the perceived powerful hold a leader could have over people to make them perform such atrocities (Dawson, 2006). As noted by Dawson (2006: 14), many of these theories were based in psychological assumptions and as such, were limited and speculative. Moreover, it is insufficient to assume apocalyptic groups function due to a charismatic leader who manages to control his followers. Rather, as O'Leary (1994: 58) has argued, people come to believe in the likelihood of apocalypse because they have been convinced by 'rational legitimation of interpretive arguments'. That is, for O'Leary's apocalyptic speakers, authority rests on justification of their interpretive strategy.

O'Leary's argument is convincing, but his study is focused on the assumption of the routinization of charisma, or more specifically, how apocalypse is made convincing through justification of interpreting a sacred text (O'Leary, 1994: 58). Pure charisma is effective in the initial stages of apocalyptic expression, where 'the authority of the apocalyptic narrative is grounded in the prophet's claim to direct apprehension of the sacred' (O'Leary, 1994: 53). Sufism very much has a visionary tradition, but as was mentioned above, it would be a mistake to neglect the importance of tradition as part of their authority. The study of Sufi apocalypse therefore presents an interesting opportunity to examine the relationship between living charisma, religious experience, and the call to external authorities in the interpretive process of traditional texts.

Authority in the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya

The nature of authority in the *tariqa* has been complicated by Shaykh Nazim's recent passing. While undeniably he united the *tariqa*, that further research be undertaken in the next few years is essential. Shaykh Nazim's announcement of Shaykh Mehmet as his successor surprised many in the *tariqa*, and it will be important to carefully monitor further developments both in terms of the nature of authority, its possible routinization, and where indeed authority in the *tariqa* ultimately comes to lie.

Nonetheless, during the period in which the majority of this research was undertaken, the most important source of authority in the *tariqa* was Shaykh Nazim. While there are higher authorities, such as the Qur'an and the Prophet, Shaykh Nazim was the gateway to these, the mediator, and certainly the most accessible authority. Drawing from Haqqani texts and my own fieldwork, the following section therefore outlines some ways in which Shaykh Nazim's authority is built and maintained in the *tariqa*, beginning with an analysis of whether Shaykh Nazim's authority can be understood with reference to a model of Sufi authority developed by Werbner (2003). This model has been chosen because it highlights knowledge as particularly important to authority, making it particularly relevant for contextualising the authoritative basis of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic teachings.

Before this, it is worth noting Shaykh Nazim's position on the *silsila*. Shaykh Nazim's legitimacy is built on his being part of the Naqshbandi Golden Chain, which links him to all previous saints and ultimately the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, Shaykh Nazim's current position in the *silsila* means he is uniquely privileged, even among the Naqshbandiyya. This is outlined by Kabbani in the quote attributed to Shaykh Sharafuddin:

> As the Order continues from one master to another, it moves upward. As the secret is passed from one shaykh to another, the rank will be increased by the addition of the successor's secret to the secret that he receives. At the same time, the rank of the Prophet is always increasing, in every moment, and as he is raised ever higher, so too are the saints of his Community. This is the meaning of the verse, *"And above every possessor of knowledge there is a greater knower".* (Kabbani, 2004: 435).

Werbner (2003: 286-287) argues there are three dimensions of Sufi charismatic power. The first dimension is a 'discourse of legitimation', that is, 'pragmatic fables inscribed concretely in narratives about an apparently unique and extraordinary individual'. As will be demonstrated below these narratives are hugely prominent in the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya. The second is 'a globally shared episteme' or an understanding that mystical experience can reveal knowledge not otherwise available, and finally, 'a technology of knowledge'.

Here, power is maintained because the shaykh has access to esoteric knowledge and importantly the spiritual methods that would lead to this knowledge. As the shaykh controls access to this knowledge he therefore determines how far an adherent can travel on the path. Moreover, due to an 'experienced sense of globalised "panoptican surveillance"' adherents are encouraged to exercise self discipline as due to the shaykh's abilities, he could be watching them at any time (Werbner, 2003: 286). The Naqshbandi-Haqqanis undoubtedly share in the global episteme, but for the purposes of this section, points one and three form a useful starting point for analysing the root of Shaykh Nazim's power.

Narratives

The Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya are a *tariqa* notable for their production of texts, and it is in one significant publication that provides a hagiographic narrative which perhaps best reveals how Shaykh Nazim's elevated status is wished to be understood. In the introduction to Shaykh Nazim's life, Kabbani (2004: 460) writes:

> Shaykh Muhammad Nazim Adil al-Haqqani is the unveiler of secrets, the keeper of light, the Shaykh of shaykhs, the sultan of ascetics, the sultan of the pious, and the leader of the people of Truth. He was the chief master without peer of the Divine Knowledge in the late twentieth century, and he has carried the flame of that Knowledge into the new millennium. He is the rain from the ocean of knowledge of this Order, which is reviving spirits in all parts of this world. He is the saint of the seven continents, his light having attracted disciples from all quarters of the globe. He wears the cloak of the Light of the Divine Presence. His is the sun for all the universe. He is known as "the Saint of Two Wings:" the external knowledge and the internal knowledge.

This passage reveals a number of Shaykh Nazim's attributes. Firstly, he is without peer, the most enlightened, unique. He has unrivalled access to secrets and is even in the Divine Presence. Importantly, he is a gift from God, indicating the wider understanding shaykhs are necessary and blessings to humanity.

The specialness of Shaykh Nazim is emphasised in the same text which narrates his childhood. As a boy, Shaykh Nazim was described as being perfect in conduct, never fighting or arguing, always smiling and patient (Kabbani, 2004: 461).[151] Despite not having undertaken any training, he was already spiritually adept, able to advise people, predict the future, and speak with dead saints (Kabbani, 2004: 461).

The hagiography further outlines Shaykh Nazim's strength as a spiritual leader by outlining his spiritual feats and devotion. Kabbani describes a number of seclusions in which Shaykh Nazim practiced *zikr* extensively and received visions of figures from Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Gilani, to Iblis to the Prophet and also experienced annihilation (*fana*). Outside of these extreme spiritual feats, Shaykh Nazim's devotion to Islam and his drive to guide people to God is outlined when he contravened the law to give the *adhan* in Arabic, resulting in imprisonment (Kabbani, 2004: 468).

The ability to perform miracles is seen as one of the best pieces of evidence that someone is in touch with divine power (Böttcher, 2006: 254). Within Haqqani texts, Shaykh Nazim has a miraculous hold on people. Kabbani's hagiography recounts how people are almost universally drawn to him, that he has the power to awaken people's hearts and that the strength and spread of the *tariqa* under his leadership is evidence of his blessed nature. However, there are also narrations of more extreme miracles. In the above discussed text, Shaykh Hisham reports that Shaykh Nazim is able to appear in two places at once, having appeared both in Cyprus and on Hajj simultaneously. Kabbani (2004:

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[151] Descriptions of an unusual childhood temperament has a long precedent in hagiographic literature of both the prophets and saints. On Hallaj, for example, Renard (2008: 26-27) describes 'like their prophetic counterparts, God's Friends are often dedicated to or presented for the exclusive service of God. According to legendary accounts about Hallaj's beginnings... the mystic's mother promised during her pregnancy to dedicate the child to a life of service to the spiritually poor. Tradition holds that the baby had foreknowledge of this dedication and that his mother made good on her promise when he reached the age of seven'. Similarly, as a young child Rumi could fast for up to a week and was visited by angels (Renard, 2008: 36). A remarkable childhood thus places Shaykh Nazim in a well established tradition.

480) reports the governor of Tripoli took *baya* after this event, reinforcing the sense that is was so miraculous it convinced an independent witness.

During my own research, I was told Shaykh Nazim stopped performing grand miracles in the 1980s as we have entered the period of the Anti-Christ. As the Anti-Christ will likewise perform incredible feats, Shaykh Nazim chose to warn his *murids* to procede with caution where incredible miracles are concerned.

Nonetheless, belief in the Shaykh's ability to perform such miracles remained strong. Indeed, as early as 1980, Habibis (1985: 188-190) noted *murids* reinforced Shaykh Nazim's authority through narrative by relating stories to each other of his works. These stories primarily focus around miracles the Shaykh has performed to individuals and thus on the Shaykh's miraculous knowledge.

Technology of knowledge

In Werbner's (2003) structure, technology of knowledge refers to both the surveillance the Shaykh can place on his *murids*, even from afar, and, with the understanding that spiritual progression comes through experience, power to halt or aid a disciple on their path by withholding or imparting knowledge to progress on the spiritual path. A requirement of the technology of knowledge is therefore the understanding from followers that a shaykh has this special knowledge. Within the Haqqaniyya, this is expressed and reinforced by *murids*, particularly through the understanding that Shaykh Nazim is considered able to predict the future. This knowledge therefore means *murids* can ask for advice on the correct course of action, although as I was warned, it always possible to misunderstand the advice. Moreover, the importance of this knowledge is reinforced in the *tariqa* by the requirement to ask the Shaykh before undertaking marriage, divorce and travel.

The Shaykh also had knowledge of things that are happening far away. In an expression of Werbner's panoptic surveillance, the Shaykh was understood to 'look' at individuals four times a day. He also has knowledge of hidden events of the past. In the Glastonbury context, I was told in my fieldwork the Shaykh knew where Jesus had walked in Glastonbury, he knew where King Arthur is in

occultation, and was able to see the divine reality of the omphalos in the grounds of Glastonbury Abbey.[152]

The ability to undertake this surveillance and aid *murids* is not diminished by the Shaykh's death. In the days following his passing, the *tariqa* released a number of videos outlining that Shaykh Nazim still lives, that he is still watching, and can still help *murids*. In my own fieldwork, a number of *murids* have stated that not only do they still feel his presence, but that he is stronger than in life.[153]

As was noted above, Kabbani's account of Shaykh Nazim's life describes Shaykh Nazim as innately spiritual, and outlines how he developed this in adulthood by undertaking seclusion and other spiritual practices. However, in an interesting passage, Kabbani describes in detail both the nature of Shaykh Nazim's knowledge and a unique method of receiving it:

> As soon as he [Shaykh Daghestani] said that, he looked into my heart with his eyes. As he did so, they turned from yellow to red, then to white, then to green and black. The color of his eyes changed as he poured into my heart the knowledge associated with each color.
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> The yellow light was the first and corresponded to the state of the heart. He poured into my heart all kinds of the external knowledge which is necessary for the daily life of people. Then he poured from the stage of the secret, the knowledge of all forty orders which came from *Ali ibn Ali Talib*. I found myself a master in all these orders. While transmitting the knowledge of this stage, his eyes were red. The third stage, which is secret of the secret, is only permitted for shaykhs of the Naqshbandi Order, whose *imam* is Abu Bakr. As he poured into my heart from this stage, his eyes were white in color. Then he took me into the stage of the hidden, the station of hidden spiritual knowledge, where his eyes changed to green. Then he took me to the station of complete annihilation, the station of the most hidden where nothing appeared. The color of his eyes was black. Here he brought me into the Presence of God. (Kabbani, 2004: 466-467).

This account ends with Shaykh Nazim being informed that should he have any question, he will 'receive an answer directly from the Divine Presence' (Kabbani, 2004: 468). This passage thus reinforces that Shaykh Nazim is authorised to

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[152] See pages 267-268 of this thesis for a Naqshbandi description of the omphalos.
[153] While most of my interviews were conducted before Shaykh Nazim died, both 'Salma' and 'Rabiah' reported this in their interviews.

help people because he has received the highest possible level and specific knowledge to help ordinary people. Moreover, as he is receiving answers from the Divine Presence, *murids* can be assured, more than anyone else, he is correctly guided.

This passage also reflects Werbner's (2003) observation that knowledge is received by experience, and there is power in who holds that knowledge. Here, Shaykh Nazim not only has the highest possible spiritual knowledge, and is thus able to guide *murids* as he sees fit, but he gained this knowledge in a manner which cannot be replicated or circumvented. It therefore reinforces the importance of the shaykh relationship.

Werbner (2003: 282) argues that the charismatic authority of the saint is embodied in ritual, something that in the context of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis has been observed by Böetcher (2006). The most obvious example of authority being enforced through ritual is in *baya* given to the Shaykh, defined in the *tariqa* as 'allegiance, to promise to obey' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 106). Closely related to *baya* is *rabita*, the process by which one binds one's heart to the Shaykh. Vidich (quoted by Kabbani, 2004: 576) observes *rabita* serves as a way for the Shaykh to transmit his knowledge. He finds 'the process of receiving transmission is not an intellectual process but a question of directed attention and attachment to the shaykh'. This connection moreover serves to connect *murids* to the spiritual power of the *silsila*, and allows Shaykh Nazim to protect people from harm (Böetcher, 2006: 257). Finally, *zikr* also reinforces the authority of the Shaykh. In my own observations, the *zikr* begins with a call to connect hearts to Shaykh Nazim. This has continued beyond his death at the time of writing.

The above illustrates that the maintenance of Shaykh Nazim's authority was consistent with a model of religious authority proposed by Werbner. As will be demonstrated in the following section, the understanding that Shaykh Nazim has abilities and the type of knowledge outlined above is necessary for holding together his apocalyptic teachings. However, the devotion and trust *murids* put in Shaykh Nazim is also often based on a profound religious experience. In my research, for some, such an experience began their journey into Sufism, and even Islam. From a phenomenological perspective, it is not possible to reject

such experiences out of hand. Rather, it should be acknowledged that for some at least in the *tariqa*, trust in the authority and power of the Shaykh was not necessarily given because they were convinced of stories they heard. Rather, they experienced it firsthand. This is explored in more detail in the following chapter.

Authorities called upon in the apocalyptic narrative

The well established authority of the Shaykh built upon his esoteric knowledge might be assumed to be the foundation of the legitimacy of the apocalyptic narrative in the Haqqaniyya. While there is some truth to this, this would be a simplistic assumption. Rather, Shaykh Nazim draws upon a complex web of authorities to legitimise his apocalyptic message, rather than solely relying on his personal visionary experiences.

As was demonstrated in Chapter Two, the broad outline of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic message draws primarily from *hadith* and Islamic traditions. Yet, Shaykh Nazim rarely directly refers to these traditions, nor does he deliberately draw parallels between current events and *hadith* expectations. However, this does not mean the authority of *hadith* and the Prophet is neglected. Rather, the Shaykh refers to the authority of the Prophet more obliquely. He states, for example, '1400 years ago Muhammad said that days would come that would be like these. Because the Last Day is coming closer, it is approaching, approaching...' (sufismus-online, 2014e [1993]), and in another text 'we believe what the Prophet said: the Last Days have started to appear' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 83).

Such statements clearly imply that the Shaykh's teachings have continuity with those of the Prophet Muhammad. Indeed, Shaykh Nazim is clear on this point, stating, 'we take our knowledge from Holy Books and according to that information the world is now going to be full of trouble'. This appeal to other authority is complemented by the Shaykh's reference to 'traditional knowledge'. He states, for example, 'the twenty-first century will not be completed. It will be the last century. This is according to our traditional knowledge' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 33) and alternatively, 'we are reaching the end of the twentieth century and according to our traditional knowledge, it is the last point mankind will reach' (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 118). While it is unclear where this traditional knowledge

comes from, it nonetheless enforces the idea that there is precedent to what Shaykh Nazim says.

One interesting authority source Shaykh Nazim appeals to is Ibn Arabi. Ibn Arabi is described by Shaykh Nazim as being of 'a high rank' (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 4261), a 'holy sultan' (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 6048) and crucially 'one of the servants to whom Allah Almighty was giving exact knowledge about coming events' (sufismus-online, 2014g [1988]). Indeed, Shaykh Nazim establishes Ibn Arabi as being an authority by outlining that 'Allah may teach any one of his servants about the news of the future' (sufismus-online, 2014g [1988]).

As was covered briefly in Chapter One, Ibn Arabi is one of the best known Sufi commentators on the apocalypse. While with the exception of his Mahdi interpretation, Ibn Arabi's apocalypse broadly follows the *hadith* (Morris, 2002: 251n10). Ibn Arabi is also credited for the unusual specifics of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse. Habibis (1985: 167), for example, found Ibn Arabi to be considered the source of numerology six out of seven people will die. In a later talk, Shaykh Nazim refers to Ibn Arabi as the source that World War Three will begin when Russia marches into Turkey, culminating in a battle on the plain of Amuq where Russians will face the Germans and Japanese, both of whom have struggled at Russia's hands (sufismus-online, 2014g [1988]). The source of this reading of Ibn Arabi is unclear. In a conversation with a *murid* who asked for the books that mention such details, Shaykh Nazim states there are booklets in Turkey (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 2523). However, there may be a second source of this reading.

Quoting Shaykh Daghestani, Shaykh Nazim reveals that Ibn Arabi wrote in three states. At his peak, he wrote at one with the Divine Oceans, revealing secrets he himself did not understand. At a lower station, he wrote in the presence of the Prophet, which only Sufis may decipher, and at his lowest state he wrote in the presence of Holy people, the state which some non-Sufis can decipher (sufismus-online, 2014g [1988]). Crucially, only Naqshbandi saints can understand Ibn Arabi's insights from all three states, and so can see knowledge about things to come that not even Ibn Arabi understood. This interpretation thus safeguards against challenges from Ibn Arabi scholars and moreover reinforces the superiority of the Naqshbandi order and their insights.

In addition to textual and traditional sources, Shaykh Nazim also builds his apocalyptic message on the authority of 'living' sources. One of these sources is Shaykh Daghestani. For example, Shaykh Nazim refers to Shaykh Daghestani in revealing who will survive Armageddon. Like Shaykh Nazim, Shaykh Daghestani's authority is reinforced through hagiography. It is interesting to note briefly Shaykh Dagestani's authority in the apocalyptic predictions. As was outlined in Chapter Two, Shaykh Daghestani is reported to have stated, for example, in 1966 'Next year there will be a war between the Israelis and the Arabs. The Arabs will be defeated' (Kabbani, 2004: 455). Following this, he predicted another war, interpreted as fulfilled on the 3rd October 1973, and in 1972 that war would come to Lebanon, interpreted as fulfilled in 1975 (Kabbani, 2004: 455). These fulfilled prophecies therefore act as legitimation of his special knowledge and thus confidence in his abilities. Furthermore, given the explicit understanding that Shaykh Nazim inherited Shaykh Daghestani's understanding, these prophecies provide support to Shaykh Nazim's own credibility.

Shaykh Nazim also reports access to hidden authorities. Again, it is not always clear who these sources are. For example, the Shaykh makes statements such as 'we have been ordered to say some things' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 106). However, one hidden source who is named is the Mahdi. They first met some time before 1980, at the Mahdi's base in the Empty Quarter (al-Haqqani, 1994: 120). Since then, he has remained in contact with him, receiving important updates (al-Haqqani, 1994: 121).

The Mahdi is a hugely significant authority source to Shaykh Nazim. Not only is he a significant apocalyptic figure who for Shaykh Nazim represents an advanced spiritual person, he also represents the restoration of a true Islamic authority. As has been seen in Chapter Five, Shaykh Nazim feels a deep dissatisfaction with the state of Islam in the contemporary world. He laments the rise of Salafi Islam and the decline of Sultans in the Ottoman Empire, whom he considered divinely appointed to rule. In their absence, and until the Mahdi comes, for Shaykh Nazim there is no Islamic religious authority to speak for and rule the Muslim world. Indeed, he is explicit that Osama bin Laden had no legitimacy to declare a *jihad* (*Sohbats 2013* [2001]: 2522) and that there can be no *jihad* at all until the Mahdi arrives (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 26).

Most frequently of all, however, the Shaykh does not refer to any external authority. Rather, he simply makes statements which, without a referral to an explicit authority source, rely on his authority as a shaykh in the Sufi tradition, whose authority, as was demonstrated above, is based on a number of factors. Indeed, while other authorities are referenced, in the apocalyptic teachings they are only made accessible by the understanding of the Shaykh's special abilities and acknowledged authority. For example, it terms of *hadith* interpretation, there is no call to reason or impetus upon *murids* to cross reference apocalyptic *hadith* themselves. Rather, there is an assumption Shaykh Nazim knows and understands the content.

This privileged ability to interpret is likewise reflected in the treatment of Ibn Arabi, where only a Naqshbandi shaykh can truly understand his insights. In this there is precedent in Sufi Qur'anic hermeneutics. Not only is the Qur'an considered by Sufis to contain many levels of meaning with an endless interpretive process, interpretation of advanced spiritual text is made possible by advanced spiritual practice (Sands, 2006: 7, 29). Moreover, the Shaykh has access to hidden sources and authorities because of his own spiritual abilities. Of the Mahdi, for example, he was able to remain in communication because one of his spiritual bodies remained with the Mahdi at all times (al-Haqqani, 1994: 121). In this respect, apocalyptic teachings therefore serve as another part of the discourse of legitimation.

However, it must be acknowledged that the Shaykh's knowledge is not absolute. As was seen in Chapter Two, the Shaykh is ambiguous in predicting the end. While he speaks with certainty, the majority of the time, this is tempered with more cautious statements such as asking *murids* to pray for him to see Mahdi. Even in the approach of the millennium, the Shaykh occasionally spoke with caution, stating for example 'Who knows if next year we are going to be with the Mehdi? Allah knows. We are looking and waiting for the time when Mehdi comes...' (sufismus-online, 2014b [1999]) and 'I was expecting Mehdi to come this year, but yet some signs have not been completed...I hope, that he may be with us next *Muharram*, after the year 2000. The third millennium should be for the Mehdi' (sufismus-online, 2014h [1999]). Ultimately only God truly knows when the end will come.

In concluding this section it is worth noting some points. It is clear that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is legitimised by an appeal to a range of authorities from the Prophet to other Sufis. However, the appeal to these authorities is only made possible by the charismatic authority of Shaykh Nazim. As was outlined above, this charisma follows a classic pattern of Sufi authority that is neither spontaneous nor entirely routinized. Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse thus represents a form of authority in apocalyptic thought which is not typically seen in studies of religious groups, and which thus moves us further away from psychological explanations for the existence and functioning of apocalyptic groups.

Daniels (2005: 6), for example, argues 'Almost anywhere you look prophetic careers follow the same trajectory. Prophets begin their lives as sinners, outsiders, disregarded and insignificant people. Then something happens. They undergo some crisis that changes their lives in fundamental and drastic ways. They experience conversion, in sudden and sometimes shocking ways'. With this comes a mission from an infallible source that begins their apocalyptic career. This simply makes no sense within the structures of Naqshbandi Sufism and would therefore not particularly aid us in making sense of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic motivations. If Shaykh Nazim's authority in his apocalyptic vision is thus somewhat different, it might be that belief in the apocalypse from his followers therefore likewise differs from explanations previously seen. It thus important to continue this thesis by turning towards his *murids*. Before this, however, the following section explores a new approach to legitimising the apocalypse put forward by Shaykh Hisham.

Apocalypse in print: a new strategy

The above discussion has explored what authorities are turned to to support the apocalyptic message of the Haqqaniyya. However, the Haqqanis are notable for producing literature and maintaining an internet presence that is freely available to a non-Haqqani audience, and the following section provides a case study in how the apocalyptic message is expressed in this new context.

The Haqqanis are not unique among Western Sufis in producing literature. Indeed, as Hermansen (2006) and Lewisohn (2006) have demonstrated, there is a thriving industry of Sufi publications in the English language. These texts

serve many different purposes, providing a space for expressing 'struggles of identity, authority and location' (Hermansen, 2006: 43). The genre may take many forms, including 'translated lectures, polemic, instruction manuals, hagiography, biography, autobiography, poetry and novels, Sufi psychology, translations, academic studies and Sufi op-ed opinion pieces' (Hermansen, 2006: 33). The favoured sub-genre may vary according to the nature of the *tariqa* and its adherent base. Interestingly, Hermansen argues that a traditional, non-Western *tariqa's* need to produce works in English is usually necessitated by the 'need to appeal to indigenous European or American populations, or to address a new generation born in the West of immigrant origins who are no longer literate in any 'Islamic' language', and as such, may well signal the 'hybridisation' of an order (Hermansen, 2006: 29).

The literature produced by the Haqqanis is a mixture of transcription of Shaykh Nazim's teachings, polemic and hagiography. Edited transcription and translations of *sohbats* are now also available online. Now published by The Islamic Supreme Council of America (ISCA), Kabbani has also written a number of books whose themes extend beyond an exegesis on Shaykh Nazim's teachings, such as *Angels Unveiled: A Sufi Perspective* (2009) and *Encyclopaedia of Muhammad's Women Companions and the Traditions they Related* (1998). While a close study of Haqqani texts would have to be undertaken before firm conclusions could be drawn, these books appear to seek to educate a wider audience than already established Haqqanis. This would be consistent with the ISCA's aims of educating both American Muslims and non-Muslims into the true nature of Islam, and the organisation's attempt to position itself as the legitimate and authoritative voice of Islam in America (Damrel, 2006: 119).

One text that has already been cited in this thesis is Kabbani's book *The Approach of Armageddon? An Islamic Perspective* (2003). This text represents an alternative attempt to communicate the apocalyptic dimension of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis and it is interesting to consider in terms of authority construction, implied audience and awareness of external critique.

In comparison to other *tariqa* literature that speaks of the apocalypse, *The Approach of Armageddon?* greatly reduces the importance of Shaykh Nazim as

a figure with special knowledge. Rather, Kabbani bases the argument that we are in the Last Days on the authority of the Qur'an and *hadith*, complemented by rhetorical devices. The book begins, however, by establishing the authority of the writer. Kabbani is described as 'a world-renowned author and religious scholar' (Kabbani, 2003: xxi), 'highly trained' as both a 'western scientist and classical Islamic scholar', clearly implying his understanding of what might be seen as opposing disciplines, and presumably allowing him to give a balanced account. His authority is further established by the statement 'as a resounding voice for traditional Islam, his council is sought by journalists, academics and government leaders.'

Shaykh Hisham argues within the text that we are living in the End Times based on *hadith* expectations. Interestingly, however, approximately one quarter of the book seeks to establish the authority of the *hadith* predictions by establishing first that the Qur'an has demonstrated miraculous knowledge that has now come to light through developments in modern science. Kabbani thus argues that as God gave the Qur'an miraculous knowledge, so too did he give the Prophet Muhammad special insight into the future (Kabbani, 2003: 42).

The appeal to science is interesting in the context of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis as Shaykh Nazim was typically suspicious of scientific knowledge, seeing it as opposed to religious learning.[154] Writing for a Western audience, however, Kabbani's appeal to science provides certain evidence or rationality to his argument, even while he is at pains to argue to the reader that science shouldn't 'determine one's faith because Muslims believe in whatever is in the Qur'an and *hadith* regardless of what scientists say' (Kabbani, 2003: 39). Rather, the fulfilment of these predictions and insights should be seen as 'verifying realities',

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[154] See, for example statements such as: 'We do not believe what some scientists say, that the last day will come when the earth finished. No! That is not real knowledge. It is all imagination, nothing else' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 23); 'Real knowledge is in Holy Books, not in philosophy or science' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 25). 'We are believers and we believe in the existence of the Creator who created everthing in its perfection...We do not believe in such ideas brought by Darwin...It wasn't a step by step approach reaching to mankind. These are nonsense ideas. The plan is to make people deny the Holy Books (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 30-31). 'Scientists cannot tell you, but they also do not want you to know. They want to cheat everybody, because they do not want to believe in God. They continue their satanic works on earth. As long as they are denying the existence of Allah, who is controlling everything, they are liars and they are destroying everything' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 87). 'If they are asking for lights, they should find it in enlightened people, not in doctors, specialists or academics; they are not granted those heavenly lights!' (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 190). Hundreds of thousands PhD people are claiming, "We know everything." You don't know; you are ignorant. Tell me, they are thinking they know everything and they know nothing' (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 662).

proofs of the Qur'an and Muhammad's miraculous knowledge and as such, an impetus to improve one's faith in preparation for the coming end.

The appeal to science comes from the Qur'anic insights that iron comes from the sky (57:25), oceans do not mix (55: 19-21), the earth is round (51: 48; 15: 19; 55: 17), the Big Bang (51: 47), String Theory (51: 7-8) and the *hadith* prediction the coccyx will remain after all things die at the end of time (Kabbani, 2003: 251). In the majority of examples, Kabbani implies a reading that the Qur'an, while poetic, can be understood literally, as science is now helping us to understand. For example, Kabbani states the Qur'anic verse 57: 25 should be read as 'we sent down iron' and argues this has commonly been misunderstood and thus mistranslated as "created", as previous commentators could not comprehend that iron did not come from below in the Earth. However, in the scientific theory of how elements are formed in supernovas, iron can be understood as descending from above in the cosmos. Putting aside that this interpretation does not entirely make sense, Kabbani neglects the interpretation that 'sends down' is a turn of phrase used elsewhere in the Qur'an in other circumstances (5: 112-115; 59: 21, for example). Similarly, Kabbani argues descriptions of the earth being 'rolled out' means the earth is round (Kabbani, 2003: 50).

Indeed, Kabbani writes as if his reading and translation is soley authoritative, without explanation of his hermeneutic or acknowledgment of alternative readings. For example, Kabbani argues the Qur'anic description of the sun rising and setting twice (55: 17) is consistent with the insight that the earth moves and so as the sun is setting in one place, it is rising in another (Kabbani, 2003: 51). Abdel Haleem (2010: 353n*e*) on the other hand, argues this refers to the rising and setting of the moon. In another example, Kabbani argues the verse 51: 47 reads 'And we have built the sky with mighty power and verily we are expanding (it) (Kabbani, 2003: 55), for him, evidence of the Qur'an referring to the Big Bang. Abdel Haleem, in contrast, argues this should translate as 'we built the sky with Our power and made it vast, We spread out the earth – how well we smoothed it out!', reducing the impact of the term expansion.

For Kabbani, the proofs of the Qur'an in science are complemented by his conviction signs of the *hadith* have already been fulfilled. Here, Kabbani is much

more willing to take a more layered reading of the Qur'an to make a convincing point. The *hadith* that time will constrict, for example, is seen as fulfilled in the advancement of modern communications, as messages which would once take days to be passed on now happen in moments (Kabbani, 2003: 107). In establishing the past predictive ability of Qur'an and *hadith*, Kabbani is therefore able to convince his readership of the likelihood that other signs and events will pass, and do so soon. In doing so, he is able to turn the *Approach of Armageddon?* into book with an important spiritual message of preparadness.

The future events and those which Kabbani argues have already been fulfilled are all drawn from the Qur'an and *hadith*. Kabbani argues these are sufficient proof alone of the truth of the apocalyptic message and encourages his reader to effectively use their own logic in realising this. Phrases such as 'it hopefully will be made plain that the miraculous knowledge the Prophet brought could only have come from Divine revelation', 'even a cursory examination of these signs shows their present-day fulfilment as foretold by Prophet Muhammad over fourteen hundred years ago', 'The predictions of the Prophet at times impress the reader with not only their precision, but with the precision of their description of events ' (Kabbani, 2003: 27; 33; 199), imply the text speaks for itself, and leaves no ambiguity as to what the reader should be thinking, or if there should be any possibility of doubt.[155]

Indeed, Kabbani implores his readers to use their logic, stating for example, 'Muslims must know and evaluate the current situation in light of what the Prophet said about the signs of the Last Days. If one supposes that sky scrapers being built by Bedouins is one of the signs of Judgement Day, a sign which just took place, then one must admit that Judgement Day is near' (Kabbani, 2003: 85).

The stress on *hadith* and logical interpretation of signs must be seen in the context in which Shaykh Hisham is writing. In response to anti-Sufi, reformist critique, Shaykh Hisham has repeatedly sought to demonstrate that Sufism is not incompatible with the Qur'an and *hadith* (Geaves, 2006b: 151), and that as an organisation, the ISCA puts particular emphasis on promoting *hadith* and

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[155] See also phrases such as 'that narration reflects today's circumstances like a shining mirror' and 'it is as if the Prophet were looking from the distant past on what we are experiencing today' (Kabbani, 2003: 168; 131).

shari'a (Damrel, 2006: 119). Framing the apocalyptic narrative in this way, with appeal to rationality, therefore grounds more readily against critique than the appeal to the visionary shaykh.

However, it may also be indicative of awareness of engaging with a less hostile, if similarly sceptical audience. Based on a Canadian case study, Beyer (2009: 18) proposes that globally, many Muslims no longer 'orient their Islam to any even local or regionally centralised authority structure, much less a global one. It is the core sources that carry authority for them, not those sources as incorporated in specific organisations, movements, lineages, orders, leadership positions or Islamic states'. As such, and typical in modernity, authority lies in the self, as Beyer illustrates: 'they have researched, they have consulted the core sources, and they have accepted or rejected elements precisely on the basis of whether or not they consider them to be authentic to the Islamic system' (Beyer, 2009: 18). If Beyer is correct, and a similar process is happening among young North American Muslims, Kabbani's stress on the rational interpretation of *hadith* may be seen as an effort to engage, or at least not repel, a group of Muslims, who whilst open to new ideas, base their trust in scripture, mediated through their own conceptions of legitimacy.

Before concluding it is worth noting that *The Approach of Armageddon?* in method and style has a resemblance to an important apocalyptic text in the American apocalyptic tradition, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Lindsey, 1970). Like Kabbani, Hal Lindsey seeks to convince his readership of the likelihood of apocalypse based on the success of previous prophets. Like Kabbani, Lindsey also does not acknowledge the interpreter's role, providing an indisputable interpretation, and like *The Late Great Planet Earth, The Approach to Armageddon?* provides a further example of how 'modern apocalyptic discourse grounds it's authoritative claims in part upon the ostensibly scientific rationality of common sense interpretation' (O'Leary, 1994: 59). While we must be careful not to draw to many conclusions from these similarities, as *The Approach of Armageddon?*, for example, has not been targeted or even intended for such a large audience, the similarities do give rise to the question of whether Kabbani may be deliberately engaging with a *Late Great Planet Earth* influenced audience, or whether this demonstrates a development within new apocalyptic narratives in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as a whole.

<u>Conclusion</u>

In conclusion, the legitimacy of the apocalyptic teachings in the Haqqaniyya are built on appeals to a complex web of authorities including the *hadith*, Ibn Arabi, the Mahdi, Shaykh Daghestani, and Shaykh Nazim's own visionary experience. However, the appeal to these authorities is only made possible because of the authority of the charismatic shaykh, established outside of the apocalyptic teachings, particularly the belief Shaykh Nazim has special knowledge to interpret, insight into the future, and the power to meet with hidden authorities. The Haqqaniyya thus present an example of authority in apocalypticism that is neither entirely charismatic nor entirely routinized. Shaykh Nazim draws on traditional, respected sources, but the key to making them relevant is in his charisma. Given the establishment of the Shaykh's authority that for many *murids*, has its foundation in an intense religious experience and is therefore established outside of the apocalyptic teachings, it is interesting to therefore ask the extent to which *murids* are convinced by the apocalyptic teachings, why they are so, and if they are not, how they reconcile this with faith in the Shaykh Nazim's other spiritual abilities and teachings. This will be discussed in the next and final chapter of this thesis.

Finally, this chapter has discussed an alternative strategy for communicating the apocalyptic message in Shaykh Hisham's *The Approach of Armageddon*. With an audience that may be hostile or sceptical, Shaykh Hisham bases the likelihood of the apocalypse, and the imperative to prepare oneself, on the authority of the *hadith*, rationality and science. Thus while Atay's (1994: 220) insight that the apocalypse served to 'justify the Shaykh's power and authority', is not falsified, indeed this chapter has also touched on this point, such developments nonetheless encourages reflection on the necessity of monitoring the changes in the *tariqa* and how it re-presents its ideas to engage effectively with new social contexts.

Chapter Seven: The view from the end of the world

Introduction

The previous chapters in this thesis have examined Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic narrative primarily with reference to his books and *sohbats*, with occasional references to Shaykh Hisham's apocalyptic expression. In this chapter I examine what characterises the apocalypticism of the Haqqaniyya from a slightly different angle, in terms of apocalyptic belief from a group of *murids* in the Glastonbury *tariqa*. This chapter thus refers to dimension six of the phenomenological framework, and aims to contribute to our knowledge of the Haqqaniyya by examining firstly how apocalyptic beliefs are interpreted, how the millennium prophecies are rationalised fourteen years on, and how this compares with other studies of apocalyptic belief. In doing so, it therefore provides a case study hermeneutic of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic narratives, and is not necessarily representative of wider *tariqa* interpretations.

While not an ethnographic study of the Haqqaniyya in Glastonbury, this chapter provides some very brief reflections on developments in the *tariqa* since the last study undertaken by Draper in 2002. Before this it is therefore worth outlining some of Draper's findings and how this work will build on and diverge from his study, and therefore how this work will contribute to our knowledge of the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya.

Draper's study focused on what he described as the 'postmodern' elements of the Haqqaniyya, including the ways in which this branch of the *tariqa* engaged with the alternative spirituality currents of the contemporary West. In particular, he argues the Haqqaniyya downplayed the association between Sufism and Islam, suggesting a move towards an expression of Sufism which is more in line with a 'universal Sufic stance not dissimilar to the Chishtiyya of Inayat Khan' (Draper, 2002: 202). Moreover, Draper valuably describes how Shaykh Nazim came to Glastonbury, the dynamics of a public *zikr* at this time, the first whirling workshop - a significant event in Naqshbandi Glastonbury history, and the beginnings of Haqqani engagement with Glastonbury mythology. On this, he finds the Haqqaniyya as most comfortable with the Abbey (rather than the Tor), Jesus, and King Arthur (Draper, 2002: 150, 155).

There are, however, some limits to Draper's innovative study. To begin, Draper's study took place relatively soon after the *tariqa* was founded in Glastonbury, as Shaykh Nazim first visited and began to build a Naqshbandi presence in the town in 1999. As such, the extent of deliberate engagement with Glastonbury culture may have been exaggerated in this initial period. In contrast, my own work takes place almost fifteen years later, after the millennium event, and towards the end of the research, after Shaykh Nazim's death. Within this time, it is not inconceivable that the *tariqa* has changed and that a new assessment may therefore have some value.

Moreover, much of Draper's study appears to have been informed by a senior *murid* he calls Zara. My own fieldwork likewise draws on her perspective. However, this chapter also draws on the views and experiences of another senior *murid* as well as *murids* who have either moved to Glastonbury or entered the *tariqa* after Draper's work. These interviews thus give a slightly wider and updated perspective on Haqqani spirituality in the Glastonbury context. Finally, while he does note the apocalyptic dimension of Shaykh Nazim's teachings earlier in his thesis, he does not examine how *murids* in Glastonbury interpret this element of Shaykh Nazim's thought.

Fieldwork

The turn to language and the increasing understanding that religion must be understood as part of culture (Flood, 1999 and Stjernholm, 2011) has led to calls for Religious Studies to be based more firmly in the experiences of those living it. To this end, the methodology of ethnography has frequently been employed in the study of religion. Ethnography is a broad subject which may be conventionally described as 'an anthropological approach to the research of culture based upon participant-observational techniques: ethnography's goal are a detailed an nuanced understanding of a cultural phenomenon, and a representation that conveys the lived experience of culture members as well as the meaning system and other social structures underpinning the culture or community' (Kozinets, 2010 cited in Paechter, 2013: 72).

Throughout the duration of this research I have interacted with *murids* from the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya, primarily though the Glastonbury context. My work has not, however, been fully ethnographic as the analysis I present in this

chapter is not drawn primarily from observation, nor is my work concerned with understanding Glastonbury Haqqani society and culture. Rather, it is informed by a small number of semi-structured interviews. However, the nature of the interviews, and how participants were recruited and acted, as well as my experiences with the Haqqanis, are nonetheless by no means value-free and neutral, nor did they take place in a vacuum. The following therefore outlines briefly my research methods before providing a short research reflection.

Research methods

Nine interview participants were recruited for this section of the thesis. The participants were recruited either directly through being approached at a *zikr* or through members of the *tariqa* recommending others to approach who might be open to the interview. These participants were then contacted directly by myself.

The participants were predominantly female and varied in age from young adults in their twenties to middle age. All were educated, the majority to degree or professional qualification level. The group included students, individuals with professional qualifications, and non-working parents.

Four of the group (Maryam, Salma, Zaynab and Fatima) were born Muslim but only Zaynab was born into the *tariqa*. Fatima had become a *murid* over ten years ago, whilst Salma and Maryam had joined within the last decade, Maryam being the most recent. Both Salma and Maryam were non-Western but had spent extensive time in the West. It was in the West that both were introduced to the *tariqa*. However, Salma had read the Mercy Oceans book series as a child growing up in South Asia.

The other five participants (Khadija, Nura, Rabiah, Yunus and Aisha) were converts to Islam and all but Rabiah had come to Islam through Shaykh Nazim or experiences with the *tariqa*. All were from Europe, with Nura, Yunus and Aisha being from the UK. Like Fatima, Rabiah and Yunus had been *murids* for some time, well over ten years. Nura had been involved with the *tariqa* for approximately ten years whilst Khadija and Aisha were the newer *murids* of under eight years.

All of the Muslim-convert section of the group described having spent time on other spiritual practices before finding Sufism. Few of the group showed particular interest in the wider spiritual Glastonbury context, with the exception of Rabiah who was interested in the associated myths and legends. Both Nura and Aisha were introduced to the Haqqaniyya through the Glastonbury spiritual context in that they attended open *zikrs*. However, neither were particularly interested in discussing the wider occultural themes of Glastonbury, replying they were primarily focused on their Sufi path now.

The interviews were semi-structured and lasted between forty-five minutes to two hours. Some participants were interviewed a number of times either due to new developments or to clarify certain points.

This participant group is of course small and cannot therefore be considered representative of all possible experiences within Glastonbury. Moreover, these participants were those who were reasonably active within the *tariqa* and interested in the project, and as such only limited conclusions can be drawn from their contributions. While a small participant group can yield valuable information, if only as a springboard to further research, there are nonetheless ethical considerations in the presentation of their contribution.

The ethical challenges of undertaking fieldwork with a small Sufi group are outlined by Draper. On this he notes, 'they [*tarqias*] consist of relatively small attendant memberships: this makes confidentiality difficult and anonymity almost impossible', and further 'even if confidentiality is maintained in any published text, it may be possible to identify individuals from the context' (Draper, 2002: 39; 37). In my participant pool it would certainly be possible to guess the identity of a number of *murids* based on a combination of age, profession and length of time in the *tariqa*. For this reason, and because the small participant pool makes it difficult to draw patterns, I have avoided drawing conclusions based on these factors. I have used pseudonyms when quoting my interviewees.

In addition to the interviews, I regularly attended women-only *zikrs* with *murids* connected with Glastonbury throughout the research period. These *zikrs* were invaluable in meeting *murids* from all over the world and gaining a small insight into *tariqa* life. In general, the *zikr* would begin in the afternoon and last for

about forty-five minutes, before being followed by a meal. The number of people varied from three (including myself) to approximately fifteen. During and following the meal, conversation would range from personal matters to discussion of *tariqa* news, such as Shaykh Nazim's latest message. Often, I would be asked about my research, sometimes prompting discussion on the apocalyptic teachings, thus making it difficult to assess from an observational perspective how likely this topic would have been to come up otherwise.

Research reflections

As research has moved away from the claims of the neutral, detached observer, it has become evident that in ethnographic research, reflexivity is essential. As Paechter (2013: 74) outlines 'Social researchers are part of the world they study' (Hammesley and Atkinson, 2007) and their orientations both within and outside the field have to be reflexively accounted for in ethnographic writing'. This is equally true of any research that involves working with people, whether the research is fully immersive or not.

Acknowledging the embededness of a research in the study of religion, Flood (1999: 143) argues:

> The inquiry into the nature of religion or quasi-religious propensities within culture, becomes a dialogical enterprise in which the inquirer is situated within a particular context or narrative tradition, and whose research into narrative traditions, that become the objects of investigation, must be apprehended in a much richer and multi-faceted way...Rather than the disengaged reason of the social scientist observing, recording and theorizing data, we have a situation in which research is imaged as 'conversation' or more accurately 'critical conversation', in which the interactive nature of research is recognized.

With this is mind, the following represents my reflections on my position in the research process.

My entry into the *tariqa* was not as a researcher. Rather, I was introduced to a leading *murid* by a friend who later was inducted into the *tariqa*. Upon discovering I lived on the outskirts of Bristol close to where a monthly *zikr* was held I was invited to attend as a participant. It was at these *zikrs* I was 'introduced' to Shaykh Nazim and began noticing the strong millenarian accent to the conversations.

My time at the *zikrs* has been positive; I have always been made welcome, and I have become friendly with a number of *murids* over time. As a researcher this placed me in a somewhat limnal position of neither entirely an outsider not an insider. As someone on the periphery I shared hopes and sorrows and in terms of background had much in common with many of the *murids*. However, as a non-Muslim and a non-*murid* I was also an outsider. While to an extent this may have been of benefit in allowing participants to speak freely[156] this undoubtedly affected my ability to meet *murids* and I was aware, particularly after the Shaykh's death, I was being shielded from conflicts in the *tariqa*.

My outsider status was particularly noticeable to me in the context of apocalyptic research. In her study of *Left Behind* Frykholm reflected on being the subject of evangelical witnessing, where some of her interviewees expressed to her their faith and that as a non-Christian she was, by implication, 'damned' (2004: 10). While my own experience with the Haqqanis was not as intense I found that with apocalyptic research the nature of being an outsider particularly uncomfortable, due to the likelihood of imminent judgement. In a group not so open or tolerant as the Haqqaniyya, this may well have been more pronounced.

In his call for dialogically situated research Flood (1999: 145) argues 'in dealing with living persons in the particularity of their lives, the scholar of religion or other social scientist is thrown into a situation in which she not only interrogates but is interrogated, even implicitly, by that tradition and those people who are the object of research'. This very much reflects my experiences with the Haqqaniyya, not just because I found myself explaining my own spiritual journey repeatedly. Within the later stages of this research the civil war in Syria intensified and Russia was presented in the media as an imposing figure on the international stage. Having read Shaykh Nazim's prophecies concerning Russia

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[156] On this see Bucerius (2013). In her study of second generation immigrants in Turkey, Bucerius found becoming a 'trusted outsider' to be immensely valuable. Not only did her outsider status actually facilitate building rapports with certain participants but once trust was gained, it provided a space for participants to share information that they would not normally share with other insiders. As she explains, 'My work demonstrates that I was able to develop an intricate understanding of my research participants while remaining an outsider. Importantly, my outsider status encouraged the young men to trust me with inside information that they would not otherwise have shared with "real insiders" (Fonow and Cook 1991), such as when Akin divulged to me the story of his parents' divorce' (Bucerius, 2013: 715).

and Syria I must admit I began to wonder if Shaykh Nazim might be onto something.

While academic literature is very scarce on researchers internalising their apocalyptic teachings I would suggest that this may have some value in the research process. Firstly, it demonstrated to me how easy it is to find meaning in world events if one is so inclined. Secondly, I found myself questioning my neutral position. Like Frykholm (2004: 9) I had hoped to be a detached listener when conducting my interviews. However, like her I found 'listening is not a transparent or neutral position'. I thus found it useful to open myself to scrutiny, to share my own spiritual journey, and my reflections on Shaykh Nazim's teachings. While I cannot be sure this encouraged an atmosphere of trust, a number of *murids* reflected they found it helped them relax in a situation they otherwise found a little daunting.

Glastonbury

Glastonbury is a small market town in the South West of Britain. While perhaps most synonymous with the Glastonbury Festival (which actually takes place in Pilton), the town also has a history of spiritual and religious significance. Two of Glastonbury's major sites of interest, the Abbey and the Tor, have Christian significance. The Abbey was a major monastery in the Middle Ages while the Tor, the site of St. Michael's chapel is 'significant to Catholics as the site of hanging of Abbot Whiting and two monks at the brutal dissolution of Glastonbury Abbey' (Bowman, 2005: 160). Moreover, in some Christian legend, Joseph of Arimathea is believed to have travelled to Glastonbury after the crucifixion, his staff becoming the Holy Thorn on Wearyall Hill (Bowman, 2005: 160).[157] In other legend, most famously recorded by William Blake in his poem 'And did those feet in ancient time', Jesus himself visited Glastonbury prior to his ministry.

Today, pilgrims come from more alternative paths. Indeed, Glastonbury is a town which embodies the varieties of the cultic milieu or New Age culture.[158] A

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[157] The historical evidence for this is slim. Hutton (2003: 69) argues the Thorn was most likely brought from the Middle East by a pilgrim. There is no record of the tree species in Glastonbury before 1520.

[158] For an interesting history of Glastonbury see Hutton (2003: 59-85). Hutton considers the cultic growth of Glastonbury to have begun in the 1960s counter culture movement, and was complete by the 1980s.

brief walk up Glastonbury high street provides many examples of this active spirituality, as shop windows display adverts for Shamanic healing, Zen meditation, pagan moots, spiritual counselling, tarot reading, and art inspired by the famous Goddess Conference to name but a few.[159]

For many of these seekers, Glastonbury's spiritual significance extends before Christianity. Glastonbury is associated with Avalon, the mystical resting place of King Arthur, while for others, 'Glastonbury's significance lies in the claim that it was the site of a great Druidic university, a centre of learning to which people flocked from all over Europe and beyond.[160] There are those who claim that in Glastonbury the Druids anticipated the coming of Christianity and that here the transition from the old religion to the new was smooth; indeed, there is even speculation that Jesus himself attended the Druidic university' (Bowman, 2005: 160).[161]

In Glastonbury, these cultic beliefs and Christianity share sacred space. The Tor, for example, is not just the remains of the chapel of St. Michael, it is also 'the spiral castle of Celtic legend; a Goddess figure, the Grail Castle; a crystal filled communication beacon for extraterrestrials; a part of the phoenix figure representing Aquarius on the Glastonbury Zodiac' as well as 'prehistoric, three dimensional ceremonial maze' (Bowman, 2005: 180). Moreover, the geography of Glastonbury is seen by many to be sacred as the convergence of the Michael

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[159] The Glastonbury Goddess Conference is an annual event which began in 1996 (Bowman, 2005: 173). A mixture of workshops, ceremonies and talks the conference is a good example of the cultic milieu, eclectic spritualities and the occultural reservoir mentioned throughout this thesis. Advertising for the 2015 conference, for example, uses language that refers to the 'ancient', 'cosmic conciousness' and connecting with the Goddess (goddessconference.com, 2015). As noted by Bowman (2005: 174), the Conference embraces an idea of a universal sacred female, including within it 'all Celtic, Egyptian, Near Eastern, Greek, Roman, Indian, African and other indigenous goddesses, Bodhisattvas in female form and the Virgin Mary'.

[160] This idea of Druids as possessors of great knowledge was particularly promoted in the 1950s by a druidic group called the British Circle of the Universal Bond, founded in the early twentieth century. This group presented ancient Druids as 'characterised in both the public and private literature of the order as marvolous scientists, especially of astonomy, and guiltless of human sacrifice; this was represented as Roman libel against them' (Hutton, 2009: 382).

[161] The history of druids is an interesting topic. Hutton, a prolific historian in this field, observes the lack of strong sources on the druids finding, 'the Druids appear in some texts as barbaric, blood thirsty and deplorable, in others as admirable, sophisticated and learned, and in yet others as a mixture of both. Thus, 'when later ages took an interest in Druids, there existed no single, authentic and authoritative portrait of them. Instead there were a number of competing options, between which modern people could choose according to their own tastes, needs, purposes and prejudices'. In the twentieth century, interest in Druids has seen a particular revival, with broadly positive connotations as is seen in the Glastonbury context. In many ways this ambiguous history reflects Glastonbury's wider image of both being a place of tremendous pre-Saxon significance for pagans, Christianity and King Arthur or alternatively somewhere with little importance until the founding of the monastery (Hutton, 2003: 83).

and Mary lay lines, the 'heart chakra' of Earth itself (Bowman, 2005: 163) and what might be described as a thin place, where 'the veil between this world and the "other world" is at its thinnest' (Bowman, 2005: 159).

Naqshbandis in Glastonbury

This sense of sacred space and place is undeniably significant to the Naqshbandi experience of Glastonbury, beginning with Shaykh Nazim's experience, as one of my participants describes: 'he went into the Abbey, that was something else. He stood there and he was almost transfixed, you can say. He was so infused with this energy...he said "now I know why I came to England. It is because of this place. This is the spiritual heart and it is here that Jesus came. And he put the foundations to this Abbey and it is here that he will return"'.[162]

Two of my interviewees, Yunus and Rabiah elaborated on this sense of sacredness and sacred space in Glastonbury. Yunus explained to me that Glastonbury is a 'spiritual power centre' and according to Shaykh Nazim, this is to do with the 'presence of many saints who are buried here'.[163] Similarly, Rabiah pointed me in the direction of the omphalos, a large stone that sits alongside the Abbots kitchen in the grounds of Glastonbury Abbey. The stone is weathered and has a groove in its surface that vaguely resembles a shallow footprint.

Rabiah described how Shaykh Abdul Hamid, the *imam* of the mosque at St. Anne's in London visited Glastonbury was struck by the similarities between the omphalos and the *Maqam Ibrahim* at the Kaaba in Mecca. After praying on this insight he revealed the footprint was actually that of Isa. This was in turn confirmed by Shaykh Nazim. Later, another shaykh visited revealed that the stone was not only the footprint of Jesus but that it was connected directly to Jerusalem and from there, Heaven, like Jacob's Ladder. Glastonbury thus becomes connected to the sacred places of Islam.[164]

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[162] In Naqshbandi understanding, however, Jesus did not come with Joseph of Aramathia, but on his own in his early thirties, by transporting himself with his fully awoken spiritual powers.
[163] Interview with 'Yunus', 12/04/14.
[164] This story was told to me several times by Rabiah but I was not able to gauge how widely known it was in the *tariqa*. However, the subject of Haqqani sacred space and sacred geography in general is fascinating yet very understudied in this field. Throughout my time with

Essentially in both of these examples and the stories of Shaykh Nazim in Glastonbury, Glastonbury sacred space is subsumed into Naqshbandi spirituality and cosmology. Glastonbury makes sense because of Shaykh Nazim's esoteric knowledge. Indeed, Yunus describes how Shaykh Nazim 'confirmed' the 'special spiritual power of Glastonbury'.[165] It is interesting to compare here to Bowman's (2005: 163) observation that 'whatever the prevailing myth or worldview, Glastonbury somehow claims a central place in it'. I would suggest rather than Glastonbury taking a central place in the Naqshbandi worldview, the Naqshbandi's have reinterpreted much of Glastonbury's significance to be made clear only truly by Shaykh Nazim's knowledge.

1.1: The omphalos, Glastonbury Abbey. Author's image, taken 27/05/13.

The places of significance do seem to be, as Draper observes, associated with Christian legends and history. The Tor, however, for example, was described to me by Rabiah as being quite a '*jinny*' place. Indeed, Glastonbury as a whole is described as quite a difficult place to live due to the high level of *jinn* in the town. There may, however, be some marginal interest in the King Arthur narrative. On the tour of Britain that would lead Shaykh Nazim to Glastonbury, a *murid* describes how 'the night before Shaykh came here to Glastonbury, we were in this very beautiful place called St. Donats...and that's where he sat

the *tariqa* I have been told about many special places in the UK and around the world, and conversely, those which are more spiritually challenging. One of the most interesting is the cave of the *Arbaeen*, the Forty. This cave on Mount Qasioun in Syria near Damascus is reportedly the length of forty prayer mats and every night saints of the world gather to pray to God for mercy on humanity. Next to this is the cave of blood, where legend has it, Cain murdered Abel. The water in the cave, rich with iron, reportedly runs red with blood as a reminder of the world's first murder. Thus, my interviewee explained, heaven and hell meet on earth.
[165] Interview with 'Yunus', 12/04/14.

down and started telling these stories. He said "not far from here, King Arthur is resting"', understood by the *murids* as being in a cave in the East of Wales.[166] What is interesting about this element of the narrative is that it holds a certain millenarian dimension. King Arthur is effectively considered to be in occulation, like the Mahdi, and when the Mahdi reveals himself, so will King Arthur, in the restoration of monarchy. Here, we therefore see the combining of two millenarian-messianic myths.[167] The extent to which this belief is held, even within Glastonbury, is unclear.

Draper reports about twenty *murids* in Glastonbury at the time of this research. In 2013, the *tariqa* was described as being closer to seventy, made up of predominantly single women, many of whom are converts. This number is fluid, as not all *murids* are fully active in the *tariqa* at all times. There are a number of *zikrs*, including a weekly ladies *zikr* of about fifteen people, a semi weekly *zikr* for men, and monthly *zikrs* in Margaret Chapel and the Abbey house. The *tariqa* does not maintain active links with other branches in the UK, but is active in encouraging *murids* to visit Cyprus. The *zikrs* I attended did not particularly reflect Draper's observations on the move towards a more universal Sufism, although the participants at these *zikrs* were primarily made up of those already *murids*, or at the least interested Muslims, rather than interested non-Muslims.

Interpreting apocalyptic belief

Studies of contemporary groups in Britain who hold apocalyptic beliefs are reasonably rare in religious studies and related disciplines. One notable study was undertaken by Daniel Thompson (2005b) in the run up to the millennium. Thompson undertook an ethnographic study of Kensington Temple, a Pentecostal church network based in London with 3000-15,000 members in Britain, depending on which associated congregations are counted. The church has a rich apocalyptic tradition and with the year 2000 approaching, Thompson investigated how prevalent apocalyptic beliefs were in the congregation. While he 'did not expect to find a hotbed of millenarianism' (2005b: 167), Thompson was nonetheless surprised to find a general disinterest in End of the World teachings from both from church leadership and church attendees.

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[166] Interview with a *murid*, summer 2013.
[167] She further outlines that at one point it seemed Shaykh Nazim considered Prince Charles to be King Arthur, but notes it is by no means certain.

Indeed, of nearly 3000 people who completed his questionnaire, only 2% rated the End Times as their primary spiritual interest. In contrast, the highest ranking priorities were prayer (51%), followed by no response (14%) and then Gifts of the Holy Spirit (11%) (Thompson, 2005b: 95). This disinterest was likewise expressed in a lack of apocalyptic material in church sermons and in interviews.

Within his interviews, Thompson observed a range of approaches to apocalyptic beliefs and teachings. The most common approach was to marginalise or ignore apocalyptic doctrines.   Secondly was 'the stigmatization of "prophecy nuts"'. These Christians approached apocalyptic beliefs and those who hold them with hostility, thus distancing themselves from a set of beliefs in Christianity they perceived to be problematic. As Thompson (2005b: 100) explains, 'There was a sense that, for many worshippers, intense apocalyptic belief was a particularly unitising form of subcultural deviance, demanding a price that was not worth paying...Apocalyptic theology inspired more scepticism and even downright hostility, than other charismatic claims.'

However, Thompson did observe some receptiveness to the possibility of apocalypse. A small group found the apocalypse to be useful for explaining current events, primarily through conspiracy theories. Another group held 'apocalypticism as an option'. Thompson describes this group as occupying a 'middle ground' neither 'ignoring apocalyptic ideas nor making heavy use of them. Instead, they distinguished between helpful and unhelpful concepts, sometimes working on the End Times narrative until it made sense to them' (Thompson, 2005b: 105). They often conceded the End Times seemed likely, but were unwilling to actively look for signs or make changes to their lives. Further, they reinterpreted apocalyptic theories to fit more easily into their belief systems, like 'Debbie' who suggested 'The mark of the beast has to be something in our hearts' (Thompson, 2005b: 109). The final two approaches to apocalyptic beliefs were rhetoric and apocalyptic as entertainment. Only four to five of the forty people he interviewed expected Jesus to come in their lifetimes.

Overall, 'when they were asked about the End Times, the vast majority of members of Kensington Temple – pastors as well as ordinary worshippers – failed to strike the confident, unambiguous note of the fundamentalist Christians interviewed by Nancy Tatom Ammerman (1987) and Charles Strozier (1994),

for whom a sense of an imminent end appeared to supply the hidden dynamic of their Christian life' (Thompson, 2005b: 114). They did not feel a sense of impending doom or look closely at coming signs. 'Everyone appeared to believe (with differing degrees of intensity) that Jesus would return one day and many people made the rhetorical concession that it might happen soon. But even those church members who employed the tools of popular prophecy to analyse the contours of the modern world did not say much about the imminence of the Second Coming...this was a church that, its traditions notwithstanding, assigned a relatively low priority to the End Times' (Thompson, 2005b: 114-115).

The hostility and lack of interest in the end of time in Kensington Temple led Thompson to consider that apocalyptic beliefs are essentially problematic. Throughout his thesis, he argues certain types of millenarianism, particularly those which involve date setting, are high risk. Firstly, they run the risk of being disconfirmed and as such open the individual or the group to ridicule, as well as shaking deep foundations of faith. Secondly, and related to this first point, the church, both leadership and individuals, understand apocalyptic beliefs to be seen by society as a whole as particularly deviant. As the church wishes to have a place in society, it this downplays beliefs which distance it from more 'mainstream' beliefs. Thompson concludes that these powerful forces, combined with secularisation, mean apocalyptic belief will become increasingly marginalised in Western society, reduced, where if it is at all effective, it is basically entertainment and rhetoric.

While it is doubtful she would make the same analysis as Thompson, Habibis (1985) similarly argues the apocalyptic teachings of Shaykh Nazim are not particularly significance to the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis. This research, however, suggests a different approach to the End Times from the Haqqaniyya in Glastonbury than Thompson found in Kensington Temples, and thus argues contemporary apocalyptic belief in the Western branch of the Haqqaniyya is rather more nuanced that what Habibis observed in 1980s Lebanon.

In contrast to Thompson's findings at Kensington Temple, the Haqqanis I spoke with were, in general, more open to entertaining apocalyptic ideas than not. All the interviewees were aware of the strong apocalyptic dimension in Shaykh

Nazim's teachings. However, the extent to which they considered the apocalypse to be a spiritual priority in their lives varied significantly.

It's a possibility

Of those who considered the apocalyptic teachings to be somewhat problematic, the majority were converts of only a few years, while one had been a convert for slightly longer at over five years. Of this group, Nura felt most sympathetic to the apocalyptic teachings, although she found it hard to make sense of them:

> Interviewer: When Shaykh Nazim talks about the end of the world, do you think he means it literally or is there another meaning?
>
> Nura: I don't know...yes and no? Can it be that? I don't know...it's said, it's also said it does cause a really intense reaction in you when you hear something like that. It freaks me out no end when [a *murid*] goes on about that. It's very detailed descriptions, Gog and Magog. I don't quite understand all of this...because there is this reverence, then surely there must be some truth in this. There has to be some divine truth to this for it to cause such, such feeling. Such an intense feeling.[168]

Unlike others in this group, she did not stress the symbolic nature of the teachings, accepting something might be happening, although she was not really inclined to interpret world events in an apocalyptic scenario:

> I'm not really clued up on that side of things. But judging on just a few things that occasionally come up in the *zikr*, things are here, and people are talking about things in other countries, Russia and stuff, but there have been a few things spot on what Shaykh Nazim has predicted. I can't say what they are...

In contrast, Aisha showed the strongest anti-apocalyptic sentiment, arguing the apocalypse is a symbolic event. Aisha described how she had 'puzzled over' the nature of Shaykh Nazim's teachings and questioned whether he really believed them himself.[169] She was the only participant who questioned the Shaykh's motivations in this manner. Aisha felt it was possible the Shaykh did believe what he was saying, but equally that many people throughout history had spoken of the end, that one can look at any given time and find signs of the apocalypse. She thus took the teachings to be symbolic, rather than literal

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[168] Interview with 'Nura', 18/04/14.
[169] Interview with Aisha, 28/04/14. At Aisha's request, our interviews were not recorded.

happenings, saying that Shaykh Nazim may well have had a much deeper understanding that he was translating the for ordinary people.

For Aisha there was, however, wisdom in the teachings. She felt it was true the apocalypse could happen at any point and that one should therefore work on one's spirituality, prepared for the end whether individual or global. In terms of impact on her life, she did not look for signs, nor look forward to the coming of the Mahdi. She did, however, start storing food 'unconsciously', seeing it as good practice in uncertain times, whether those times are apocalyptic or not.

Two of this group were marginally more receptive to the apocalyptic teachings in that they were less inclined to see the apocalypse as a symbolic event. However, it still held little priority to them. Khadija stated she didn't think about that side of the teachings and she just tried to live her life.[170] Maryam in contrast was more explicit on the teachings being problematic, as she describes: 'To be honest that was one thing that really put me off the *tariqa*. Because I, my inclination, is I don't know why this is so important or relevant because death will take place anyway. Before that...But at the beginning I was so distant because I didn't like the stories of Mahdi, I didn't know what to make of it. It just seemed a bit, like ahhh...'.[171]

However, she described that she was becoming less resistant, finding at least something resonating: 'I mean the state that we're living in. The damage that's happening around us. Even humanity, consciousness. Yeah. Something resonates. Something started to resonate recently at least to me.' She also reasoned it was a possibility and suggested the usefulness of the teachings: 'I think he does this. Because he wants to create a sense of urge. Because, exactly as you said, death could be around the corner, so you'd better take this seriously. It puts you in a different state'. Ultimately, she was 'not worried', reasoning 'if you work towards your death, you have done your duty. So the end of the world, you know, it's just secondary'.

The symbolic nature of the teachings is an interesting aspect of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse to consider. Should the apocalyptic dimensions be removed from Shaykh Nazim's teachings, eschatology, the focus on the next world, would still

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[170] Interview with 'Khadija', 02/05/14.
[171] Interview with 'Maryam', 20/03/14.

be of considerable importance within his message. Indeed, teachings about preparing for death and the impermanence of the material world appear frequently without reference to end time signs or the Mahdi.

The Shaykh defines the Naqshandiyya as being next-worldly focused, the primary aim of the *tariqa* being to prepare people for the Divine Presence in eternity. He states, for example, 'this *tariqat* is not for this world, it prepares you for Allah Almighty' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 11), and further in the same text, 'It is not a guideline for this life, no! It is only for those who are interested in Heavens, in their spiritual beings and in their souls and in enlightening' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 90). As such, a theme of preparing for the next life often runs parallel, as can seen in statements such as, 'we are preparing ourselves to reach a never ending life with never ending power, knowledge, wisdom, teachings and understanding' (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 15) as well as, 'O People, prepare yourselves for heavens' (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 2130).

These statements do not propose that this life does not matter but rather that it is a time of preparation for what is to come. As such, he stresses the impermanence of the material, and how ultimately it is futile to invest in it at the expense of the eternal life as illustrated in his statements, 'most people spend their lives running after something which in the end is worth nothing' (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 12) and 'When we come face to face with our Creator, we leave everything else behind. Nothing remains except your soul' (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 54). Like human lives, the world is temporary (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 358) and was made with a limit (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 3193). What seems most essential to Shaykh Nazim, then, is trying to get people to take the fragility of their lives, and of all they know, seriously, that death will come to all as can be seen in his statement, 'You must know today you are approaching your lives' end by one more day and death is not looking if you are *malik*, or if you are minister, or if you are shaykh, if you are wives of *mulook*, or if you are the richest one's wife, no! Today is coming to be one day less' (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 517).[172] So significant is preparing oneself for death to the Haqqani way

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[172] See also, for example, 'Don't think about anything else but this life and when it is going to end. Don't think for tomorrow and what is your work or business; they are nothing! But think, perhaps tomorrow you are going to be taken from this life to another life. You may be taken from this life to another life so quickly that you will not know it' (*Sohbats 2013* ([2010]: 1029) and

that Shaykh Nazim sees it as an absolutely vital element of spiritual training (al-Haqqani, 1994: 3).

This concern with death and separating oneself from the material is not unusual in the classical Sufi tradition. The *hadith* 'die before you die' caused significant reflection and 'formed the cornerstone of Sufism' (Schimmel, 1975: 70). While for some this death was in the annihilation of *fana* (Schimmel, 1994: 231), for others it was the 'slaying of the lower qualities and ensuring the spiritual resurrection in this life' (Schimmel, 1975: 135).[173]

Psychologically, personal death and the passing of all things are difficult concepts to grasp, it is easy to consider them far off events. Indeed, Shaykh Nazim refers to people of the twentieth century being in denial about their deaths, stating for example, 'You can't find one person who is going to think "Perhaps tonight I am sleeping in my bed and tomorrow perhaps I may be sleeping in my graveyard"' (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 197). However, the vividness of the apocalypse and its implications means *murids* must take notice and are encouraged to make a positive change. For example, by encouraging reflection on the apocalypse, Shaykh Nazim can encourage a desired psychologically of material detachment from the world and an understanding that death could come at any time to both individuals and civilisations. As illustrated so vividly, there are powers beyond the visible active in the world, the greatest of which is God. Apocalyptic imagery and warnings of the imminence of the end therefore prompts reflection on who is truly in control and not to invest in the material. By stressing the likelihood of global catastrophe in the near future, Shaykh Nazim is able to make the impermanence of the material a genuine pressing concern, making an abstract concept very real and, by using events in the world as signs, very believable.[174]

Further, because of the imminence of the apocalypse, the implications of these ideas are that one must prepare for judgement at any time, whether it is being judged to live with the Mahdi or Qiyama after an individual's death. The

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'Death is written for everyone...Today you are here, but tomorrow you will not...But people are not thinking anymore in the century' (*Sohbats 2013* [n.d]: 2134).
[173] See also Nasr (1972: 47)
[174] In this way, Shaykh Nazim may be seen to follow a pattern found in the Qur'an in which stories of God's chastisement aim 'at convincing the Prophet's contemporaries that punishment us imminent and real' (Raven, 2014: para 20).

apocalypse makes it clear death will come to all, and not necessarily at old age. The apocalyptic imperative that the End Times could begin at any moment therefore means that there is no time to delay and preparations must commence immediately by reflecting and improving behaviours and following the guidance of the shaykhs. Indeed, Kabbani (2003: 276, 281) explicitly makes the point that in the time of troubles, such as he has outlined the duty of Muslims is to 'take charge' of their actions and pay close attention to the example of the Prophet. This echoes Shaykh Nazim who states this pre-apocalyptic period is a time of preparation (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 521). The larger outcome is of course therefore that *murids* are prepared not just for the Mahdi, but detachment from the world, ready to face the end of their individual life, whenever it may come. My interview responses make it clear a number of *murids* find this to be a powerful message within the apocalyptic teachings.

However, what is interesting is that among my participant group who assigned the apocalypse more significance, this moral dimension was not neglected, as is explored below.

We are living at the end of times

All but one of the rest of my participants were more receptive to the possibility that Shaykh Nazim's teachings should be taken literally and that they therefore had a relevance to their lives. They did not feel a need to rationalise the apocalyptic teachings. All had undergone some preparation ranging from moving to the countryside to aiming to become self-sufficient to storing food in case on an emergency. Crucially, however, none had adopted an end time psychology in that all were continuing their lives, working, building relationships. Their apocalyptic expectation was not urgent or intense.

The majority of people I spoke to whether at interview or *zikrs* were interested by this thesis topic and expressed that they didn't actually know much about the Shaykh's teachings in the area, although all were able to describe at least a few of Shaykh Nazim's end time teachings. No participant reported interest in looking for signs and although most felt the likelihood of the End Times based on feelings of decay in the world, no one was willing to commit to expressing a particular example of an event which was a sign of the End Times, or at least

made it more likely. Yunus, however, did reveal that he had been more apocalyptically aware in the past:

> I've felt maybe five, maybe ten times in the last...that things are happening, "Oh this is it! Something's happening, something's happening...Aww, faked out". With Iraq, this invasion of Iraq, the whole thing with that and Kuwait...9/11, all these things...and then it calms down again and so we struggle on. "Oh, the banking system in the West is collapsing, it must come down, finished, finished, finished..."and then it kind of picks up again.[175]

In general, my own semiotic awareness seemed far more sensitive than many *murids* I spoke with!

Zaynab spoke most clearly about feeling that a change was coming, reflecting 'we are living at the end of times. Where so many people, they don't believe in anything, there's so many people following Shaytanic ways. You can see it. There's so much darkness. It brings unhappiness...if you look at the situation in the world, where people are at, I think it is around the corner...I do feel like it's going to happen soon. But it's not top of my mind all the time! I have faith everything will be ok.'[176] Rabiah likewise expressed strong certainty. When asked if events in Syria were the beginning of the countdown she replied 'I wouldn't use the word think and I wouldn't use the word believe. I would use the word know'.[177]

Two other participants were slightly more cautious. Fatima, who took the millennium warnings very seriously, reflected 'the idea of "soon" has changed...how soon is "soon"? But I do feel that it's soon'.[178] Similarly, Yunus said 'you could certainly see signs of it in the outside world'.[179]

However, this expectation was tempered by significant caution. None were willing to speculate more precisely on the end of time. Rabiah, for example, felt 'we are not meant to know', while Yunus felt 'it could be another 200 years', and equally even the Prophet did not speculate. In all cases, this was managed by

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[175] Interview with 'Yunus', 12/04/14.
[176] Interview with 'Zaynab', 02/05/14.
[177] Interview with 'Rabiah', 08/09/14.
[178] Interview with 'Fatima', 02/05/14.
[179] Interview with 'Yunus', 12/04/14.

preparation, as Yunus explains 'you have to live with a reality that says "make the best of your life, but expect the unexpected"'.[180]

Interestingly, within this group there was a sense that, while the apocalyptic teachings were not to be second-guessed, the teachings nonetheless had a value beyond the obvious. In other words, they were both literal and metaphorical. Fatima, for example, explains 'so I think there's two things. There's one where it's almost like we are encouraged to live in this way of feeling that there will be some change soon, which I'll come back to – I think that in its own thing has its importance, its function or whatever. But the other thing about "soon" – I think it's something that's a little bit – what's the word? – changeable'.[181]

Yunus explains this tension as a paradox. When asked if he understood the teachings to be metaphorical, as well as literal, he replied:

> Undoubtedly it is that as well. Because even in the time of the prophet, one of his messages, every day you should do an action as if it might be the last thing you do, because you don't know when you're going to die. But, on the other hand, you make every action as if it might last forever. So it doesn't mean it's not important, you have to do the best, but also be prepared that you're leaving. So it's two things at the same time: attachment and detachment. It's a paradox, it's full of paradoxes. You have to hold both together. You might say it's like yin and yang, they're both true. And you have to somehow hold the two together. It might just be a metaphor but it's also true because outside follows inside and inside follows outside.[182]

A better future

In Chapter Five I suggested Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse might serve as a theodicy, a way of making sense of the present and providing hope for the future. In contrast to previous research on millenarian groups I found little evidence that those interviewed felt particularly alienated from wider society economically, politically or socially. However, a number did express discontent with the general moral and spiritual status of humanity.

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[180] This sense of preparation for the final eschatological event is also found in Christianity. Mark 15:32-37 for example reads: 'But about that day or hour no-one knows, not even the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come'.
[181] Interview with 'Fatima', 02/05/14.
[182] Interview with 'Yunus', 12/04/14.

Nura, for example, reflected 'It's too much...I think today's society, we've gone to the opposite extreme when we're totally avoiding it all, totally avoiding the possibility of, you know, a bad subject. And what's happening with the avoidance, this respect...people become very animalistic and losing humanity'.[183]

A common refection on the problems of the modern world was that people have lost touch with their spirituality, that they are following Shaytanic ways. Rabiah, for example, argued the biggest ill of the modern world is that people 'don't even understand that there is a place to get back to. That is probably the biggest ill, that the biggest disappointment, the biggest depression, that there is an expectation for paradise to be here'.[184] Focusing slightly more widely Yunus referred to a theme common in Shaykh Nazim's teachings that the world is out of balance: 'you can see the overwhelming science in the world of madness, and this craziness and they way people are, the ugliness and that things are upside-down, somehow the values are upside-down...very weird things going on, very dark things going on somehow'.[185] Salma, in contrast, who was less apocalyptically-inclined, argued that while evil was on the rise, ultimately this was part of a cycle between good and evil.[186]

A few participants did express their hope of the time of the Mahdi. However, a sense of vindication was not strong. Rather, it was the hope of a new start. Rabiah, who of all my participants seemed most interested in the apocalypse said on expectation of the Mahdi, 'I feel absolutely relieved. It is like a feeling I'm sitting in a dustbin and it's been promised it will be emptied and it is going to be emptied...And you don't need to look into the realities of the news, I mean there's hardly anything they tell us anyway, at how terrible the way the world is developing. Terrible, terrible, terrible on all levels. What a relief that someone's going to come and clear it all up!'. Fatima likewise expressed feeling of relief: 'I do think of it...to hear that is almost a relief that I'm out of all this rat-race of everything that's going on, and one day it'll all just not matter anyway...In terms of importance, I think it's something that has helped put a light on times when I

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[183] Interview with 'Nura', 18/04/14.
[184] Interview with 'Rabiah', 08/09/14.
[185] Interview with 'Yunus', 12/04/14.
[186] Interview with 'Salma', June 2014.

have gone through very difficult times in my own personal life, and you think, "Well, it'll all change and pass" – so in that sense, maybe, it's important'.[187]

Discussion

Despite the relatively small size of the interview group, there are a number of points than can be raised to address the research question of what characterises the apocalypticism of the Haqqaniyya on the level of *murids*. Firstly, and in contrast to Thompson, none of my interviewees, or people I met at *zikrs*, tried to distance themselves from Shaykh Nazim's teachings in the sense of mocking them nor expressing strong hostility. This may be because unlike Thompson's group, they did not feel the eyes of society upon them, nor feel the need to demonstrate they weren't deviant from mainstream social values.

Moreover, there is considerably more social support for apocalyptic beliefs within the *tariqa*. While apocalyptic teachings have a reasonably low status, they are undeniably present, beyond the Shaykh's obvious teachings. Zaynab, for example, reported 'I think in Cyprus I think it's normal knowledge. But if you went around telling everybody here they'd think you were crazy! Because it's not normal, it's not what everyone knows about'.[188] Aisha similarly felt there was a certain amount of pressure regarding the apocalyptic teachings in being seen to be doing the right thing. In short, the teachings have a certain amount of plausibility by both authority and the group. As noted by Aisha, this may in fact be problematic for the less apocalyptically minded.

This does not mean, however, that the Naqshbandis in Glastonbury are, to use Thompson's phrase, 'a hotbed of millenarianism'. The apocalyptic teachings undoubtedly hold a relatively low level of interest for the *murids*. While they were all aware of the teachings, many, both in interview or general talk, said they didn't know all that much about them. All, however, agreed on the necessity of preparation, and the majority on the likelihood on living in the last days. As Yunus explained 'I think everyone believes it, they just don't know when it will happen'.[189] Thus, I would describe apocalyptic interest in the end

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[187] Interview with 'Fatima', 02/05/14.
[188] Interview with 'Zaynab', 02/05/14.
[189] Interview with 'Yunus', 12/04/14.

time as present, albeit low level, and stable in that it does not, among the people I spoke to at least, seem to be causing conflict with the group or separation from society. Whether this will be maintained in the light of the Shaykh's death remains to be seen.

This form of apocalyptic belief is not well represented in the literature. While further research with more participants would be required in order to draw more comprehensive conclusions, I believe we can suggest the following about why such belief functions.

Firstly, apocalyptic beliefs can be relatively stable because Shaykh Nazim did not make strong demands of his *murids*. While they are called to prepare they are not called to separate themselves from society. This can be maintained because of the strong spiritual and moral nature of the apocalypse, that if one is spiritually prepared they will survive. Moreover, the nature of the *tariqa* means that the advice the Shaykh gives is no more than that, it is advice. As Zaynab explains 'we can take it or leave it'. Furthermore, the Shaykh, while encouraging a general sense of spiritual awareness in terms of evil, did not particularly promote semiotic arousal. This is consistent with my observations in Chapter Five that Shaykh Nazim himself was not inclined to draw attention to events in the world as direct parallels to end time prophecies. On a related note, with exception of the millennial prophecies, this stability is reinforced by a lack of date setting. Here then, we see similarities with the dispensationalists who manage to walk the difficult line of apocalyptic awareness whilst remaining in society.

Furthermore the stability of the teachings is maintained because all *murids* can see the wisdom in the preparation. In short, the beliefs had relevance for them. Most interesting was that a number of *murids* were able to hold both the literal and teaching nature of the teachings together. This may well be the key to the longevity of apocalyptic expectation in the Haqqaniyya.

Finally, and related to this point, the Shaykh gives the prophecies meaning. He, unlike Mrs Keech or William Miller, does not have to prove his apocalyptic authority. His authority is built and maintained in other ways, including personal mystical experience. It is these wider experiences that also help to explain the failure of the apocalypse to begin.

Making sense of failed prophecy

As was outlined in Chapters Two and Three, the approach of the millennium was one of the few occasions Shaykh Nazim expressed a firm and continuous expectation of the end in line with a certain date. This type of prophecy is particularly high risk as it comes with the very strong possibility of being shown to be wrong. Indeed, Geaves (2001: 231) noted this at the time, observing 'his [Shaykh Nazim's] prophecies run the risk of all predictions concerning events that are so near in the future. The danger of them remaining unfulfilled may create a conflict between the requirement amidst his Western followers for visionary or mystical experience and their potential to dismiss incredulous belief'.

Shaykh Nazim's warnings that time is short, that the world is in darkness, and of the need to prepare create tension and expectation, are less risky as, to an extent, they can be extended and as we have seen be managed by an understanding that one should be aware of the fragility of human existence. However, they are not without problem for the *tariqa*.

Within apocalyptic studies, the failure of apocalyptic claims and how this is managed has been the subject of much academic interest. In general, it has been assumed that the lack of apocalyptic fulfilment is deeply damaging to the group. Indeed, Thompson (2005a) argues that apocalyptic belief such as this is particularly fragile in the modern period. The forces of secularisation and rationalisation mean that charismatic authority is eroded. People require proof to maintain this sort of apocalyptic expectation and without it will become disillusioned or need to move towards less high risk apocalyptic beliefs.

However, as Melton (1985: 20) argues 'within religious groups, prophecy seldom fails'. This is because, unlike outsiders, insiders in the group maintain a 'broader perspective'. They reinterpret the failure to make sense within their belief system. For Melton the 'ultimate and more permanent reconceptualization is most frequently accomplished through a process of "spritualisation"'. That is 'the prophesised event is reinterpreted in such as way that what was supposed to have been a viable, verifiable occurrence is seen to have been in reality an invisible spiritual occurrence. The event occurred as predicted, only on a spiritual level' (Melton, 1985: 21). Further, the group may overcome the

disappointment by undertaking actions to strengthen the group, by examining their experiences for example (Melton, 1985: 27).

A considerable period of time has passed since Shaykh Nazim's millennial predictions and it is thus not possible within this thesis to provide an account of how the *tariqa* came to terms with the apparent prophetic failure in the years following the millennium. However, my interview group, a few of whom did live through the millennium prophecies, do provide insight into some explanations for these beliefs which provide insight into the nature of failed prophecy in the longer term.

Before this, it is worth considering whether some *tariqa* members even regard this tension as problematic. From my interviewees reflection it seems the predictions were taken very seriously, and there was a profound disappointment when they failed to materialise. Yunus, for example reflected:

> You believe it. And they changed their lives. In other words they gave everything up and moved out to the country or they did something or they said there's no point going to education or there's no point going to school or education or university, you know, we're gonna do this. And they went "But...it didn't happen, we're stuck now! We gave this up and our lives are, in a way, hard"...And I think some people did fall away from it a little bit. They got a bit fed up with that aspect of it.[190]

Similarly, Rabiah reports 'another part of the training is to still, not do as some Naqshbandis did in 1999 and went out and took huge loans on credit card and really got in trouble...You have to right until your last moment do your best with the abilities given to you'.[191]

Of my participant group, a number did prepare extensively for the end. One *murid* reported she's only just finished up their supplies while another described 'we sat there on New Year's Eve, we a few of us rented a cottage somewhere on our friend's property and we were sat there with our baked bean tins...And we made *zikr*, and tick tock tick tock it went past midnight and we looked and the lights were on. Nothing happened!'.

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[190] Interview with 'Yunus', 12/04/14.
[191] Interview with 'Rabiah', 08/09/14.

However, only one described the difficulty of these beliefs: 'You get a bit fed up with that message. Because it's like...it's false alarms all the time. It's difficult. And I think some people did fall away from it a little bit...I think it's difficult for some people and I find that even for myself. You get a bit fed up thinking that way'. While the only interviewee to reflect on the difficulty of belief this *murid* did provide a number of strategies for coming to terms with this difficult belief. These strategies are outlined below, along with those provided by other *murids*.

The most common explanation for the deferral of the apocalypse was not, as Melton found, a belief that the apocalypse happened, nor a reflection on the fragility of human knowledge of divine ways, that the prophet might have been wrong. Rather, the *murids* I spoke with stressed that the apocalypse is a fluid event. When asked if the apocalypse was inevitable Rabiah replied:

> Oh yes! It is one of those things that is written. The only thing that with big events that is written, the only thing where Allah can change is the timing. He can change the timing. It's just like Shaykh Nazim very much expected it to happen when Saddam Hussein marched into Kuwait and now it's been explained that one of the reasons it had to be delayed for another 23 years is that the *alawis*, the holy people, were begging, begging, begging for it to be delayed because there were so many potential believers out there to join the boat.[192]

Likewise for Fatima:

> It's something that – I think we've got an effect on. So it's almost like, you know, the will of God will happen, whatever, it will happen... But this thing of destiny and things that are to be and will come about – it fluctuates. Not fluctuates – it can change, depending on how we are.[193]

She further explains with particular reference to 2000:

> I think it is something that will happen. But in terms of the actual time and date and everything it is something that – I'm trying to think what the word is, where...you know, almost like you can have an effect on bringing it forward, or delay it. I think if very spiritually strong people asked them to delay it, then maybe it was going to happen then but it's been delayed. Or maybe it wasn't to happen then, I don't know – but if was said to happen then and didn't, then I

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[192] Interview with 'Rabiah', 08/09/14.
[193] Interview with 'Fatima', 02/05/14.

would have thought it's through some prayer or something
that it's delayed to give mankind more time to waken up.

Zaynab had similarly heard the end was delayed as she explained: 'I've heard from the Shaykh, from his family, that it was meant to happen then but it was delayed because people weren't ready for it. Because there was so much more preparation to do. I've heard it's been delayed'.[194]

Two important themes are revealed in these explanations. Firstly is that of God's mercy and secondly, of prophecy being changed because of the actions of saints. These points, rather than damaging the Shaykh's reputation, reaffirm him as a figure with special knowledge and indeed, a special role. None of my participants reflected the Shaykh had been wrong or mistaken.

Alternatively, some *murids* suggested that the Shaykh had been misunderstood. Rabiah supposed that it is very easy to misunderstand the Shaykh, as she explains: 'many of the things that Shaykh Nazim says or many of the things that happen in your life generally you don't understand...it could also be that maybe, that in his funny language, this mixture of Turkish and Arabic and English, not being that good in English. Maybe he was meaning now we are in the year 2013'.[195]

A slightly different explanation was given by Salma who felt that Shaykh Nazim was preparing people for a reality that was actually further into the future than is typically implied:

> I think when Shaykh says a time factor it's actually a step towards preparation – it's not something definitive. So if he says 2000 – you can't go from A to Z in one big jump. So what he's going is, when he says "*Murids, 2000!*" we all prepare, we do certain things in our lives to prepare. But that's actually going from A to B, and then the next milestone is B to C, the next milestone is C to D – it doesn't come in one go. So he might say 2000, he might say 2003, he might say 2010, he might say 2014, and then it goes on – but he's actually taking us from one milestone to the other. We're on the journey of that part. I don't think it's literally definite, because everything is ongoing – Allah says we can change it.[196]

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[194] Interview with 'Zaynab', 02/05/14.
[195] Interview with 'Rabiah', 08/09/14.
[196] Interview with 'Salma', June 2014.

In all these explanations is a trust in the Shaykh. Most *murids*, even if they expressed confusion were ultimately willing to defer to his authority.

While of course this cannot account for *murids* who left the *tariqa* disillusioned, I believe these *murids* do provide us with an interesting insight into apocalyptic belief. Melton (1985: 27-28) argues 'studies of groups experiencing prophetic failure should look for the effects of the more comprehensive religious faith and life upon the group'. I thus propose that for *murids*, their wider, personal experiences of the Shaykh mean they could reason for the apocalyptic 'failures'. While Thompson argued charisma is weakened because people need proof, some of my participants already had it in their other experiences of the Shaykh. Yunus, for example, reflected 'I suppose, knowing someone who is a saint, as I believe Shaykh Nazim is, validates a lot of stuff. He is the evidence. And his faith is so certain. That when he speaks you know it's truth. When he speaks you know he's seeing divine realities, he's seeing behind the veil, he's meeting in the assembly of saints every night. I don't see any of that, absolutely nothing. But because I know people who are in that situation it kind of makes it more real'.[197]

These thoughts are echoed in my other interviews. Rabiah, for example, reflects 'if I wasn't 100% convinced...that he's a saint, I would never obey him, that's the condition'.[198] Both Zaynab and Salma reflected similar feelings. Zaynab, for example, told me: 'I feel that he's truth. I can trust completely what he says. There's no ego involved. From my experience with him, I can feel that he is somewhere else',[199] while Salma relayed: 'there has never been a single statement of Shaykh that I doubted one bit...He's very connected – I know he's very connected. I know he's watching over the *murids* in a way we cannot understand, in a spiritual sense we cannot understand'.[200] While a small participant group means we cannot draw firm conclusions, it may be significant that those who had a less intense experience of the Shaykh were less inclined towards apocalyptic belief. Further research may help determine this.

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[197] Interview with 'Yunus', 12/04/14.
[198] Interview with 'Rabiah', 08/09/14.
[199] Interview with 'Zaynab', 02/05/14.
[200] Interview with 'Salma', June 2014.

<u>Conclusion</u>

This chapter has considered the 'experiential' dimension of the phenomenological framework. While this dimension could consider a range of phenomena within ethnography, such as how the apocalyptic teachings function in the group, this chapter has focused on how *murids* interpret these teachings, including when they apparently fail. Overall, the apocalypticism of the Haqqaniyya in Glastonbury can be described as low-level but nonetheless present. Apocalyptic beliefs are reasonably stable, primarily, I suggest, because of their relationship with Shaykh Nazim's teachings on the importance of detachment from the material world and preparation for death.

The apocalyptic teachings thus have a wisdom to them that gives them spiritual relevance and purpose. This is combined with the relatively low demands on *murids* to prepare and watch for the end, ensures that *murids* are unlikely to enter Landes' 'apocalyptic time' as discussed in Chapter Two. Nonetheless, many of the *murids* I spoke with believed it was likely we are living at the end of time, particularly due to the perceived spiritual degradation in the world. A sense of vindication, however, was not strong, although to an extent the teachings did seem to act as a theodicy for some.

In reference to research question three, there are a number of interpretations of apocalyptic teachings within Glastonbury. While some *murids* believe firmly of the nearness of the End Times, others interpret Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic teachings as more metaphorical. The majority of *murids* I spoke to were ultimately able to hold both of these ideas together, preparing for an imminent end (both practicially and spiritually) whilst living their day to day lives. In everyone I spoke to, looking for signs of the end was not emphasised. Rather, trust was placed in the knowledge of the shaykhs.

This chapter has thus contributed to our understanding of the Naqshbandis in Glastonbury in a number of ways. Firstly, it has shown apocalyptic beliefs are present. Secondly, it has referenced the idea that apocalyptic ideas are challenging, particularly to those new to the *tariqa*. Thirdly, it demonstrates that *murids* are not passive receivers of the teachings. Rather, they are reflected on and evaluated in the light of other experiences. Finally, and related to this point, the failure of the millennium prophecies does not seem to have challenged faith

in the Shaykh, nor seen a complete reinterpretation of the teachings as metaphorical.

In answer to the second research question, this thus contributes to our understanding of apocalyptic belief in comparison to other patterns of Western apocalyptic belief. To begin, the Haqqanis demonstrate a strategy of coming to terms with failed prophecy not often seen, in determining that world wasn't ready for judgement, and thus reaffirming the need for continual preparation. This also supports the observation that failure of prophecy is seldom devastating to groups with complex belief systems. Furthermore, the Haqqaniyya represent an apocalyptic belief which, in comparison to Thompson's findings, seems to be based in charismatic authority and experiences. Finally, this appears to be an apocalyptic belief, which like the Christian dispensationalisits, is reasonably consistent and low risk. Whether this will continue under Shaykh Mehmet's leadership remains to be seen.

Conclusion

In January 2015 the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists changed the setting of the Doomsday Clock, a measure of how close the world is to global disaster, to three minutes to 'midnight', what might colloquially be termed the apocalypse (Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 2015). This indicated their belief that the world is now closer than it has been since 2014 to global catastrophe based on concerns over wide scale nuclear weapons proliferation, climate change, and failure by nations to adequately pursue safer, cleaner, and renewable forms of fuel and energy.

Only a few months later newspapers and televisions in the West were filled with terrifying scenes of the spread of ebola and the rise of ISIL in the Middle East. These frightening images of suffering and destruction, which seem to grow steadily worse year on year, might well cause many to reflect upon the future of humanity and as people have done throughout history, a number will undoubtedly consider that perhaps we are nearer than ever to the End. This thesis has discussed one well-established manifestation of such end time thought.

The primary research question of this thesis has been the phenomenologically formulated 'what characterises the apocalypticism of Shaykh Nazim and the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya?'. In Chapter Two I argued that Shaykh Nazim's most consistent apocalyptic narrative fits a classical definition of *millenarianism* as defined by Cohn (1993). Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse foresees a complete and sudden reordering of the world making it 'total', no persons will be exempt from judgement making it 'collective', it will happen on earth more or less in this mode of history making it 'terrestrial', it will be miraculous both in terms of the utopia of Isa and in that it will happen according to divine agents and it is, as far as we can tell from the literature and interpretation of *murids*, to happen soon.

In Chapter Three I argued Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse converges with many symbols found in the Western apocalyptic tradition. After outlining Shaykh Nazim's wider engagement with Western spiritual culture, I argued Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse most significantly references New Age millennial expectation, occultural nature spiritualities, nuclear destruction and at one point,

millennial anxiety, with a particular emphasis on Y2K catastrophic predictions. In this way Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is both *hybrid* and *global*.

In Chapter Four I argued Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is fundamentally orientated towards themes of punishment, evidenced by his explicit references to judgement, purification and Noah imagery. It thus may be considered a *moral* apocalypse. This in turn was linked to the idea that humanity is being punished due to its perceived deviations from the ways of God, primarily due to the state of the moral world individually, culturally, and at a social level. I also argued that developments in the apocalyptic narrative suggested this apocalypse is now inevitable. It is therefore also *pessimistic*, and given that is seeks divine agencies to bring about this change it is also *passive*.

Following this chapter I argued that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is essentially a theodicy and in particular that it follows a triple act drama of crisis-judgement-vindication as first applied to Judaism and Christianity by McGinn (1994b). While Shaykh Nazim explains evil outside of the apocalyptic narrative as the work of Satan (and humanity's collusion with him), the extent of the perceived crisis is explained by the strength of Satan because it is the end of time. This theodicy thus serves as an explanation for world events and provides hope to endure difficult times in the hope of the resolution of suffering in human history. Interestingly, this theodicy is not supported particularly by looking to signs. Rather, it is maintained through Shaykh Nazim's commentary on the modern world.

Within this identification of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse as a theodicy, further characteristics of his apocalypse can be identified. Firstly, despite its violence and destruction, it is a reasonably *open* and *inclusive* apocalypse as potentially anyone could survive Armageddon (although *murids* are at an advantage). The punishment that comes on the world will punish all, the majority of Muslims included. However, the apocalypse is used by the shaykhs to affirm the superiority of Naqshbandi identity, and in the context of vindication, seems increasingly aimed at detailing the destruction of Wahhabis. Secondly, it is *utopic*, as it presents a particularly miraculous utopia that not only reflects hopes of justice and peace but of the spiritual fulfilment of humanity.

In Chapters Six and Seven I turned towards the more social aspects of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism. In Chapter Six I argued Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism is *multi-authoritative* in that it draws on a number of authority sources to provide the apocalyptic narrative with legitimacy. Crucially, however, these sources are only made accessible through the authority of Shaykh Nazim, which in turn fits Werbner's (2003) model of Sufi authority. For accessing some of these hidden authorities such as the Mahdi, the Shaykh's importance is obvious. For others, such as Ibn Arabi, it is more subtle. I also examined Shaykh Hisham's new interpretative strategy which draws on asserting the authority of the *hadith* with reference to science, followed by an argument that apocalyptic predictions must likewise be true, and indeed, are being fulfilled.

Chapter Seven explored these themes of authority from a slightly different angle in terms of interpretations of the apocalyptic teachings from a group of *murids* in Glastonbury. In this context, I found the apocalyptic teachings to be of reasonably low-level importance but nonetheless present. As such, apocalyptic expectation was reasonably *stable*. Here, I suggested this was made possible because of the relatively low demands Shaykh Nazim placed on his *murids* and because the majority of *murids* were able to hold different interpretations of the teachings together; they were both true and useful in a more rhetorical way at the same time. That *murids* could see the wisdom in preparing for the apocalypse, and the wider spiritual importance in preparing for death, meant that the teachings had value even if the Mahdi never came. This interpretation was made possible by their trust in, and some cases wider experiences of, Shaykh Nazim. Indeed, this trust was crucial for many in making sense of the failure of the Mahdi to arrive within expected time scales. With Shaykh Nazim's death, it will be interesting to see if this stability can be maintained.

Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to go beyond a description of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse and consider whether his apocalyptic vision, in form and existence, can be accounted for. This is of course a challenging question and one that could be addressed in a variety of ways ranging from an explanation of the Shaykh's psychology and personal history to a theological-mystical explanation that the Shaykh's apocalyptic vision is divinely inspired. In this thesis I have tried to provide an interpretation based on the understanding that Shaykh Nazim is the author of his vision, at least in its form, and that

explanations for his apocalypse may be found by situating the apocalyptic narrative in the contemporary context.

Previous research on the Haqqaniyya has acknowledged the functional role the apocalyptic narrative plays in the *tariqa*. In this research I have also examined this both in terms of identity and an incentive to personal purification. While undoubtedly important parts of the Haqqani apocalyptic experience, I do not believe these explanations alone can account for the existence of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse, nor why it takes this distinctive from.

Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is particularly distinctive in comparison to the apocalypses of contemporary writers in the Middle East as while he does present Islam as being triumphant in global society, it is not to the indiscriminate benefit of Muslims at the expense of the West. While the West will be destroyed, so will the Muslim world. Combined with this link to Westeners entering at the end of time, I believe here we can see the influence of the transnational nature of the *tariqa*. In comparison to the writers described by Cook (2005) and Filiu (2011), Shaykh Nazim is not speaking from a regional perspective. That anyone could survive, and that destruction will be global, means no *murid*, wherever they are in the world, is excluded, nor is a cultural-ethnic background privileged over any other.

The transnational nature of the apocalypse is similarly reflected in Shaykh Nazim's references to familiar themes of the Western apocalyptic tradition. In comparison to previous research, I argued Shaykh Nazim engages with Western apocalyptic traditions in different ways. While Shaykh Nazim does present his apocalyptic message in a way that makes it accessible, familiar, and potentially appealing to the apocalyptically minded, he has also adapted his narrative through the appropriation of elements of contemporary apocalyptic thought that support his own more long term apocalyptic vision. Likewise, while undoubtedly a familiar trope of Western apocalypticism, his engagement with nuclear global catastrophe is ultimately reflective of engagement with universal symbols of destruction.

One of the most interesting aspects of Shaykh Nazim's distinctive apocalyptic narrative is that is pessimistic and millenarian, marking a departure from historical reform-focused Mahdi movements. In this thesis I have discussed how

Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse resolves problems of the modern world. Drawing themes from Chapters Four and Five together, I suggest here that Shaykh Nazim sees the world as consisting of a three sided crisis: 1) problems of contemporary Islam including loss of legitimate authority and the rise of Islamism, making reform neither possible nor desirable; 2) the modern world has turned away from God at both an individual and societal level; 3) the prevalence of modern technology, which he considers to be problematic as it disrupts humanity's relationship with God. At the root of this crisis is Satan, whose influence extends throughout the world, and whose strength is explained because it is the end of time. It is this three sided crisis that makes a millenarian vision necessary.

His apocalypse resolves the crisis of modernity in overthrowing the aspects of the modern world he finds challenging: spiritual knowledge replaces scientific knowledge, monarchy replaces democracy, and the powerful dimension of punishment provides restoration of justice and vindication against those in conflict with Sufism. But it is the need to purify the modern world of both Satanic influence and all its modern aspects including technology that means a complete reordering of the world is the only way the crisis can truly end. The establishment of this crisis, and the promise of its resolution thus completes Shaykh Nazim's theodicy, providing hope in difficult times. However, this multidimensional crisis means that the apocalypse is potentially appealing to different *murids* for different reasons. In my own research, for example, I did not notice a strong anti-Wahhabi narrative among the Glastonbury *murids*, but rather a hope for a return to spirituality and an end to materialism. This may well be different in another branch of the *tariqa*.

In this way my research diverges somewhat with the most recent publication on this topic from Wiesmann (2014). While I agree with him that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is 'a mythic articulation of the anxiety felt by an adept of an orthodox Sufi brotherhood in a cosmic struggle against the rising tide of global militant Islamism' (Weismann, 2014: 121), ultimately this must be balanced by a wider view of a far bigger crisis that is present at all areas of the modern world that must be resolved.

One of the aims of this thesis was to situate Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse in the context of other Muslim apocalypses, to question whether Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse is unusual and to thus consider whether there is anything 'Sufi' about this apocalypse. This question of course runs the risk of essentialising Sufism but we can nonetheless proceed with some caution.

Sufi interest in Islam's apocalyptic imagery in the past has in general been triggered by a desire to reform the Muslim community, and to thus restore justice. Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse in this way does diverge somewhat from historical precedent. While he undeniably seeks a fairer world his apocalypse is more passive, more messianic, more miraculous (with the exception of Ibn Arabi) and more catastrophic.

In comparison with the apocalypticism of Arab Muslim apocalyptic writers, Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse does seem distinctly Sufi firstly in its appeal to charismatic knowledge, and secondly in his vision of a spiritual utopia. In other ways he shares features in terms of millenarianism, political passivity, and use of Western symbols. Shaykh Nazim's anti-modernity apocalypse in terms of the destruction of all technology is not shared by many Muslim apocalypticists, nor is Shaykh Nazim's moral apocalypse which does not focus on the triumph of Islam and the humiliation of the West, but rather reflects ongoing Naqshbandi intra-Muslim conflict.

Significance of the research

Many of the above points represent new ways of analysing Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic thought and this thesis has thus contributed a fuller understanding of Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism than has previously been seen. While a number of studies have described Shaykh Nazim as millenarian or millennial, this thesis has demonstrated in detail why it is appropriate to describe him as such. As McGinn (1979: 4) notes, in any study of apocalypticism we must use terminology appropriately. This thesis thus provides us with a better understanding of the nature of Shaykh Nazim's thought, how it compares with other Muslim apocalyptic thought and therefore proves potential for comparison with other contemporary thinkers.

Similarly, this thesis has contributed to an understanding of how Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse can be seen as resolution to the perceived problem of modernity, how it functions as a theodicy, and has provided new analysis of the authorities used to legitimise the apocalyptic narrative, including a new strategy by Shaykh Hisham that indicates an attempt to reach an audience outside of the *tariqa*. While preliminary, this research has also contributed to our knowledge of how *murids* interpret the apocalyptic teachings in a new context. As such it challenges some earlier research. For example, while Damrel (1999) argued for an interpretation that would make the apocalypse interesting to Western converts, my research has demonstrated that these teachings can actually be problematic for new Haqqanis. Nonethless, I also observed interest in the teachings from Western converts that did not rely on a metaphorical interpretation, differing from Atay (1994) and Köse's (1994) findings.

Most in-depth academic research on Shaykh Nazim's apocalypticism was written prior to or just after the millennium, and questions were thus raised over the form Shaykh Nazim's teachings would take in the years to come. Overall, this thesis has demonstrated that in the light of the millennium, apocalyptic teachings remained prevalent in Shaykh Nazim's teachings, and their importance to his vision of the world and the *tariqa* was not diminished.

Indeed, as the references to Shaykh Hisham's *The Approach of Armageddon?* (Kabbani, 2003) has demonstrated, interest in the end of the world continues in the next generation of Naqshbandi shaykhs. Furthermore, this thesis has been able to provide an account of how some *murids* came to terms with the millennium that extend beyond previous research.

In using a phenomenological method, this thesis has approached Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse by comparing it with more researched Christian apocalypticism. It has thus demonstrated that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse has much in common with the Western tradition. Like Christian dispensationalists, Shaykh Nazim used strategic ambiguity to make the end seem close without resorting to date setting, and in so doing, instil a sense of urgency in addressing behaviour through the threat of apocalypse. Like Jewish and Christian apocalypses, Shaykh Nazim presented a theodicy that gave hope in a time of perceived crisis through the reordering of the world. This crisis, like that

presented by Catholic and Protestant speakers, was driven by as sense the world is in crisis due to developments in modernity. The moral and punishment elements of his narrative parallel similar apocalypses in Catholicism. However, in contrast, his apocalypse developed to become far more pessimistic.

In any comparative study we must be careful not to essentialise. Nonetheless, we might be able to infer that there are certain common characteristics of contemporary apocalypticism which manifest in various ways across the Abrahamic religions. It is interesting that these apocalypses address modernity, that they are not revolutionary, that they are catastrophic and pessimistic. These are global trends that Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse must be seen in context with. The causes of these similarities is not clear. Roca (2014: 85) notes the growth of 'crisis' apocalyptic thought can be linked to fears over nuclear technology and distrust of power, finding 'the malign transformation of apocalyptic began in the last few decades, growing around the nuclear threat, which placed the very destiny of the human race in the hands of political power and produced the phrase 'humanity's nuclear apocalypse'' Today, he argues, we also see apocalypse in terms of ecological and financial disaster.[201]

The growth of recent publications on apocalyptic thought suggests researchers are once again noting the importance of apocalypse in the contemporary world.[202] The recent 2012 phenomenon is a notable example of popular apocalyptic expectation that spread throughout the world and indeed, Ditommaso (2014: 112) goes so far as to argue 'today more than at any other time in human history, people are inclined to understand the world and their place in it in terms of an apocalyptic world view...this apocalyptic turn is, by any measure, a global phenomenon'. Although research is scarce, it seems this trend is apparent within Islam. In 2012, for example, the Pew Forum released data which revealed that in nine out of twenty three countries they surveyed,

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[201] In many ways, this pessimistic vision of the End reflected in popular culture. In film, for example, popular apocalyptic releases included *2012* (2009) which projects global disaster based on the Mayan prophecies which predicted the world would end in the year 2012, *The Day after Tomorrow* (2004), based on worldwide environmental disaster, *Contagion* (2011) in which a devastating virus wipes out the world's population, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011), a prequel to *Planet of the Apes* (1968), where experimentation on animals to treat devastating diseases creates apes with superhuman intelligence, and *Legion* (2009), in which God commands his angels to wipe out humanity once and for all.
[202] See for example Collins (2014), Harvey and Newcombe (2013) and a 2014 volume of *Concilium.*

half or more adult Muslims believed the Mahdi would appear in their lifetimes (Pew Forum, 2012).

More research is undoubtedly required to understand the nature of these beliefs. In the introduction I suggested apocalyptic thought in contemporary Islam is overrepresented by a focus on groups who, while perhaps fitting broad millennial categories, are not extensively drawing on apocalyptic imagery from Islamic culture. This not only gives a distorted view of apocalyptic thought, but in this association of Islam, violence and apocalypse potentially leads us to a clash-of-civilisations apocalyptic fantasy. In this thesis I've attempted to show that just as Islam is not monolithic, neither is Islamic apocalypticism. Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse demonstrates a reflection on the same global concerns seen in many Christian and cultic apocalypses.

While Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse was unusual, if this apocalyptic interest is as prevelant as predicted, it may not be the last. Future research could reveal how varied such beliefs could be and help us potentially uncover a global apocalyptic vision. Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse would make a rich contribution to this global apocalyptic conversation.

Future research

Given the importance of Shaykh Nazim as a charismatic figure in unifying the *tariqa* together, the most urgent future research that should be undertaken with the Haqqaniyya in the light of Shaykh Nazim's passing is monitoring the cohesiveness of the *tariqa*. Within this, we should carefully note any signs of fracture, how the *tariqa* maintains its unity, and how Shaykh Mehmet's authority is constructed and maintained. At the time of writing, Shaykh Bahauddin and Shaykh Mehmet are touring the UK and reportedly gaining in popularity. However, it is very early in the successional period and given there was some surprise and 'trouble' with Shaykh Mehmet's appointment, it may become apparent over the coming months and years that divisions within the *tariqa* are growing.

To this end it will be interesting to observe whether the apocalyptic teachings are used in this process of legitimation. Previous academic studies that have been undertaken on the Haqqaniyya seem to suggest that the Mahdi teachings

were a reasonably popular element of Shaykh Nazim's teachings, providing, as we have seen in this thesis, hope in difficult times. Haqqani literature reflects this, with transcriptions of meetings often including a question on whether there is any news of the Mahdi. Potentially, referring to the Mahdi could strengthen Shaykh Mehmet's legitimacy in maintaining the image of being a figure with privileged knowledge. However, the teachings may also be problematic for him. Without other miracles and charismatic experiences *murids* may well be less willing to sit patiently for the Mahdi. Alternatively, the apocalyptic teachings may take on an increasingly rhetorical function.

Shaykh Mehmet and other leading Naqshbandi shaykhs also face questions over the apocalyptic narrative as told by Shaykh Nazim. While as we have seen in this thesis Shaykh Nazim has almost always been ambiguous in whether he will see the Mahdi, it seems from speaking with *murids* it was expected he would, and indeed that he would have a role to play in the new world of Isa and the Mahdi. The question of how this expectation is reconciled will be an interesting one to examine and indeed may well change the nature of apocalypticism in the *tariqa*. With Shaykh Nazim's death we will undoubtedly see *murids* reinterpret these teachings and there may be some who feel they can speak more freely than perhaps they could in the past. In this way this thesis could provide a comparison to further research on apocalyptic interpretations undertaken in other *tariqa* contexts.

It will also be interesting to observe developments in the apocalyptic narrative in the context of transglobal Sufism. As Geaves (2009; 2014) and others have noted, we are seeing the beginning of a shift in Sufism away from traditional *tariqas* to more transnational networks facilitated by the internet. Geaves (2009: 110) notes, for example, 'the influential presence of the online shaikhs may well lead to the demise of cultural binary fission and to the emergence of a transglobal Sufism that will differ from historic precedents in that it will not be *tariqa*-dominated around the influence of one significant charismatic figure but rather will find *tariqa* and shaikh/*murid* relations subliminated to serve the cause of 'traditional Islam''. These new Sufi interactions often take place in the context of articulating an alternative Islamic identity without resorting to Salafism (Geaves, 2014: 45-51). If the *tariqa* continue to engage Western Muslims as

successfully as they have done, it will be interesting to see if an apocalyptic narrative can be sustained in the context.

While this thesis has attempted to position Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic narrative in comparison with other Muslim apocalypticism, there is still much work that could be done in this area. This thesis has not provided a detailed comparison but rather undertaken comparison with broad trends found in contemporary Middle East Muslim apocalyptic literature. There are three principal areas further comparative research could be undertaken that would further our understanding of the varieties of Muslim apocalyptic belief. To begin, very interesting results may be found from a comparison between the Haqqaniyya and Harun Yahya Enterprise, an Islamic organisation based in Turkey which in many ways shares similarities to Shaykh Nazim's apocalypse in terms of being vehemently anti-materialism and creationist. The Enterprise is not, however, Sufi, and it would be interesting to identify more closely what differentiates them from Shaykh Nazim. Secondly, we might also consider apocalyptic belief in the perrennialist strands of universalist Sufism to further our understanding of the relationship between Western occulture, the New Age and new forms of Sufism.

Finally, the internet may present an interesting site for research into apocalyptic interpretations. The internet has a new space for the cultic milieu to flourish, including apocalyptic speculation (Thompson, 2005a: 242). This is likewise argued by Ditommaso (2014: 111) in his observation 'the emergence of a global information society based on internet technologies has revolutionised they way in which apocalyptic prophecies are conceived, composed, and received'. Ideas can be freely shared, removed from their historical and religious contexts to form new interpretations of the contemporary period, supported by various authorities. It will be interesting to see how, if at all, Islamic apocalypses develop in this context.

With apocalyptic beliefs clearly not diminished in the new millennium and the search for meaning in an uncertain world as appealing as ever, we must continue to seek to understand the complexities of these beliefs and their subtleties.

<u>Appendix One: A selected collection of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic <i>sohbats</i> by theme</u>

The purpose of this appendix is to demonstrate the flavour of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic statements and how they have developed over time in a way not possible in the main text of the thesis. This collection is only a small sample of what was recorded of Shaykh Nazim's apocalyptic thought and cannot be considered exhaustive.

<u>Statements the end is near</u>

We are not at the beginning of this world, we are reaching the end of this period. The Last Day must come, it is coming...That is why there are so many sufferings everywhere (sufismus-online 2014i [1993]).

He [Jesus] will come very soon in the near future. Very soon he will be with us, towards the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first (al-Haqqani, 1994: 21).

Armageddon is going to happen before the coming of Jesus Christ. Armageddon, which is mentioned in the Old and New Testaments, is indicated as near (al-Haqqani, 1994: 22).

Soon huge events will come on earth because we are supporting Satan and his kingdom. As a punishment for our support, and strong fire will come. A storm of fire will blow from the East to the West and then from the West to the East and from the north to the South and from the South to the North, from the continents to the oceans and from the oceans to the continents (al-Haqqani, 1994: 68).

Therefore, we are expecting, and seeing that in a short while there will be a common change, physically and then spiritually. Perhaps it will be physical for some people and spiritual for others, but time is over now. Time is over and therefore you have been prepared for something, just like all nations, all humanity is being prepared for something that is approaching. These are huge events, unexpected huge events (al-Haqqani, 1994: 91).

Huge events will come in a very short period of time. This period of life which has been very long is just passing away and the short time that is left over is filled up with huge events (al-Haqqani, 1994: 92).

We are believers and we know that this world is going to reach its last days...The last station of this world is now approaching (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 23).

According to Holy Books there will be no more democratical systems in the year 2000...the alternative for democracy is monarchy. By the year 2000 everything in this world will be changed. It will turn from the worst to the best, isha'Allah (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 81).

The time we are expecting is coming closer. Everyone must believe. Those who believe will have a position, they will have a weight. Those who don't, will be like a dry leaf in the wind (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 34).

So many unexpected things are approaching, because time is over (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 35).

According to traditional knowledge that is the last century for manking living on this planet. The Day of Resurrection will be in the twenty-first century (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 42).

This world must change. The last limit for this change to take place is the year 2000. If people want to continue in this way after then, this world will finish (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 48).

Time is over. Don't think that this world will last more than this century...We believe in what the Prophet* said: the *Last Days* have started to appear. The 21st century of the Christian calendar is approaching, but I don't think that we will have a 21st century. Time is finishing. Prepare yourself! Everyone is being called back to the Creator (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 83).

One more biggest trouble is in front of us, which will wipe away 6 out of 7 people. People cannot imagine the tragedy which will happen in the war to come. It can come in 1996, or in 1997, or in 1998, or in 1999. It will not wait for the year 2000 to come (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 116).

We are reaching the end of the 20th century and according to our traditional knowledge, it is the last point which mankind will reach (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 118).

We believe that this miraculous person will come before the year 2000 and that the new century will be a century of belief, trith and peace: a century of the Heavenly Kingdom. The kingdom of satan will be defeated (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 151).

According to the knowledge which has come to me, the limit will be reached before the year 2000 (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 15).

The new century is ahead of us, but the 21st century will not be completed. It will be the last century. This is according to our traditional knowledge (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 33).

The last days are approaching. Don't think that everything will be the way it is now. A change is coming before the year 2000. Every believer in every religion is expecting a Divine Intervention to come to this planet to rearrange everything according to Divine Rules (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 74).

In these days when we are approaching the year 2000 we need blessings more than anything else. There is a new century in front of us where everything will have to be changed. We will have to move from materialism into spiritualism, because our souls are fed up with the dirt and the nonsense of materialism (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 102).

I was expecting Mehdi to come this year, but yet some signs have not been completed...and I hope that he may be with us next Muharram, after the year 2000. The third millennium should be for Mehdi (a.s) (sufismus-online, 2014h [1999]).

Now coming the biggest war; it is at the door. I don't know up to the next Muharram how many people will be living on earth and how many will have been sent away...' (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 176).

Our Dunya is running to its end. It is not stable, because everything that belongs to the time before the Last Day, everything must finish in *fana*, finishing (*Sohbats 2013* [2004]: 2581).

This Ramadan now just arrived and it is a last chance for humanity to make their hegemony on their egos, to take the power away from their egos and to give their soul spiritual power! If they are not doing this...billions, not millions, will die! (*Sohbats 2013* [2004]: 3874).

All I can say is that is so very near. There will be a big explosion on this planet and this explosion shall be on a magnitude like it has never happened before. This will be the last explosion and billions of people will die (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 3133).

And we are looking and seeing that the conditions for that Armageddon just prepared. Nations, all of them, they are preparing themselves for that Biggest War (*Sohbats 2013* [2007]: 3323).

Coming some days now, after a few weeks coming something that going to be beginning of Armageddon! (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 510).

We reached the Last Days for the life of Mankind, according to holy knowledge that granted to prophets (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 893).

So many things are going to happen now. You must have heard about what happened in Japan. No one can give you a guarantee that this place cannot be like that place, no! Keep yourself in doors and trust in your Lord's Protection (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 82).

The Last Day, Judgement Day, is coming now. Don't think that we are at the beginning, no. We are the last Prophet's nation and our nation is reaching to the day of Resurrection (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 93).

We are in the Last Days...Shut your doors and sit in your homes; don't show yourselves (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 758).

We are reaching the last century of dunya...troubles continue in all nations everywhere, and now this is happening between people and within nations. Some signs are also coming from the Heavens, such as earthquakes, floods and hurricanes. No one can stop this from coming all are terrible signs for terrible days that will come on people (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 4500).

I am not afraid, but rather cautious of the occurrences of Armageddon as the time is very near! (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 1937).

And now this fits the King of Jordan. His Royal Highness King Abdullah, he is the last of the descendents of the Prophet (saws). It's obligatory for Muslims to follow him and to give him *ba'ya* because he is carrying the banner of Islam. He will carry until the appearance of Mahdi (as)...This vengeance is coming closer from the Lord of the Heavens and the Earths (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 97).

And our days now are the days of the time of Mahdi (as) (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 98).

The order of this world, this world is finished and waiting for intervention of Heavens. No more control on Earth now, finished!..Everywhere finish; no anyone from Earth people may do anything for people to correct their ways for their lives. That is finished (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 811).

Judgement Day has come near, the moon has been split (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 533).

Problem with Muslims

Muhammad, may peace be upon him, said that Islam began in a secret way and was very weak. It then grew up, gained power and then once again would become weak. This is what he informed us of and this is what has happened. We are in a time in which believers are disliked in the community because the big majority are enemies of Islam and truth. They are against justice, wisdom, holy-men, holy things, lights, mercy, love and respect. This is the time in which we are. People are against Islam and against prophets and saints and believers (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 65).

People are against truth now. The whole nonmuslim world is against truth and the Muslims and the Muslims themselves are also heedless and ignorant (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 65).

We are sorry to say that there are so many crises in Muslim counties; like in Turkey, Pakistan...But these countries are not following Islam properly! (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 139).

These times are very difficult for believers. Unbelievers have fallen into endless misery oceans of suffering. But the believers are following them and are getting the same curse. We are ssing the Islamic world and seeing in which terrible times they are (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 150).

What we are saying is real knowledge, they can't refuse it, but the Muslim world is in a deep heedlessness, following blindly those materialist people and atheist people. They should be punished. If now [the] punishment [is] coming, if [the] non-Muslim world [is] punished once, [the] Muslim world seven times should be punished (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 221).

The Christians have improved in heavenly matters, but unfortunately, the Muslims' spirituality has descended from a high station to the lower station (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 102).

Christians have a greater desire for spirituality and unfortunately the Muslim world doesn't even have a drop of desire for spirituality...Muslims in all countries deny everything related to spirituality and have become like dried word. They don't have a soul, only a material being. On the Day of Judgement, Allah will ask to finish their material bodies to release their spiritual being and they will burn and burn (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 103).

The Muslim people became millions, but have no value (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 116).

The whole Muslim world now is caught in the trap of Shaytan. They have fallen (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 131).

The non-Muslim world doesn't know the majesty of Islam. Islam world confused too. They see non-Muslims as superior. They believe in the useless machines in their hands (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 382).

Role of Satan

Millions of people will be dead and their countries will be in ruins. Satan will be dancing and making music for them. He will have achieved what he planned (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 48).

Satan encourages people to develop even more powerful weapons so that everyone can be killed (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 45).

He [Satan] causes governments to look in the wrong direction (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 76).

The fire is everywhere. Anytime it can explode and satan will come and sit on a hill of ashes and laugh, "Finally mankind is finished. It was because of them that I was thrown out of Heaven, now I got rid of them!" (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 151-152).

Everywhere there is miseries and suffering, fighting, war and crisis, the main reason is that people think Shaitan is their best friend (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 176).

Shaitan's anger, hatred and enmity for mankind reached the top point and he is waiting for the moment to see the whole world destroyed and globally people killed (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 1105).

The end is very quickly approaching – and ending in Armageddon. The whole effort of Satan was to divide the whole world in two parts and to start a big fight among them and to destroy mankind and everything they have built in thousands of years. And now the whole world, Dunya, is running full speed towards that point (Sohbats 2013 [2003]: 7606).

They propose to do something, and they list some reasons, but they never mention the name of Satan as the cause. They talk about the problems of technology, the fall of the Soviet Union and they say that poverty is the problem. But all of this is of no relevance. Satan the devil is making people be enemies to one another, but he is veiled, so people never curse Satan. Instead they say, "Satan is our best friend!" This is the time of devils and evil. The whole world is full of devils and evil. And we must know whom we are fighting. If we are good and well-intentioned people, we must show other people who our enemy is, so that the real enemy may be recognized. (Sohbats 2013 [2004]: 2142).

Reviver. Reviver must come. I hope that we are to belong to that Reviver, to be on his service and to be against atheism and we are ready to fight against every wrong idea that Shaytan putting in the minds of people (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 1803).

All crises, all suffering and terrible happenings through life on this planet are the result of shaytanic teachings (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 1030).

That is the worst teaching from Shaytan to Mankind, and they think by doing everything with technology instead of manpower brings them happiness. Every

trouble on Earth is coming through the expansion of technology!...Shaytan is spreading technology, taking every capacity and ability from Mankind, leaving them in a big place, saying 'There is no work because we are doing everything through technology...Mankind is cursed because of technology (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 2076-2075).

Armageddon events

Armageddon, which is the name of the Greatest War, must be before the Saviour comes. That will be a war between the East and the West...The West will win, not the East. It is written. The West wins and the East vanishes...Out of seven, six will die and one will remain...and then the Mahdi comes and calls, "God is Greater!" (*Allahu akbar*) in Damascus. Then he moves to Istanbul and takes the flag of Muhammad. Then when they are in Istanbul, the Anti-Christ will come quickly through Khorasan, a part of Iran, and run to Jerusalem. He will go around the whole world for forty days and when the forty days are over... (al-Haqqani, 1994: 30-31).

He will appear in the Great War. The Great War will break out between the East and West. These will be very difficult days for humanity. There will be very strong fighting. Very many people will be killed (al-Haqqani, 1994: 120).

The red powers will come to Aleppo and that huge power will gather on the boundaries of Turkey. The huge Russian power will be west of Aleppo. At the same time, the American powers will be in Adana, Turkey, near the sea. (al-Haqqani, 1994: 127).

Another world war will maybe come before the 21st century and destroy everything which civilisation has built up for centuries. Everything on earth will be destroyed during this biggest war which is approaching (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 134-135).

When *Mehdi* comes, the *jinn* will be under his control in the same way, some of them will be with me. When they have received the order, they will take all those concrete buildings within one night and throw them into a deep part of the Atlantic Ocean (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 12).

Grandsheikh said that before Mehdi comes Armageddon should come. Armageddon. It is the last and biggest battle in history. After that there will be no more war (*Sohabts 2013* [1999]: 520).

They should kill each other…now coming the biggest war; it is at the door. I don't know up to next Muharram how many people will be living on earth and how many will have been sent away…From six people one will remain. If there are six billion people, five billion must die…and everything they built is going to be destroyed (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 176).

I am a weak servant, but making Lord of Heavens to come to my ear the sound of Armageddon; that taking six people from seven and one remaining and six going away (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 511).

The Last Prophet, the Seal of Messengers...informed us that when time is over, when the Last Day is near and the Day of Judgment approaches, there will be so many very cursed Signs. One of the Signs that will be at the end of the

period of Mankind on this planet is a huge war. Life will not finish and the Judgment Day will not come except after a big war. *Fi'atayn `azheematayn*, the world is going to be in two camps, one camp against the other. When they assemble in two parties, there will be the biggest war, as they are saying, "Armageddon." From five billion people, four billion will die (*Sohbats 2013* [8146-8147]: 2010).

And finally, also, our people will divide into two groups: one group will take the side of the Russians, the other will take the side of the Muslims. Then Mahdi (a) will arrive. They will abandon old politics and come to a new one (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 759).

Half the inhabitants on Earth will perish; if there are five billion, three billion must go away. So many things are coming (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 2579).

Now we are near. There is movement, but as it intensifies the approach of Mehdi's appearance comes closer. The whole world will be in chaos. They call it "Armageddon" (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 2722).

They'll fly like dried tree leaves in the air. Out of five only one person will survive. If nuclear reactors erupt all at once nothing will remain, not even humans, animals, tree, stone or anything… (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 3907).

Armaggedon and the conquest of Constantinople occur within six months and in the seventh month al-Dajjal will appear. Armageddon will have two groups (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 9383).

Al-Malhama (Armageddon) will take place on the plain of Amuq. Don't even ask about that great war on the Amuq plain, the great slaughter...Then, a power will come from Sham to Amuq plain and face the ones coming from up. Who he called "the yellows" are the Russians. Who comes from here are the Muslims. They will fight there. 80 divisions are on this side, 80 divisions are on the other side under 80 flags, 12,000 soldiers. Calculate- 80 times 12,000, stand in the upper part. And the same amount of soldiers come from here, from Sham, they are also 80 divisions. 80 divisions. Each division is 12,000 men. So approximately 1 million here & 1 million there will fight. It will be finished on the plain of Amuq (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 7531).

Mahdi

He [Mahdi] is living, but he is not with people. It is impossible for people to look at him because he has such strong power...If someone looks at him, he will fall down dead. That is why he is living in the Empty Quarter Desert between Saudi Arabia and Yemen (al-Haqqani, 1994: 28).

He is around 35 years old. And he has power now. All Friends of God (*awliya*) are under his command now (al-Haqqani, 1994: 29).

Mehdi Alehi Salam has 7 Wezirs, but not one of them is an Arab even though Mehdi Alehi Salam is one of the descendents of the Prophet. This means that the supporters of Mehdi are foreigners, not Arabs. Arabs are not supporting Mehdi (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 66).

Oh our Lord, send us your powerful servant! We need a Sultan to judge on behalf of You. This earth has to be cleaned of devils (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 39).

Sayyidina Mahdi a.s. and his seven Grand Wazirs, 99 Caliphas, and 313 Grand Murshids are all in the Naqshibandi Tariqat (sufismus-online, 2014a [1999]).

Send us Seyyadina Mahdi because if he does not come there will never be any good on earth and instead there will only be fighting, killing, destroying, burnings, earthquakes, storms and hurricanes (*Sohabts 2013* [2006]: 2321).

Imam Mahdi is coming!.. He will recite takbir and all technology and everything associated with it will be taken away! Then people will say, "alhamdulillah," and will run to make sajda! (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 325).

Of course he [Mahdi] is living! He is only waiting for the order now (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 2722).

Send us a leader who will revive you Shariah and destroy falsehood. Send us a sultan who will be a carrier of power, might and magnificence and make us of those who will gather under his banner... With his spirituality he will put everything in order, destroy those who come against Islam and fill the whole world with Muslims!..We have lost our way and are asking for a guide to give guidance to carry people from the wrong way to the true way (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 5781).

We are awaiting the arrival of the Sultan of pure lineage (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 258).

Technology will end

The first to break will be technology, making it rubbish and throwing it in the ocean because Mankind is too proud with technology and trembling! (*Sohbats 2013* [1991]: 528).

It [electricity will be finished]...Every power of technology will stop (al-Haqqani, 1994: 31).

He [Isa] has a sword. When he was on earth he never touched a sword, but now he is coming as a Saviour. In His time, all technology will be finished (al-Haqqani, 1994: 105).

In these times we will not need planes or ships or cars. Nothing! Every person will be given miraculous powers through Jesus Christ (al-Haqqani, 1994: 106).

Within one night all parts of technology will be collected by the *jinn*, put into a great sack and thrown out into space onto the heads of Gog and Magog (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 58).

Man will be forced to come back to nature, because twentieth century civilisation has led man to run from nature. You must not throw away animal fat because candles will be made from it. Candles. No more electricity, no more lamps in which you can use paraffin or petroleum for light, for lighting, no. Only wooden lights as before, burning them to give light at night. And in every place fireplaces will be used for cooking and for heating inside. And you are going to

use your clothes as much as possible, for a long time (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 5307).

The authority that Allah Almighty granted to people to carry them more to their Lord, but which they use for opposite purposes, they use technology against the Lord of Heavens, and they fight against Allah Almighty's orders; therefore now, first of all that authority that was granted to them, this electricity will be taken from them. It is not only taken from earth, through computers, but from the sun, waves, magnetic waves will come and, like a hoover take away all electricity, and I fear that it is going to affect our bodies, that there will also be some electric waves on our bodies (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 521).

We are at the end of time. Times like ours have never been before. We are only at the beginning of winter. Airplanes and cars will not be able to move anymore, the roads cannot be seen anymore (*Sohabts 2013* [2002]: 2417).

When Mehdi coming and using not to take away that darkness of ignorance from earth, he has been granted to say "Allah Akbar Allah Akbar Allah Akbar" and in a second whole technology finished! 100% technology power finished (*Sohbats 2013* [2004]: 224).

Mahdi will takbeer...Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar! Allahu Akbar *walillahi 'l-hamd!..*When he says that, all weapons and technology will stop, finished! With only one takbeer he will end the technology they worship. That is what I am waiting for! All technology will end (Sohbats 2013 [2011]: 2722-2723).

<u>Punishment</u>

Armageddon will come...It will be like the flood was for Noah...It will run over the world...Because people are using their wildness (*Sohbats 2013* [1993]: 3913).

He is coming and he is going to be amongst people like a judge to make everything clear because before he comes, everything is mixed up (al-Haqqani, 1994: 22).

1: It is impossible for those who deny the Creator to survive. Never. If it is your father or mother or daughter, sister or brother! It is impossible!..These people must be killed. They will kill each other. If anyone of his relatives was denying the Prophet, they would fight them, kill them. 2: All cruel people, cruel people cannot survive. Cruel people will not survive. 3: Envious people are the enemy of humanity. They will be killed and hurt and harmed according to the envy in their hearts. (al-Haqqani, 1994: 53).

It is impossible for believers to be killed during Armageddon or for people with good actions and good intentions. That is impossible but for those who harm humanity and have enemies and are denying the Creator, they must be killed. That is their punishment (al-Haqqani, 1994: 54).

Soon huge events will come on earth because we are supporting Satan and his kingdom. As a punishment for our support, a strong fire will come, spread through the world. That is the punishment for humanity because they are supporting the kingdom of devils on earth now. And they are supporting the Anti Christ...We are declaring to all of you to be supporters of the Saviors and not

supporters of satans will die but the supporters of the Saviors will be saved' (al-Haqqani, 1994: 68).

The Greatest war is only for those who harm others. Cruel people must be taken away. There will be no such thing as to be unprotected without reason (al-Haqqani, 1994: 122).

In the last days, so many men will be killed that there will be forty women for every man. That is because men are mostly cruel people (al-Haqqani, 1994: 128).

May God take care of you until those Holy Days and make you helpers of truth and believers in truth. That is the honor for every nation and for every person. The truth is one. It is not only for Christians or for Jews only or for Muslims only. Truth is one for all. Anyone who runs away from the truth must be punished. They will punish themselves by themselves. Who come to truth will be in safety (al-Haqqani, 1994: 129).

Now adults are very afraid of the coming war. Therefore there is no hope for this present generation. They must be punished. Heavenly punishment is coming now (al-Haqqani, 1995b: 15).

In that time blessings will be very where and this world will be filled with blessed people. Cursed people will be taken away. We are trying to bring that message to people. That is our message to people: be with good-ones, don't be with bad-ones (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 24).

People are surrounded by devils and have surrendered to them. So how can there be a bright future for mankind in the new century? If they do not change their direction a worst end is waiting for them. Everything on earth may be destroyed and most people will be killed and those who survive will be on ruins. This will make satan very happy (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 48).

I fear the divine revenge which is mentioned in the Holy Books. From time to time nations are being taken away by Divine Revenge when they do not keep their services (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 23).

I am afraid now, because once more most people are supporting Satan. A Divine Curse will come on them and destroy billions, like it is mentioned in all Holy Books as Armageddon, the biggest war which will be on earth before the last day (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 40).

The second millennium is coming closer and something else too: if we do not change our attributes, a curse will come. No power on earth can stop it (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 65).

There are only two more years until the year 2000 when unexpected huge events will happen, terrible and horrible wars, because people are following satan and devils and are trying to make even more evil. The result is a Heavenly Punishment (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 68).

Don't place yourself as a target of Divine Revenge. There are billions of people who are living a life which will cause Divine Revenge to reach them (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 35).

Judgement Day is approaching and everything will be changed (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 135).

But now the end of this period is coming very soon. Many signs are appearing. People will either awake, or be punished. They should take a warning of what happened 15 days ago, when an earthquake struck Japan. Then there was another punishment in Europe; a river started flooding whole towns...Allah will remove disobedient servants (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 81).

But now so many billions of people will suffer Divine Revenge. They must be killed, because they are fighting the Lord of Heavens...Most people are going to be unbelievers (sufismus-online, 2014c [1999]).

The supporters of the devils will die, but the supporters of Saviours S. Mehdi and S. Isa a.s. will be saved. There is no shelter for cruel people who harm others or disobedient people who do prohibited things...There is no shelter for unbelievers, nothing and no one can save them (sufismus-online, 2014d [1999]).

Now divine revenge is approaching. For a few days now I am seeing the sky red. It signs either war or an earthquake (*Sohabts 2013* [2002]: 2418).

Therefore the penalty for Kufr, denying Allah and refusing His heavenly rules, is to be killed. Whole world will be cleaned...Now it is going to be the last war that is mentioned through holy books, in our Holy Book as Merhamet Kubra, biggest massacre of mankind, and in other holy Books mentioned as Armageddon, that last war, whole world going to be cleaned from Shaitan and satanic kingdom is going to be destroyed (*Sohbats 2013* [2003]: 4365).

Allah should punish mankind on earth, and if His anger is coming, He is able to create another virus – for mankind, so that through 24 hours never living even one person on earth – at least half (of the) inhabitants of the world should pass away! (*Sohbats 2013* [2005]: 3854).

The punishment has just begun. Today will be better than tomorrow. Yesterday was much better than today (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 3192).

Now they are reaching to that point that they should be punished. They should be punished. And this mankind now on earth are like the nation of Noah (*Sohbats 2013* [2007]: 3324).

Therefore there is coming now cursing! If people are not changing their ways, there is coming cursing to take them away from 5 people 4, remaining 1. If the population on earth is 5 billions, 4 billions are going to die, remaining one...It is a very terrible time now, therefore I have been ordered to remind whole nations, if reaching my words to all nations (*Sohbats 2013* [2008]: 3874).

O people, time is over and Qiyama, the Last Day is approaching. And so many signs of Qiyama, Last Day, are just appearing. Keep your faith, try to be with Allah Almighty! (*Sohbats 2013* [2008]: 418).

Beware of Shaytan. If not, heavenly punishment is ready this year. It is a heavy year and it is very terrible events, like camel caravan following people one-after-one! (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 896).

The time is running, therefore beginning earthquakes everywhere. Beginning heavenly revenge rays coming from under oceans or coming from above (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 2130).

As long as people are refusing the Seal of the Prophet, trouble is going to be never ending and punishment never stopping (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 5302).

Or you will be taken away as the flood of Noah just took away whole nations, whom they were not accepting Noah (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 5302).

You must hear, you must hear, you must listen, you must obey! Or coming, coming, coming Armageddon more than worst! (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 511).

No one can stop the Lord's punishment! No one can fight or defeat when the Lord's punishment reaching people; it is going to be too late (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 3669).

Troubles continue in all nations everywhere and now this is happening between people and within nations. Some signs are also coming from the Heavens, such as earthquakes, floods and hurricanes. No one can stop this from coming; all of these terrible signs for terrible days that will come on people (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 4500).

This vengeance is coming closer from the Lord of the Heavens and the Earths (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 97).

Be warned O tyrants! One of these days the Divine Vengeance will come upon them...Repent to Allah. Stop fighting! This is the first warning!..The warning will increase to the second and third warnings. They will come stronger till there will be no tyrants remaining, neither their names nor their bodies. So, be warned (*Sohbats 2013* [2012]: 827).

This month will become very intense. And this is a sign of Divine revenge. So that those who have gone astray, will be punished in this month. They won't be left without punishment. Mankind has crossed the limits. They forgot their servant hood, they forget their identity. They forgot their creator (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 8773).

Time of crisis

He [the Anti-Christ] is listening very much and he is giving many orders. He has thirty deputies before he comes. He has sent thirty deputies to make the people prepared for his coming (al-Haqqani, 1994: 24).

In our times satans are establishing their kingdoms on this planet, from East to West and North to South... And I am sorry to say that humanity is the supporters of satans and evil (al-Haqqani, 1994: 68).

That is the only news I am waiting for, the news of the Savior because I see that people have fallen down in a deep valley and have no means to carry them from the bottom of the valley to the top. I am looking for a Hand from heaven to reach to the bottom of the valley and to take the people out. (al-Haqqni, 1994: 104).

People are taking their hearts away. They are not using their hearts. They are also not using their minds or they are not using their will-power. They are trying to be on the level of animals, but we are not animals. We have been honoured to be mankind. The crisis is increasing. Tehre are troubles, sufferings and fire everything (al-Haqqnai, 1995a: 22).

I must say that the twentieth century is the worst century (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 22).

Nowadays 999 out of 1000 people and representing Satan and devils and their egos. That is why their lives are like hell (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 47).

In our days you cannot find anyone who isn't cheated and there are very few people who do not cheat. That is why all problems increase for day to day (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 84).

I have been travelling though this world during this century and I am observing that the life of mankind is getting more and more difficult. The crisis is increasing and so is the suffering of people (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 40).

We are living in a time when all these good manners have been lost and people are doing their worst to each others (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 54).

We are living in a time unlike any time before. It is the most difficult period mankind has ever experienced (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 57).

The twentieth century is the worst century since the beginning to time. People are following satan more than they have ever done because they are not interested in anything belonging to Heaven (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 74).

Now the whole world is cursed and the earth is asking to throw people into space, to disappear. It is fed up to carry mankind on its shoulders, because mankind is not servant of Allah, but becoming slaves of Shaytan (*Sohabts 2013* [2002]: 176).

We are entering that tunnel, and day by day it is getting more narrow and more difficult, finishing, and from that side a few people will get out (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 1105).

The whole world is just covered with a dark darkness; no light on it. (Sohabts 2013 [2002]: 287).

Mankind is running in the worst possible way and soon it will hall into a bottomless valley. Anyone may see that day-by-day things are getting worse for mankind (*Sohbats 2013* [2004]: 2140).

Starting from now, day-by-day, things are getting worse and cursings are coming on earth because people are not asking for holy ones (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 2320).

We are now living in a time where the 'true ones' have disappeared. You cannot find trustworthy people now (*Sohbats 2013* [2006]: 3128).

Because when Last Day approaching, people going to be like before, the period of ignorance once again (Sohbats 2013 [2007] 3323).

Now is the period of Dajjal, Anti-Christ; making everything, showing people that: 'You are living in Paradise' and really they are living in fire! (*Sohbats 2013* [2007]: 4397).

Now we are living in the worst times because people, each one making trouble for the second one. Each one asking to reach whole treasures and monies (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 358-359).

Now a second period of *jahiliyyah*, ignorance time...They are refusing heavenly knowledge and they are denying everything about spirituality (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 359).

We are here living through darkness, the darkness of this life. We are living through darkness and dirtiness through this world. Darkness. We have been created through never ending lights of heavens (*Sohbats 2013* [2009]: 2025).

We are living in very difficult time, the time of the signs of Qiyama...just approaching (Sohbats 2013 [2009]: 5299).

We are living in a time that is the worst, and in the coming days worse than this will come, because Mankind lost their balance. All of Mankind is like the worst beast; beasts are not killing each other, but Man is asking to destroy everyone living on this planet, saying, "We reached the top point of civilization." Shaytan is making them to say this. If this is civilization, what is going to be worse than this? It is civilization to make people happy, and no one is happy! (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 2667).

In our days, difficulties have begun to appear that prophets predicted and there is wisdom in them, for us to correct our manners when we see these events occur, which are terrible and difficult in the Last Days (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 437).

Fire has spread everywhere! Ladies must not leave their homes too much, they must not work outside, they must sit at home and Allah will protect them. Now there is danger for those who go outside (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 9503).

We must constantly ask for protection as we are living in a time which Muhammad has described... "When good people will be thought of as bad people and bad people as good: honest people as liars and liars as honest people deceivers as trustworthy people and trustworthy people as deceivers" (*Sohabts 2013* [n.d]: 2053).

These are the conditions prevalent in our time; every moral value is turned upside-down so that people can no longer distinguish between good and evil. We are asking our Lord Almighty to stead us on the Path of Truth and help us adhere to it even if many people attack and insist we are misguided. And because we have been informed by the Prophet Muhammad that true people will come under such heavy criticism in the last times we are heartened by such criticism and take it as verification of our being on a true way (*Sohbats 2013* [n.d] 2053).

<u>Be close to nature</u>

It is not easy for people to follow a way which asks them to lead a simpler life drawing closer to nature and becoming more humble. People usually want to be proud, not humble. They don't want to be simple, but to be complex. That is why they want to be far way from nature and run away from it as much as possible. In the big cities they are trying to lose everything concerning nature and to make it artificial. Everything! (al-Haqqani, 1994: 59).

If man eats that which comes from nature, they way it is, it is the best medicine for the physical bodies (al-Haqqani, 1995a: 82).

Nature gives mankind love and mankind gives nature love. They take this love from their Creator. He gives His Divine Love to nature and nature gives it to you and you love to get it (al-Haqqani, 1995b: 2).

Try to eat as much organic food as possible (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 79).

Try not to be slaves of technology! Avoid it as much as possible and use less and less. Try to use natural ways, if you have a choice. Live your life with nature (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 83).

We have been created from earth and we must try to be closer to earth. This will give you a good character and make you more humble. If you sit on strange chairs, you think you are important (al-Haqqani, 1998a: 102).

We try to make as much contact as possible with nature (al-Haqqani, 1998c: 86).

My advice to follow is to come back to nature and to begin to put into action, and to practice, their own physical powers, not to give commands to machines to do this and not to do that (sufismus-online, 2014f [1999]).

Step by step try to come back to your natural position and to use man power. Learn to live without technology and how to act by yourself. Don't build tall buildings. Don't use concrete, comment, iron, use mud, timbre, stone (sufismus-online, 2014f [1999]).

You must learn and try to come back to nature so that nature is not fighting you. As much as you are fighting nature, nature is fighting you back...When you make peace with nature, nature will keep you in your life (sufismus-online, 2014j [1999]).

If you are going to be friendly with nature, nature protects you. If you come life enemy to nature, nature fights you also (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 7551).

You must come back to nature! (*Sohbats 2013* [2005]: 3854).

In nature, through Creation, you can find such a beautiful harmony (*Sohbats 2013* [2010]: 3143).

Mankind is going to be cursed on this planet, for the honour of technology. Leave that and be friendly to nature! Nature is enough for you!..As long as you are against nature you will die, you will kill, you will suffer, and it will not diminish. Technology will never finish, but it will give more troubles because technology is against nature. When man is against nature through technology,

nature is also coming against mankind... When nature dies, mankind is going to die, finished, and all nations are now running on technology. Leave technology and return to nature: be friendly with nature, which is like your mother who gives everything to you without living (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 2076).

Technology has kept people apart from nature. However, tabiat, nature is the mother of Mankind...When you neglect her, poison her, insult her, she won't give back to you in return. Nature will then be an enemy to humans and become the mother of all kinds of germs and viruses – she'll attack people (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 8732).

Protection/survival

No one can be touched by Armageddon if he is wearing a turban...For ladies, hijab will protect them, but women and men with uncovered heads will go away. Who wears a turban cannot be touched, not by a bullet or anything to injure him. He will be protected and surrounded with heavenly powers, because heavenly powers will be enabled from the beginning of Armageddon (*Sohabts 2013* [1991]: 528).

It is impossible for believers to be killed during Armageddon r for people with good actions and good intentions. That is impossible but for those who harm humanity and have enemies and are denying the Creator they must be killed. That is their punishment (al-Haqqani, 1994: 54).

It is a huge punishment. But there is no shelter. Only Allah can give you a shelter. If you run to Him He will protect you. No-one else can (al-Haqqani, 1998b: 35).

My advice is to run to the countryside and to have a well, because life depends on water. Without water there is no life. Simple houses and try to come to a simple life, simple living. No more TV, no more instruments; they must try to keep everything with care so that they do not waste what they have, because wasting is going to finish nations (*Sohbats 2013* [1999]: 5308-5309).

Now I am fearing that should be now a big, huge, terrible killing of mankind that never happened before. From seven people one will remain and six are going to finish. Or from six one will remain and five must be killed...Who should be with Allah is going to be protected (*Sohbats 2013* [2002]: 289).

Use Islamic uniforms for men, women and children, young and old ones, so that you will be supported by heavenly powers that no one may assault you from nuclear weapons, nothing will touch you (*Sohbats 2013* [2010] 2010).

Do not get out at night, stay home. So many things are going to happen now...You must have heard about what happened in Japan. No one can give you a guarantee that this place cannot be like that place, no! Keep yourself indoors and trust in you Lord's protection (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 82).

I have always said that big cities are dangerous. I don't think that anyone living in big cities will be saved, because if they bomb they centre of electricity everything is going to die. Therefore, I always say to go to the countryside (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 84).

Everyone should put aside a week's, a month's or three months supplies in their homes (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 759).

If anything happens in the skies, one must go back home, make ablution, pray two prayer cycles on a prayer mat and sit there. Nothing would affect them (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 3907).

O People! Run and seek shelter for yourself under divine protection. Enough of drunkenness! Try to run after heavenly blessings to be in safety, both here and Hereafter (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 4500).

The Prophet said in the Last Days people will be safe on mountain tops...Safety is on the mountains! You can no longer live in the cities (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 7554).

Find a bit of food in your village and try to manage, breathe in the clean air and spend your time in worship (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 7555).

Don't waste, and keep (emergency supplies) through your homes. At least it should be enough for you for forty days. Don't waste, don't waste. Waste is bringing on people a heavy burden (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 9389).

Specific signs of the end

One of them was that the red-coloured people come to Afghanistan. They will then go to Pakistan and then to Turkey...So that is the first sign, Russians coming to Turkey. The Friends of God say this is expected to happen soon (al-Haqqani, 1994: 126).

[In response to a question about a green man seen in Cairo] This is something true and it is a sign that we are entering the Age of Miracles so that they may take heed! (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 102).

According to our knowledge or what we were informed, Mehdi will emerge in the year of Hajj al-Akbar...This year is Hajj al-Akbar (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 2723).

I saw when it began in Egypt or Tunis that it is the start of Armageddon, beginning with tyrants being taken away and then heavenly powers will come. The period of tyrants is finished now, and one after the one they will be taken away from Tunis, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Damascus, Palestine, Iraq, Turkey, Hijazz, all of them (*Sohbats 2013* [2011]: 4512).

The fire that started in Syria will being Armageddon (*Sohbats 2013* [2013]: 8773)

Appendix Two: Annotated interview collection with a *murid* from Glastonbury

This appendix presents sections of interviews taken with a *murid* over the course of my fieldwork. The interview is edited in that I have chosen what to include, what order to place sections of the interviews in and as I have modified minor elements of the transcript for coherency. The *murid* shared with me an interesting vision of the Naqshbandis in Glastonbury and her understanding of the Sufi world. It is with her permission that it is shared.

Meeting Shaykh Nazim

We arrived in Peckham, midnight, and we come into this old church with about 350 praying. Shaykh Nazim turned around and here was this man dressed purple velvet looking like Father Christmas and he stood at the other end and smiled at me. And I thought 'wow.' Shaykh Nazim had a house in Green Lanes so we were about 25 people living with him; one room for ladies, one for men and Shaykh upstairs. We went home at 1am and I was introduced and Shaykh smiled and we started this friendship. I didn't want to be Naqshbandi because I'd heard from this great Shaykh in Germany who'd just died. People kept asking how had someone with such a big job, bringing hundreds and thousands into Islam, he had a car accident. Why did he die? He died because he had different *bayats* so he wasn't listening to anyone. Which you can do if you do it one at a time. But he had no protection. So I thought, 'I'm not making that mistake.' And every morning Shaykh would say, 'who is your Shaykh?' and I would say, [a different shaykh]. And that went on for about 10 days and I was just feeling so drawn to him, [thinking] 'this is my Shaykh.' And then I went up to him and said, 'can I be Naqshbandi?, can I take *bayat*?' And he said, 'No. Not necessary.'

And someone came up to me and said, 'you will never be a good Naqshbandi. That is why he said no. You will need an Arabic name and you will have to get married. No unmarried women.' And I thought, 'I'm not good enough for this.' So in the evening we went to the mosque and Shaykh called out to the whole mosque: 'Come here!' And he did this massive *bayat*…

I never regretted it. He has regularly pulled me through hell. Necessarily. I had things that needed cleaning up.

Could you describe what it's like being drawn to him?

I think magnet is the best. What I've now learnt on a finer way -- what makes you attracted to holy people, and royal people, it has to do with their angels. Each atom has an angel, it is like a bulb. You have 40w bulbs; if you are a saint you have a million watt. And the light -- that is why these people are enlightened, the energy their angels send out. I was aware the first time I stood in front of Shaykh he knows everything about me. This x-ray machine that goes through your thoughts and feelings. Not just what you're feeling right now but what you did. How often has he proven he knows what I did years before I even met him. So it's that kind of aura. The energy that comes out.

The Naqshbandi World

The Sufi Path

Why is it so important to have shaykh? If you want to be a Muslim is it better to be in a tariqa?

Don't get it mixed up. Unfortunately, until about when these horrible Wahhabis came about two hundred years ago, until then, almost every Muslim was also a Sufi and had a shaykh. But, ever since this terrible introduction of Wahhabis and Salafis and turning terrorist…

Could you summarise what it's like to be a Naqshbandi?

A saint is someone beyond their own ego who gets the information through the *silsila*. It's not his whim, this is coming from up there. If I didn't know that, no way would I obey. I'm the most stubborn person, I didn't obey anyone. This is someone I fully, fully, trust because he's a saint.

What do you think summarises Shaykh Nazim's teachings? What is his path?

Well, I think for every spiritual teacher their job that has been given to them is to bring people back. And to bring them back because we are such complex people. This Western society -- like Shyakh calls them -- too many 'mind' people, think we can learn everything from books and computers don't take into consideration that what really makes us do things is love, deep, deep feelings. That is what makes us tick. Why did God bother with embodying the Holy Book in a person, a living example. And that is what attracted people, because it has to be on that spiritual level. Every Sufi teacher, any spiritual teacher, their job is to bring people back to their source.

How do you do that?

Well this is an exercise for every second of your life. Because the spiritual body and ego has exactly the same rules as the physical world. It's like you can have a lovely bath but within a few minutes you start to sweat and you're dirty again. It's the same with your spiritual body and your ego. And the ego's job -- and this is what keeps you alive -- that there is this dualistic conflict all the time, this *jihad*, going on all the time inside you, and without that you would be dead. Even the biggest saints have huge egos which is why they have to fast and pray because the higher you get, the bigger the friction gets.

What is a Sufi?

The most important thing is to make your heart as soft as wool which you do by making a lot of *zikr*. Your heart will get softer and softer the more *zikr* you do (it wakes up the angels in your blood). In the old days you would do that in the desert and you would be covered in wool and you wouldn't have show-off clothes.

If you go to places like Africa, every Muslim is a Sufi, they are all very spiritual. And until all the horrible Wahhabi business started 250 years ago, you had similar movements going on in Christianity, you had this age of enlightenment (it was the opposite) where science became very important and anything you couldn't quantify wasn't respected anymore. In the Muslim world, the same

thing happened. These Wahhabis joined forces with the English and the rest is history. Saudi Arabia split up the Ottoman Empire. And if you look, I remember when Shaykh Nazim started criticising the Wahhabis twenty years ago and he went into the Central Mosque and we couldn't understand it. 'Surely that's their business. Some understand holiness, others don't.' Shaykh knew this was the beginning of terrorism. And of course it's happened. If you take these hard-line Salafis or Wahhabis or whatever, for young or any kind of people, if you neglect your spiritual part, if you don't accept religion is also part of your heart, if you put it all into your brain, you have the great danger of wanting to explode in there. And that's what's happened. That is really to put it in a nutshell why we have terrorism today. If you meet these people they are so cold in their hearts and it is so dangerous. Anything that you want to put just inside your brain, you will come to a part where it want to explode. That is what's happening.

Originally everyone was a Sufi. Martin Lings said the same. Everyone who followed Muhammad did it out of their hearts. It was a very spiritual, holy experience. Religion always was. It wasn't until the last few centuries and now you have Wahhabis and Salafis and they arrive in Africa and they want to make Africans Wahhabi and the Africans say, 'what's wrong with you? I'm going to dance and sing when I'm praying.'

What does it mean being connected to the source?

Well I think every action of your awareness, you always have a choice. You will have a voice from down there telling you to do the wrong thing which will probably look really fun and then you have a way which the saints and the prophets demonstrated that if you look into the *shari'a* that is the right way. And this is what makes us and the *jinn* so special. That we have this awareness and this is why the Holy Qur'an is addressed to us and *jinn*. Because our decisions are being filmed and that is what you will watch on Judgement Day. Whereas an animal is just going to go according to what they do -- like the angels and the devils. They don't have any responsibility because there's no choice. But for us -- constant responsibility. And when you go into one of these deep exercises, seclusion and fasting, that is when you will literally see your ego tell you what to do! So this is the constant battle going on.

Is there anything special about Naqshbandis compared to other tariqas*?*

I would say when Shaykh Nazim said we are now *rabbanis*. And now *tariqas* are as good as finished because it wasn't agreed who was the successor. And this is very important because the Naqshbandis have been given this umbrella function because Shaykh Nazim, inshallah, will be there to hand it over to the Mahdi which has to include the Sufis, the Shiites, the Ismailis, the Christians, because when Mahdi comes the question of who will survive the war is not 'are you a Naqshbandi, are you a Muslim, but what about your heart?' And there will be lots of Muslims and Naqshbandis who will not survive the war because of the condition of their heart. You can go into the jungle of South America and find people who haven't even found out about the Ten Commandments and their hearts are mostly looking up. And this is one of the reasons Shaykh Dagestani gave this big job to Shaykh Nazim to start going to the West because the next step, why it is important to be in a place like Glastonbury, because you very much have this living reality that people accept and respect each other.

Jinn

What is a jinn*?*

Jinn lived in this world long before we did. According to our knowledge, creation exists of humans and they are made of clay, then you have the *jinn*, they're made of smokeless fire, then you have the angels, they're made of light, and then you have the devils, and they're made of fire. Now the material of the *jinn*...I mean interestingly enough, the Holy Qur'an address humans and *jinn* so it's a book of recipes of how to live this life for humans and *jinn* because both these creatures have a will power.

Now angels have no will power, they are like a remote control, always doing a good thing. The devils are always doing evil things so...and again, both of them don't have any will power. So the Book of the Holy Qur'an and the rules are addressing the two beings present on Judgment Day, the humans and the *jinn*. Now the *jinn* live much longer lives than humans, they can live for many hundreds of years, which is why...basically, they live a parallel life in the same world we are in, but because they can see us and we can't see them, we can get into trouble with them. For example, one of the rules is that because they're made of smokeless fire, they don't like water very much, so one of the rules is you should avoid doing house work after sunset because after sunset they're very much up and about during the night, so one famous thing is you should never mop the floor after sunset because you might hurt a little *jinny* baby and then the mother will haunt you for a long, long time.

And this is it, the *jinn* can influence us and this is where we have to be careful because they are a bit like amplifiers. I always say in Glastonbury where there are many lay lines, the lay lines are clearly rivers of *jinn*. Because, as we have the physical body attached to this physical world here, we are very much in charge of what is happening with the physical things of this world. But the *jinn* are a bit jealous of that because they had a much greater civilisation than what we did. So when the Almighty decided to make Adam of human-kind, the boss of this world, the biggest *jinn* of all was the one who became Iblis and Shaytan. They got very upset and said 'these humans are going to mess everything up and leave the world in our hands', and God famously replied 'I know what I'm doing'. And ever since...

The way I see what they do to us, they amplify whatever we do. Let's say we are in a place that's highly charged with the presence of a lot of *jinn*, well, we always have to be careful what we do, if we do something good in a place like that, that piece of good will be much, much stronger and at the same time, if we are torn, if we are not in unity with the Almighty and a bit torn apart, then the presence of those *jinn* will make us even more torn apart. This is roughly what is going on, how they influence us in this life and so we take precautions.

The thing is also that because our material body is so completely embedded in many, many, many different dimensions of invisible world, our spiritual job is to clean up that environment, because we are never sitting in a vacuum, we are never sitting in a place that's neutral and this is why Sufis do so much of their time, preferably all of their time, doing *zikr* -- *zikr* being remembering the Lord. Because every time you say a holy name, that holy name is attached to armies and armies of angels. So really, the trick is to avoid the *jinn* or even worse the

shayatin, the devils, to come and influence you, you fill up that vacuum within you with goodness.

I told you what Shaykh Adnan once described the heart is...the Arabic word for heart is *qalb*; *qalb* means a place of change. And he so beautifully compared it to an airport and said that our will power is the control tower and all these influences that come, come like aeroplanes. Us sharpening our awareness by making a lot of prayer, by making a lot of *zikr*, our doing that, we should be able to recognise here comes an aeroplane full of angels; 'yes come, come, stay a long time in my heart' and 'oh, here comes a really dodgy plane full of devils, don't let that even land'. Because every thought we have...thoughts don't just fly around in the ether and we happen formulate one. They have carriers. So if you have a good thought, a really good thought comes to you, a good plan or intention, an angel bought that to you. If you have a nasty idea it is a devil who is carrying that to you. And this why in the Holy Quran they say be aware of the *waswasa* and the *waswasa* is the whispering of the devil. Because his job is...when the world is as it is now was created, he got so upset he made this threat, that he is clearly keeping, he said to the Almighty, 'I am going to until the end of time try to win as many humans over to my side as possible'. And this is his job. He wants to get as many of us over to his side. The only way of stopping him is by already filling our hearts with goodness by making prayers and making *zikr*.

You said about not going out after sunset which is when the jinn *are about. Is it more likely that when you're away from home you'll run into them?*

Well, *jinn* are everywhere. Where we are sitting now there are quite a few jinn here, though in the garden is a good deal because they say that every atom, every living atom, has an angel in charge of it, which is why when you're in nature, and all these atoms of the natural world, every leaf, every flower is just packed with angels and this is why it's so soothing and makes you feel so at peace. But we even have our own personal *jinn* which is given to us right at the moment we're born. This one is called the *qarin*. The *jinn* are in charge of energy so it's actually the *jinn* inside you that gives you energy, but of course the *jinn* being a very conscious being and having a mind and will power, because it's been alive for many thousands of years, has clearly been living with other people before, and this is where the misunderstanding of reincarnation comes from. And when you come into people being psychologically mixed up, schizophrenia is a very good example of that, where the memory or the mind of the *jinn* inside you, your own mind or will power inside of you is so weak, one can take over. So you become possessed or worse case scenario like schizophrenia you can have these two beings living next to each other, like Jekkal and Hyde. Two very different personalities.

So it about making sure you're protected as much as possible?

Again by calling angels, because the angels will strengthen you and your heart. That little *jinn* living inside of you, if that's a praying one...if you have a saint then clearly *the* jinn inside them is a saint too. So that little saint *jinn* will do its own prayers and there won't be any mix up. And this is what was very popular 100 years ago, when they were speaking to the dead at the séances – those were the *jinn* of those people coming back because we are humans, the moment we take our last breath, that's it, there is no more action. We cannot

interact and start talking to people once we are dead. Unless...there's always 124,000 saints alive in this world. When one saint dies, someone else we be completed as a saint. A saint is a different matter, because that person is already complete. And the moment they take their last breath, they don't have to go through any more washing machines, they don't have to go through any hells, they don't have to go to Judgment Day, they then can act as a saint up there. This is why we have intercessions with saints, because they don't really die. So that's the different thing. But any other normal person, when they die, their book is closed. If there's any meeting where they say 'oh, uncle so and so came back and gave this and this message', it was his *jinn*.

Is it Shaykh Nazim who's revealed this? Or is it older Naqshbandi teachings?

Oh, this is general. This is absolutely general. There's two African shaykhs. One is shaykh Abu Bakr and he has fantastic talks. He's on itunes, he has his own little thing there. He lives in London. He was the first imam of Shaykh Nazim is the mosque in St Anne's. He has got the blessing of Shaykh Nazim to be a Naqshbandi shaykh, but he has the full authority from his shaykh from Sudan. I think it's called the Tamaniyya or something. But he has fantastic talks. He gave more than an hour long talk about *jinn*. I'll send that to you. And then there is another African shaykh from Kenya, Shakh Abdl Hamid and he also gives a beautiful talks. I'll send both of those to you. And they talk about the structures of the *jinn* which is very interesting because there's no democracy there. They have sultans and kings and these followers. It's very, very fascinating.

Monarchy

We've talked a few times about the British monarchy. Can you talk a little bit more about that? Why the British monarchy special? Why it's still around when others aren't? What will its future be?

Well, it goes back to the killing of Kane and Abel. That is where one blood line stayed clean and it is from that bloodline that all the royal blood comes. Royal blood is something very, very different. It's like if you compare every atom has an angel so every drop of blood in us has an angel attached to it, and if you're just a normal being, that little bulb of light, depending on how spiritual you are that day, can be anything between 40w or maybe if you're having a really good spiritual day it could be up to 100w. If you look at holy people and holy blood, they can go up to millions of watts. This is why you call them enlightened, because they actually have lights coming out of them. And you feel it. When you are with holy people, you feel this energy and this light coming out of them, and that is very much the case when you meet people like Prince Charles and even Queen. Incredible. The photographs will never give you that feeling. It's just overwhelming. It's the amount of angels in their blood.

In the case of the English monarchy, it's so interesting because their bloodline goes back both lines. Now the holy bloodlines were pretty much separated, went into two parts, to the Arabic one and Jewish one in Abraham with the two sons Isaac and Ishmael. In the case of the British monarchy -- I can give you even the family trees and show you that -- one goes back to King David so fully Jewish and the other goes straight back to Muhammad through Spain. And this is so important because at the end of times they say there's going to be 313 kings and these kings all have to authorised by having the right blood and the English one, having the best blood...and this is from Shaykh Nazim, that at the

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end of times, Prince Charles will be King and not just constitutional monarch but actually be ruling King with full authority over England and the United States.

Why America?

Well, because until they declared themselves to be independent, they were English. Unless of course you go back to the Native Americans, but I mean I think they've been mostly exterminated, that would be the real rulers of that country. But going back as far as this country is, the only royal connection they've got is with English royal family. And they do love royalty there. They're clearly being prepared. The whole celebrity culture is a bit of a preparation!

So is it better to be ruled under a monarchy than a democracy?

Only a monarch who is truly a servant of God. So if you look at the most successful monarchy that there's ever been which is the Ottoman empire. The Ottoman sultans all had their *viziers*, they all had holy people around them, really Sufi shaykhs who were telling them what to do. They would never out of a whim or ego...which of course is what happened in Europe, the people got fed up of these kings who were not at all anymore connected to God or trying to do the will of God. It became a luxury, it became a game, it became decadent and it had very, very little to do with 'I am here to represent God on earth and to be like a vehicle having God's will pass on to my people'.

Has Prince Charles taken bay'at *with the Shaykh or anything? He's interested in Sufism.*

He has never met Shaykh Nazim physically. But there are so many levels of meeting a holy person. It can be a dream...I mean I know quite a few people here in Glastonbury who've had Shaykh Nazim appear in front of them, in the middle of their meditation in the morning. So on what level that has taken place no one knows. But that he is totally aware of what the Qur'an is and what Islam is, so you know from the definition of that a Muslim is someone who believes in one creator and who totally believes that Muhammad is one of the prophets and the Holy Qur'an is a revelation, of course he's a Muslim. But he's not in his position as the future head of the Church of England going to run around saying *la ilaha illallah*, that is very obvious.

Will this happen before the Mahdi comes?

No, I don't think this will happen until after Mahdi comes. I think so. He'll be the last king.

So Prince William has to wait?

Well, I mean who knows how they will share the job? There will be enough possibilities.

<u>King Arthur</u>

King Arthur, you said he didn't die. He's one of these beings who's in occultation, you could say. And where is he resting?

Oh, Shaykh said he's in a cave in Wales, and the way we understood it, it's more in the east of Wales, almost close to the Bridge, around that area. Not

where you would think, St David's, something like that. No, around that corner. Because the night before Shaykh came here to Glastonbury, we were in this very beautiful place called St Donats, at it's an old castle in the south there of Wales which is now an international university. Very, very old castle. And that's where he sat down and started telling these stores. He said, 'not far from here, King Arthur is resting'.

And he's going to return when the Mahdi comes?

This is just speculation...it's an interesting fact that for centuries, every Prince of Wales has been given the name Arthur. Everyone has the name Arthur. And I believe, and whether I misunderstood this or not, at one point we believed Shaykh Nazim to say that Prince Charles is King Arthur, or that this is going to somehow join, or maybe that spiritual body of Prince Charles that hasn't yet come to fruition is the one that waiting in the cave.

Why do you think King Arthur is significant? Is it because of the prophecy that he would rule again?

Well, we have to go back further. What made him...just like the question why is Glastonbury famous at all. I suppose King Arthur is just an embodiment of someone very, very holy. Someone who actually ruled this country like a proper king being inspired from up there. That was his secret. That is why he is still alive. Because he was a complete saint. He didn't really die in that sense.

I guess this is something that's only really significant to the tariqa *in Britain, or maybe even only in Glastonbury?*

No, no, no, no. The fairy tale of King Arthur is worldwide. No, no, no. That fascinates everyone.

Naqshbandis in Glastonbury

How did the tariqa *end up in Glastonbury?*

Well, it was in 1999 that Shaykh Nazim was invited to have a little tour of England. The last two places he went to was in Wales and that castle there in St. Donants, and from there he came here to Glastonbury and...very strong evening in the assembly rooms, about 300 people came. Much more than were allowed. Health and Safety. And it was very fascinating, a few became Muslims and took *bay'at* and so on, but I would say at least 100 people got new names, because this is very often how it starts. That someone gets their heart attracted to a saint like Shaykh... In that evening in the assembly rooms, at least 100 people asked for a name and it was an enormous evening.

And then the same evening we went back, he was staying in the Earth Spirit Centre, and...no, it was the next morning he went to the Abbey, that was where he wanted to go to. People wanted to take him all over, even to Pilton, they wanted to show him the sight of the Glastonbury Festival! And he was not too interested. But, he went into the Abbey and that was something else. He stood there and he was almost transfixed, you can say. He was so infused with this spiritual energy. And then he turned around and he looked at me and he said 'Oh [*name*], ever since Grandshaykh'...that was his shaykh and he passed away in 1973, and on his deathbed one of his jobs for Shaykh Nazim was he should start going in the holy month of Ramadan, he should start coming to

England, and Shaykh of course being the obedient *murid* that he was, he didn't question it.

So from 1974 onwards, he came every single year to London. And it grew. It grew in a big way. First he only had a little group of Turkish people around him, and then the first English people started to come and then someone gave him a house to use, then someone bought a synagogue to pray in, then someone else bought an old church, and really it was like a snowball effect. When I joined It was really big. At least, 200 to 300 people would come from all over the world to live. We all stayed in this old church, this mosque in Peckham, and them later the convent was bought in St Anne's. And every evening at least 200 people would break fast and it was very, very special. And from all over the world, really like a rainbow family, all ages, and the poorest and the oldest, every race you can imagine. It was the most fantastic rainbow family you can imagine.

Then in 1999 he came to Glastonbury and he said, 'you know [*name*], I never understood why Grandshaykh sent me to England. Because of all the followers I've got, the English are the most difficult ones. They are the most stubborn; they don't want to listen to what I say'. And it's very interesting to compare to Germany, for example, where he's got thousands of followers and big, big groups and they all have a shaykh and they're all properly organised. In England, it was more like a commonwealth connection. That while he was in London, he would make connections to people in Pakistan, they would invite him to come to Pakistan. He would make connections with people in Malaysia, they would invite him to Malaysia. People in Sri Lanka...This was the commonwealth meeting place for him to come and visit these people. But the English themselves. The white original English. Very few, maybe only 100 or so. Compared to Germany...ridiculous!

So he was standing there in Glastonbury and saying, 'Now I know why I came to England. It is because of this place. This is the spiritual heart and it is here that Jesus came. And he put the foundations to this Abbey and it is to here that he will return'. [The interviewee describes how a Naqshbandi presence was established in Glastonbury. Due to details which would make individuals identifiable I have omitted this section].

So in the meantime fourteen years later, I would say the complete group, we're probably around seventy people and at least fifty five are women. Interestingly, nearly all of them single. Very few men! Again, because it's so unIslamic. In Islam everyone is supposed to be married. Once you get divorced or your husband dies, within three, four months you marry again. But this is again a sign of the end of times. That women are very much alone.

There's a hadith, isn't there? That a man will be responsible for fifty women?

Although that is something that, especially in Germany, was very widely misunderstood. That when the war has happened, out of seven people six will die in the third world war. And then of the people who remain, forty times more women. Many of these big turbans and beards think 'oh I'll have forty wives'. No. The *sharia* will never be changed. The *sharia* stands until absolutely the end. But what will happen, which is also an interesting phenomenon, that because we will be back in the age of sultans, and there will be 313 sultans, just like during the Ottoman empire, every sultan can also only have forty wives but he can have a *harem* of...um...what are they called...the word is not so

good...the Arabic word is *jaria*, so how its translated in the Holy Qur'an is the one who your right hand possess.

And it is a very interesting subject and it's widely misunderstood, especially in Africa in these days where they still practice it a lot, but they practice it in the wrong way as they think it's a question of money. If someone has a lot of money they think, 'oh, I can have a lot of slaves and I can sleep with them and all this'. Now, in the original way, these were the spoils of war, so these were, well, the captives after the war and they were there for the king to protect them. The good thing about being a *jaria* is, the king carries the whole responsibility, you don't have a Judgment Day. So this is the one the good deal about it. You will not have any Judgment Day. In the Ottoman empire, another nice thing was if you became pregnant and that son became the new sultan, then you were the mother of the sultan. It's a whole subject for itself but it's quite interesting.

Are there any other tariqas *in Glastonbury?*

We're the only Muslim one. There is this really lovely group around Irena Tweedy and that's led by Jackie and they have lovely meetings on Fridays. They do a lot of dream interpretation. I knew Irena Tweedy myself – she was a very, very holy lady. I think if she had been sent back by her teacher nowadays she would have been a practicing Muslim. But when she came back from her very strong training, which she really describes beautifully in her book *Daughter of Fire*, that was in the 1950s and in the 50s the West was not ready for Islam. It had to recover from the Second World War, it had to go through a very strong period of materialism, and the sex, drugs and rock and roll. It really had to go through that illusion of freedom to then, like me and many others, almost crash completely to say 'please God, how can we get to you?'

And that is why Shaykh Dagestani sent Shaykh Nazim to the West?

Yes, exactly. Because there's also the hadith that in the end of time the sun will rise from the West.

Because in the east...well, not everywhere, there's still some very deep believers, especially in Yemen and places like that...very much in this newly civilised Pakistan of whatever...Pakistan is a whole other drama because of that awful form of Islam, but in many parts like in Africa you have this urge to be Westernised and there of course, especially with all this tourism turning up and all this drinking, some naive people then think 'they're doing very well aren't they'. They think we in the West have holidays not two weeks of the year but fifty-two weeks of the year. That's the very tragic part, especially with this wrong picture of television and advertising. All these people who risk their lives creeping into Europe through Africa and then ending up in very, very terrible lives. So that's the shift.

So you've got about seventy murids in Glastonbury?

Yes.

Do they all attend zikrs...

Well, we have different *zikrs*. We have the ladies *zikir*, that's the strongest, once a week on Wednesdays at half past eleven. But even there I'm really quite happy that not all fifty turn up all in one go. We have a few regulars, maybe six

or eight who always come. But it always works out quite nicely that on average we're about fifteen who turn up. Then we have the once a month *zikr* in the Margaret Chapel and then we have once a month in the Abbey house. And the men, they meet sometimes on a Thursday evening. We do have out of those seventy people, there is probably around ten who don't want to mix with anyone. They are going through whatever they are going through. You might see them once during Ramadan but they are keeping themselves to themselves. The others...

Are quite active?

Yes very.

So with the Glastonbury branch, there are other branches, aren't there, in London and Sheffield...

I would say in England, I don't know, probably thirty or forty at least.

But not everyone is involved with each other are they?

No, no. And this is the thing I noticed when I first stayed behind in London then when Shaykh told me to live there in the centre in St. Anne's. Until then I had just been travelling with Shaykh around the world, I was living with him in Cyprus. I was used to this picture that Shaykh was there and there would be 200 people there all joined together in this lovely big family. And then the first time I stayed behind in London and Shaykh went, I couldn't believe it, in London alone, there were 25 different Turkish ladies *zikrs*. Because the moment Shaykh left, this one didn't talk to that one, that one didn't talk to this one. At first I was really sad, and thought 'what's happened? Everything's splitting up', and then I thought 'no, he is the only one'...like you need to have a king to keep a whole kingdom united, because its only one person who has that ability, who's been given that ability to join everyone. And you shouldn't even...even here in Glastonbury you have some people where this person doesn't talk to this one...in the beginning I was really sad about it, but then I thought 'no, this is ok, it's only Shaykh Nazim who's supposed to join them all'.

Because everyone is so different. The beauty of this *tariqa* is that it is like a rainbow family, it's not all the obvious difference that Pakistanis are very different from Malaysians and Malaysians are really different from Africans, and we Europeans are one big mix up, just like we eat Chinese one day and Japanese the next, we are kind of mixed up. But these other cultures, they are still very strong. You look at the Pakistani community in this country and some of them are here for three generations and they still only eat Pakistani food and they still only wear they're Pakistani clothes, so you know, for that, you need one figure head on top. So it doesn't really matter, it has to be like that.

So in Glastonbury, would you say you're fairly autonomous, just going to Cyprus, are you involved with anyone in London...

Oh no no no. Not involved with anyone in London. Only with Shaykh Nazim. That's more than enough. More than enough!

Do you think there's anything particularly special about the Glastonbury branch or different, if you compared it to the Turkish branch for example?

The big, big unusual part...there are many unusual parts. Maybe 80% women and maybe three quarters of those are not married, so that makes it very, very unusual. But you know, people who are drawn to Glastonbury are very freedom loving people. They're absolutely normally the opposite of Muslims. So for them even to take this step of saying 'yes, I should ask Shaykh if I can get married, I should ask him is I should travel', they are not people who generally want to be told anything. And that was really difficult for me in the beginning when Shaykh would pass on something I had to say, and I've now long learnt I should never say anything straight out, just do it from behind! Make people believe it's their own idea.

But then again what I'm learning more is that Shaykh really influences everyone. And everyone is on such a different level. It's like in the beginning when you're new on this path, you do only pray once a day, the first three years or so if you're a slow learner. Some people jump right in and pray five times a day. But just like it takes a long time to stop drinking or smoking or having a boyfriend or whatever you have...and that's why it's nearly impossible like it was in the old days of a Sufi *tariqa* you would have one Shaykh...in other *tariqas*, what they used to do when people would come, they would give that person, usually men then, a year off, the *tarqia* would pay for their wife or whatever responsibilities they had, and that one year they were given to learn all their daily *zikrs*, the daily routine, and to get used to it and to make that part of their daily routine.

In Draper and Yemelianova's article, they mentioned in passing something about the Glastonbury tariqa *having been targeted by a false shaykh? Does that mean anything to you?*

I have to say in the 14 years we've been there's been more than one. We have these people popping up claiming all sorts of things, yeah. It's part of the Sufi training that you have to learn so you don't fall into the trap of following the Anti Christ. Oh, we have people coming up with all sorts of claims, we had one a few years ago saying 'oh you are now on the level you don't have to fast, you don't have to pray, you're beyond that.' We still have people in town who are following this. He comes to see Shaykh Nazim. He does pray when he's with Shaykh Nazim! But when he comes to Glastonbury it was this big thing a few years ago. Maybe that was it. Although Draper's study was a while ago, but this latest one, my god did he waste a lot of time, that is only about four or five years ago.

Why is Glastonbury important? Why did Shaykh Nazim send you to Glastonbury? Will it be safer in Armageddon that anywhere else?

Well the more obedient you are the safer you are. And if he tells you to sit on the Empire State building then that's going to be the safest place for you. That's within itself. Glastonbury goes back beyond Jesus. Anyone who says Glastonbury is fantastic because Jesus came here, you do have to go back an extra step and say why did Jesus bother, especially if you listen to Shaykh Nazim's version where Jesus didn't just get dragged along by his uncle. No, he actually came on his own in those most spiritual years of 30-33. He made the effort to go there.

So what I personally notice are the lay lines and the lay lines for me are rivers are *jinn*. So you have this situation where the other world meets this world, very

much like you have in Jerusalem. We could sit here for days and days about the speciality of Glastonbury and we wouldn't even get one percent of what it's really about.

And also King Arthur, who Shaykh Nazim takes very seriously, and his whole connection to the royal family, Shaykh Nazim even said to me Prince Charles is King Arthur...it's so beyond our understanding how all these worlds come together, how these fairy tales come together. But you know Glastonbury being the place it is, most people in the country would say King Arthur is a fairy tale, King Arthur is very official, so official that they've even put a grave there for him. Of course Shaykh Nazim doesn't agree as he says he didn't die, he's in the cave. But I think it has to do with all these lay lines coming. Did I read this to you last time? This beautiful little piece about why Jerusalem is so special, and I think this very much applies to Glastonbury too and then of course did those feet in ancient times. Blake was no fool. He knew something was going on there:

'Kabbalistically, the temple was built on that spot because the energy of the ground on that place has the greatest connection to the force of creation.'

Mitchell is his name – wrote a lot about sacred geometry. And that's very much what's going on in Glastonbury too. And if you go back into the fact where people used to build churches and cathedrals and that fact the Abbey was built where it was and it was the most thriving Abbey until Henry VIII came, there was this knowledge about very deep forces of creation.

And it is of course also connected to the royal family. What makes England so special is that they are connected to both bloodlines. That they have a continuous line from King David and the Prophet Muhammad so Abraham comes together again.

And that's why Prince Charles is so special. And now there's a new baby, Prince George.

But the interesting thing there is that it's the first in many many generations the first Prince of Wales who doesn't have the name Arthur, but I suppose by then King Arthur will have returned.

Do you think that's why Shaykh Nazim felt that Glastonbury was special?

You know, many people come to Glastonbury now on a religious level, and say, "Ooh, this is so special because Jesus has been here!" Now, Shaykh Nazim's version of Jesus having been there went much further than the official legend, which is that Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus by the hand and took him there. Shaykh Nazim-- Which, obviously I'm sure that also happened, but Shaykh Nazim went much further and said that Jesus was there during his time of full spiritual power, which was between the age of thirty and thirty-three. And that is much more interesting because he went there voluntarily and, you know, he just had to say *bismillah* and he could travel wherever he wanted. But you then have to go much further and say, "Why did he bother? Why did he come?" I mean, now it's famous because Jesus has been there, but why did he come? And it must have to do with these ley-lines. It must have something to do with that. I suppose.

Yes - and especially this very important fact that he was given-- Shaykh Nazim was given this job to go to England on the death-bed of Shaykh Abdullah Daghestani, and he just - like you're supposed to when you're a good *murid* - he just listened and followed. But it was so extraordinary when he then, twenty five years later, stood there in Glastonbury and just looked bewildered and said to me, "all these years I've been coming to England because Grandshaykh told me to, but I never understood why," and he said, "Now that I'm here in Glastonbury I know, because this is the spiritual heart and it is to here that Jesus will return."

And this of course also has to do with Prince Charles, and-- He had this whole sacred reality that this island has, you know - the whole of England, it being the on-- well, not the only country; I think Morocco and... and Jordan also have Kings that lead all the way back to the Prophet Mohammed. But this country is so special because it's not only leading back to the Prophet Mohammed, but also to King David, you know - that has got both lines. That is what is so extraordinary. And I think that's also one of the very important symbols with Glastonbury, that it really is-- and the person, Jesus - is the only one that can join the three religions together. Because if Mohammed had come back the Jews and the Christians wouldn't be bothered, and if Moses had come back the Christians and the Muslims wouldn't-- well, they would show respect, but you know - they wouldn't see it as necessary to follow. Jesus is of course the only one, because he is Jewish, the Christians should follow him, and he will pray like a Muslim - so I mean, it's the perfect package, really.

The End of Times

The way I was told to put it into a very short little nutshell, the Third World War will break out by the Russians marching into Turkey. That will start the Third World War. One of the first things that will happen is that the German's will attach the Russians, and the Japanese will attack the Russians. This just puts it in the picture that it's an east-west thing again. The war will last for three months. The *jinn* are already very much under the control of the Mahdi, who is all ready alive and hiding down there in the empty quarters – the land between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. He's protected by all these *jinn*. They are having a solid thing around him, nothing can get close. And the one thing so that no one can get close physically is that the *jinn* have produced these quick sands around him. And again, *jinn* have to do with movement. Once we were travelling and there was this whirlwind and Shaykh was looking and he said 'that is a wedding of two *jinn'*.

Anyway, coming back to the war, the war will last three months. But there will be nuclear bombs but it will be totally out of control because the *jinn*, good *jinn* who are directed by the Mahdi, will...say each bomb will have a name written on. And if it's written for you to be protected, and even if a bomb goes straight into central Bristol and it's written, 'no, Rhiannon is protected', the *jinn* will send that bomb up to goodness knows somewhere else. So the protection will already begin then.

At the same time, Shaykh has prepared us, for a long, long time he has told us to move away from towns and cities. Be self sufficient and above all, make sure they can get water from somewhere. But interestingly, years ago he said we should have enough food for three months. He then recently, well about a year

ago, went down to forty days. Then it went down to twenty days. And some people started thinking 'oh, the war's going to be shorter than we thought'.

But, this happened at the same time of this miraculous story with the miners in Chile. They went through a real interesting meeting with Shaykh Nazim down there. Some of them, not all of them, saw Shaykh Nazim down then and when they came up went to Lefke, took *bayat*. But the interesting example they were giving, because all of them were extremely religious, catholic to begin with, they really had faith when they were down there and they had the will, they wanted to survive. So they started having these tins of oily fish down there and when it started and they had no idea how long it would take, they started rationing and they each just had one spoon a day. Then as the weeks went on, they were there for seventy days, after a week or so they said 'look each of us can have a spoon every second day'. And it was incredible because of this mixture of faith with being totally, spiritually infused with energy, they were able to survive for weeks and weeks with just one tiny spoon of fish every 48 hours and hardly any water. So that was a good story.

So back to the war. It will last for three months. It will end by the coming of the Madhi. The Mahdi and the Anti-Christ will appear roughly at the same time. This is what I was told. And their job will be to make the final preparations for the return of Jesus. Because for those people who have survived, everyone will have to choose a side. No one can sit on the fence anymore. So the Mahdi...well, first of all the Anti-Christ. He is the really dangerous guy because he will appear to be Jesus. And he will be extremely handsome, he will be sexy, he will have loads of money, and he will be doing magic. He will go to the cemeteries, he'll pull up the dead, make them alive, all these tricks.

So many, many people will think 'this is it, this is Jesus. Hallelujah, here we go'. The Madhi will be very difficult to follow because he will be almost hidden. He is not allowed to show his powers, not allowed to do any kind of miracle or anything like that. But this is the moment where it's very important to be connected to someone like Shaykh Nazim because that will stop you being drawn to the wrong guy. Because from the people who survive the war, most people will follow the Anti-Christ. Only a small, small group will follow the Mahdi. And the Anti-Christ will be very much like the pied piper. Lots of music, but the wrong kind, the one that appeals to the ego, not brings you up the Lord. And he'll be going around from village to village, they say there isn't one pot of civilisation where he won't turn up. And this is why we've been told, when he comes, and this is what we're already practicing, not to leave our homes is, in those days, you shouldn't even throw your rubbish out, because if he happens to walk past with his wonderful sex appeal and you happen to throw out your rubbish at that moment, he will like a vacuum cleaner, he will suck you in. And you will follow him, like the pied piper. So that is the time where you just stay at home.

And at the end of those forty days, whether that is the total shift of the north or the south pole, whether it's the reaction of lots of nuclear bombs having exploded up there in space, but this is the time when they say that in these forty days, these forty days are longer than forty days because they say that the first day is as long as a year, the next day is as long as a month, the next day is as long as a week, and the next like days. So in all in all it's about fourteen months

we're talking about. But for this to happen, something must be going on up there. And I think this is when we're going to have this shift, probably.

And when that has happened, Jesus will come back. And this is the good news, for people who are connected to Shaykh Nazim, when these forty dangerous days begin, when the Anti-Christ is recruiting, Shaykh Nazim will send out, like a message from heart to heart when you're connected to him, 'it's time to come to Damascus'.

That is the time when believers who are with the Mahdi will be gathered in Damascus and Damascus will be one of the places where the Anti-Christ will not be allowed in. There is this famous moment when we're getting ready for the morning prayer at the tomb of John the Baptist who you know was the teacher of Jesus, so that is why this is the place where Jesus will physically return, at that tower there. And so we're just getting ready for the morning prayer and the Mahdi is about to lead the prayer when Jesus comes down. And he will be exactly dressed as on that evening when they came to arrest him and then mistakenly put Judas on the cross. And he'll still have the same sweat and he'll still have the same orange clothes. He'll be coming down and the Mahdi who knows what's going to happen, rushes forward to him, and says come come come you lead the prayer. And he leads the prayer and that is the moment when he practically becomes a Muslim. And this is so important because to unite the people of the book, Jesus is the only one who can do that. Because he's Jewish, Christians who haven't fallen for the Anti-Christ should follow him, and the Muslims, every Muslim will accept him and follow him. And then he will...here comes the important part because this time he is coming with a sword.

So he's coming with a sword. Now I've always believed he was going to go from there to the Topkapi museum and pick up the sword that belonged to Muhammad but lately I've been listening to Shaykh and it sounds...or whether he's just saying it like that...he says he will be coming with the heavenly sword. So whether he's bringing it down...well it's just a technicality. But anyway, with that heavenly sword, which interestingly a bit like Excalibur if you come back to Arthur, he will take that whacking sword and go to where the Anti-Christ is. And we already know that at that moment in time the Anti-Christ will be in Egeddo. And this is why it's called Armageddon. Megedo are the big, big planes and there are a bit outside...it's in what's now Israel...so I think it's just outside Nazareth, so it's in there. And they already know under which tree, and some silly people who did not realise there won't be any more electricity, they've spot lighted this tree. And it is under this tree that Jesus will kill the Anti Christ. And the moment he kills the Anti-Christ...because we're already living in the age of spirituality, all the energy that's so far been put into electricity and technology will be in spiritual power. This will be a time where in the blink of an eye you will just be able to go from here to there just by saying *bismillah*. So with that spiritual power, Jesus kills the Anti-Christ and all the people who have sworn allegiance to the Anti-Christ will die with him.

And then come the forty years...I still haven't understood why they say one thousand years in the Bible and forty years here, I don't know, but in any case according to our books it's forty years, Jesus will rule this world and it will paradise on earth. But it's not the end. Because locked behind this wall of copper and iron and glass are these nasty Gog and Magog. And they were

locked into this other reality because they were really ruining this world in a big way so they were locked away so they would be stopped. But right at the end of time, exactly when Jesus dies, and this is an interesting time because even though Jesus has all these good, good believers all around him, we are still human, we are not in paradise yet, it will be like paradise on earth but because Gog and Magog are locked up there and the devil isn't finished yet, during these forty years, there will already be some developments of people turning a bit nasty because that is the nature of humankind.

So when Jesus dies, there will be this cloud of basil around the world. And all the people who've managed to stay completely holy, they will die so they don't have to be there for the very very end. And when they are dead, Gog and Magog will come out and they will eat everything, everything, and every human being, and that is the end of times. The absolute end. Then we will all meet, but it will be such an incredible day that you won't even notice you are there with everyone who's ever been created, I don't know zillions of people, you'll all be naked but you won't be ashamed because you will just be busy with your book. And that is also in Damascus.

And that is what I find so fascinating, that the first big sin happened there with Kane and Abel. That you have this cave next to this incredible cave which I've seen where the mountain just screams when this first sin happens and there's this very red water, like blood, full of iron coming out at the exact spot where Kane killed his brother. And right next to it is...we'll slightly above it...is this *Arbaeen* where these forty holy people meet every night. So you've got the worst place on earth and the best right next door. And you've got this huge battle there these last two years which is not going to stop until Jesus comes. And it's the same place where Judgement happens. It's really a power place.

So what's going on in Syria is significant?

This is what the devil has been planning for centuries and now he's got all the countries involved. He got the Chinese, he's got the Americans, he's got the Russians, he's got the Iranians, they're all there. That Assad doesn't have a clue. He doesn't have a clue what's going on. Poor guy, but that is clearly what was written for him. But that is the stage for the big Big. I mean, why have the Russians had a huge navy fleet for I don't know how many years? Why have the Iranians been so busy there with their weird Hezbollah and this whole business in Lebanon that's been going on for years and years? It's all building up to this.

Will Shaykh Nazim live to see this? He's quite elderly now.

Yes. I'm quite convinced he is the one leading up to Jesus.

If he was to pass on, presumably like Shaykh Daghestani he'd still be present in a way...

Well of course.

He'd take part spiritually...

Well, this is this whole group of people who're going to come back when Mahdi comes. The people who are now living behind the mountain of Qaf. And the

people living behind the mountain of Qaf, they are these super saints who will in any case come back.

Is the best way to make it through al-dajjal to be with Shaykh Nazim?...

No I think...

...Is he the most accomplished to protect people?

No. For me, from the information I've been given, I don't have a choice. I really don't have a choice. From the information I've been given, when the *murid* is ready the Shaykh will appear. Now you have people who are extremely close to God who could be living on a small ocean in the Pacific who've never even heard about Moses. They can overnight be given info and they will be connected. It all depends on what kind of info you've been given. I could never have a good life by saying 'I don't care about Muhammad, I really don't care about Moses, I'm going to go and be a Buddhist'. That wouldn't do it because my belief is so strong that I can say I know for a fact that all this is truth. It's gone beyond belief, it's knowledge. I know that this is a fact. The Holy Qur'an was revealed and there isn't one drop of doubt in me. I have weak days when I think, 'oh, I'm not going to pray today'. Of course, that's my ego, that's my privilege or my burden of being a human. But the fact is there.

Shaykh Mikhail said yesterday we are in very dark times. Is a lot of what is happening the work of a shaytan?

Of course! Because especially in the last 100 years and probably since the first world war, especially here in the West where technology and these terrible ways of destroying mankind have now been manufactured, invented and manufactured, this goes hand in hand with a few generations of people not praying actively any more. This big thing of science vs religion which I was very affected by when I was studying in the 70s, I mean, I was bought up as a catholic but my friends and I, we quickly decided to become atheists officially because that's a sign of being intelligent. And this was what counted. So if you have a big active part of the world not praying not evoking angels to come in, you will have devils in that space because again, we are not living in a vacuum.

And their job is to draw people away from God?

To destroy. There's nothing that the devil loves more than war. People killing people. That is how it started with Kane and Abel. That was the big, big first terrible thing that happened on earth, one brother killing the other.

Shaykh refers to Shah Mardan a lot in his sohbats. Who or what is Shah Mardan?

Shah Mardan is another name for Ali. And I...Shah Mardan...I have to look it up, it is Ali, and what is fascinating about it is many things. Firstly, he is the founder of the Shiites and we of course are Sunnis. And about two or three years ago, Shaykh started making a very big point about us also being Naqshbandis but beyond that, also being *rabbanis*. And *rab* is the Lord and *rabbanis* are people of the Lord. It includes all religions, well, the three Abrahamic religions but also, you meet more and more Hindus who will tell you they believe in one creator. Anyway, so this was interesting because it then opened up the doors to the Shiites.

At the time he started using this Shah Mardan what was interesting, if you watched the videos, Shah Mardan is actually appearing in front of him, so it is like a conversation he is having with Shah Mardan. Two years ago Shaykh Nazim...he's much physically weaker now, one of the reasons things are happening...but during one of his talks which normally last about 40 minutes, every time he mentioned the Prophet he would physically stand up and people would say 'what's going on, what's going on' and he would say 'he's there, he's actually there', he's seeing the Prophet at the moment.

If we could see him at that moment we would probably stand up too, but now we've come to this exactly the same time when this situation in Syria became very, very serious, Shah Mardan started appearing. Now in Syria, a lot of things are going on there, but one of the things is the Alawites, the president being one of them, and they are a very special form of Shiite, so if you don't want to get into the Russians and the Chinese and the Israelis, if you don't want to get into all of that and you just want to stay on the religious level, it is ultimately to do with Shiites and Sunnis. Which is also why Iran is supporting Syria.

So one of the first things that happened when Shah Mardan came out was that Shaykh was constantly, or is still, daily trying to make these people understand that they are not following Ali. That Ali is against this war. That he doesn't want this thing to be happening, that he is against, well, anyone who is a *rabbani* will not think that it is alright from a moral point of view. I mean from a moral point of view in Islam you're not even allowed fire weapons. You're not allowed a gun, you're not allowed a bomb, you're not allowed any of this. And, in the Christian point of view you have the just war rules which are just like in Islam. You are never supposed to have anything to do with civilians. You are not even supposed to attack, you even have to have eye contact, you're not allowed to attack from behind, you're not allowed to stand so far away that...and your opponent has to have the same weapons. There are so many rules and none of these are being kept. But in this case, there we have absolutely now the countdown to the third world war and as we have been talking about for a long time, the last 99 signs that were given to Ibn Arabi, the last one was that the Russians will march into Turkey.

And this very interesting thing that happened before Ramadan, that the Israelis were actually allowed to use a base in the south of Turkey to, which they did, actually attack a Russian arsenal in Turkey. And this, if you turn back the clock to two years ago, when the Israelis sank that ship on the way to Gaza, and they stopped having any ties, so for them now to be helping...because of this Sunni Shii thing, you have the weirdest alliances.

But coming back to Shah Mardan, the other very interesting point about Shah Mardan, which again opens up the umbrella and puts the final preparation for the coming of Mehdi, that from the 41 *tariqats*, 40 of those all with their *silsila* go back through Ali, and it's only the Naqshbandis who go through Abu Bakr al-Saddiqi. So, with this, not only has Shaykh opened in a true *Rabbani* style for the Shiites to join but all the other *tariqats*. So it's an absolute opening up and, yeah, making those people understand that Shah Mardan...

Oh now I understand. Shah Mardan is very interesting symbolically, I think you can google it...it is that double edged sword that Ali used...it's a very special sword to do with Mardan, yes, it's sword with two...

...Sayyid Ali was the one who was using this and undoubtedly it was like the magnificent sword we are waiting for, that Medhi will use and Jesus will use to kill the Anti-Christ, which is directly from Muhammad. But the other interesting thing about Shah Mardan, so many interesting things about him, he is of course, and Fatima, they are the beginning of all the *sayyids* and *sharifs*. Now *sayyids* and *sharifs* are the direct decedents of Muhammad because of all the wives he had the only ones to produce grandchildren were they. And you have the sayyids, one of them comes from Hussein and the other Hassan. One of them are sayyids and the others are *sharifs*. They are the direct, so any one, including our royal family here, anyone who have a claim to be one the 313 sultans ruling this world, they go back. So just like the father in the wider sense, Abraham is the father and grandfather of all the people of the book, so when they say, well it's a fact, Mehdi is a direct descendent, Ali is his great, great grandfather.

And then of course even greater grandfather is Muhammad himself. But that puts him also in the family line in a very important position for the end of time.

Do you think it's possible that this could be averted? I mean, if Shaykh Nazim's calling to everyone to realise they're acting in a very terrible way, and if people were to listen and turn round, would the end times be stopped?

That would be very sad. That would be very sad if it was stopped.

Is it inevitable?

Oh yes! It is one of those things that is written. The only thing that with big events that is written, the only thing where Allah can change is the timing. He can change the timing. It's just like Shaykh Nazim very much excepted it to happen when Saddam Hussein marched into Kuwait and now it's been explained that one of the reasons it had to be delayed for another 23 years is that the Alawis, the holy people, were begging, begging, begging for it to be delayed because there were so many potential believers out there to join the boat. It's Noah standing there, the arc is ready and there are still some people way behind who haven't made it yet.

But the event in itself, there's no changing that. There's no changing that Jesus is going to come back. There's no change that the Russians are going to march into Turkey. All of that will happen. But, just as every Christian would say to you, only the Lord knows the time.

So especially before the year 2000, Shaykh Nazim talked about the change, the spiritual awakening that's going to come across the world. He still talks about that but I think maybe less than he did before the millennium, and this spiritual awakening and change, will this always happen after Armageddon or is this change possible without the war taking place?

This is already taking place. This is what you notice a lot in a place like Glastonbury and all spiritual groups in the world are very much aware things are changing. And a new age never comes in a block like some people thought in the millennium. No, it's always floating in people. Some people will be ahead and others behind and so on. And just like we in ourselves have so many different levels of awareness. We can have extremely spiritual moments when

all this is very clear and we can have moments where all this is down to earth. The same with history.

What's the general feeling in the tariqa*? Events going on in Syria seem to match up quite closely with what Shaykh Daghestani and Shaykh Nazim have been saying for a very long time, do you think there is an expectation?*

Well you can never generalise, you know? There are hundreds and thousands of followers of Shaykh Nazim and it is so many different levels. Some people probably for their own reasons stay tourists all their lives, kind of just come once a year for a little *zikr* and it doesn't really affect their daily lives, and other people have given their lives to be on this path and so I think you have all shades. But is also depends psychologically on how much people can carry. There are people who are very fragile and who don't want to go there and they shouldn't go there because you should only get what you can carry. So I don't think there's any general..., no.

If we go back a little to the year 2000, what was it like around then, SN said a lot about the change will come a lot around the year 2000, the year 2000 will not be completed, what was it like being in the tariqa *back then?*

I mean, you could now afterwards...because many of the things that Shaykh Nazim says or many of the things that happen in your life generally, you don't really understand, or you understand better the more layers that become aware to you...but you know, it could also be that maybe, that in his funny language, this mixture of Turkish and Arabic and English, not being that good in English. Maybe he was meaning now we are in the year 2013, so maybe he was saying within the year 2000 because there is of course...but also now you are there maybe I should sit down and work it out, we once worked out, we had a very lovely little timetable with exactly when it would start, based on this very important *hadith* that Muhammad said after his time there would only be one and half fingers and we then found out each finger was 1000 years so it was exactly 1500 years.

And there of course we are now of course in the year 1443 coming up, but then there are these really interesting...where you know that the war will be for three months, then there will be 40 days, but that is already when time becomes a bit wobbly, the forty days of the Mahdi and *al-dajjal*, because we know with nuclear bombs things will have collapsed a bit, so the first day is one year, the next is like a month, the next is like a week, and like days, so it's actually 14 months until Jesus comes back. Then we've got the 40 years of Jesus being here, then we've got the 40 years (is it?), it's the time when after Jesus has died and all the world gets covered in this cloud of basil, and all the people who have remained believers in their hearts and with Jesus, then comes the terrible time of Gog and Magog who will eat up the world. That's what I have to remember, find out, how long that takes. Then it's the end of the world.

So there are ways...but we're not supposed to know. It's getting ready time that's clear.

Did anyone leave for the tariqa *after 2000?*

Yes. This is an interesting point. Within being a Sufi you will be trained to a point where you just want to scream and run away and some people do that.

Whether it's this or big things that have been going on, big big things. But the interesting thing I have been observing for 30 years is they all come back. They all come back. Some people stay away screaming and shouting and telling horrible stories, some people run away for a year, some for ten years, some for twenty. But Shaykh has said everyone who goes will come back and I'm seeing it. I can't prove percentages and there maybe are a few still out there screaming and shouting and who knows when their time is, very interesting.

In regards 2000, was there a bit of disappointment?

Well the other thing that happened which was quite interesting was that because Shaykh connected it with a personal responsibility, when he stood up there in St Anne's in 1999 and gave this very strict talk about the war was coming and it was connected to the order, it wasn't a suggestion, it was an order move away from the towns, move away from cities, go out into the country, and the most shocking thing he said was, to all the Pakistanis and everyone who was there, he said go back to your home country. And people are like 'but I was born here, this is my home country'. But shockingly from those hundreds, even thousands of people there listening to this talk, only ten people did it. 'Oh I can't leave my business, I've got a mortgage, my son's going to school'. They had so many excuses there was really only a handful who listened straight away, sold up, moved to the county, became farmers.

What do you think that means for the people who stayed? Are they in for a bad time now, the cities get attacked, should they have heeded the warning...

Well I got a very interesting letter from someone yesterday saying 'I'm still in this flat', he lives in Sheffield, 'I'm still in this flat and I'm getting worried about what's going to happen. Toilets. I won't be able to eat, I won't be able to use my toilet will I?' He was really worried about his toilet. And he's a bit psychologically sensitive so I didn't want to make him too nervous so I just said 'think of the miners in Chile', which was a big miracle and of course one of the reasons Shaykh said have food for three months and it's now gone down to twenty days. So I said 'look, if you keep your heart connected to Shaykh you can hopefully be on the level of the miners and just one spoonful every 48 hours will be enough and you could always go out to the park...'

Are you prepared? Have you got your food?

Oh yes. We constantly renew. Little trips to Lidl. But it has changed through the years, we grow wiser. We realise, I mean, I have as little as possible that needs to be cooked for example, you don't want all this mess with fires, so you have oily fish, that's a very good thing, I learnt that from the miners, and then more tins, tins of beans...And instead of having high hopes of baking your own bread and goodness knows what others were thinking about, you just have crisp bread, peanut butter, the things you like. But you do need to go in there every few years and check.

How important is Shaykh Nazim's eschatology and apocalyptic teaching to you? Is it important in your life?

Yes and no. If you're being very realistic, if you're being a good Sufi, one of the first things you learn is that you have to be prepared for death, you should have death in a suitcase ready to go on the journey at any time. You should as a

Naqshbandi remember death twenty times a day. Each turn you meet is part of the shroud in which you are...you really should be prepared at any moment. You can be dead at any second.

Another part of the training is to still, not to, as some Naqshbandi's in 1999 went out and took huge loans on credit cards and really got in trouble. To still continue like Jesus said, even if you know the world is going to end tomorrow you plant a tree. You have to right until your last moment do your best with the abilities Allah has given to you.

<u>After Shaykh Nazim's death</u>

I was one of the people who took it really for granted that Shaykh would hang on there, because he was always telling, well, you know - he was always describing all the different practical things he would be doing when Mehdi comes. Or he said when Isa *alayhi s-salam*, when Jesus comes, he says, I'm the one, I'm going to cut his hair, and I'm the one who's going to do the *Nikah* when Jesus gets married. And you know, it was all very practical - he, the body of Shaykh Nazim, would be doing this. At the same time, we were very aware that it was going to be a completely different reality, because this is the time after technology, this is the time after electricity, this is the time when Shaykh Nazim is going to be forty years old, not ninety-whatever, and where the whole world will be - overnight - completely different. But that it could also mean that, someone like Shaykh Nazim - I almost have the feeling he's gone into a changing room, you know? I mean, for me - I do not for one second have the feeling he is dead. And it's not that I'm in denial, it's not that - but he's so... almost physically present, for me. And I think it's the first time in my life that I've experienced the official death of a Saint, and you know how they always say Saints don't die. And how one of the things which makes it a bit complicated when you think about relics of Christian Saints, when they carry the bones around - and I get really confused, because one of the things that I've been taught is that the way you can check whether someone is a Saint or not, if you open their grave after 300 years it will look as if they've just been put there, because nothing decays because there is this life still in them. And this is really the feeling I had with Shaykh straight away - yeah, there was this "Hmm...", but the same moment he was just so, so, so, so present!

So that was my very personal experience, which is really increasing from day to day - this thing that... we were always told that, yes, Shaykh will send you-- *Allah* will send you a test, and three times a day you are under observation, Shaykh will zoom in and will see how you behave in that test. I have to tell you - I have a feeling as if I'm under a 24/7 CCTV camera. Honestly!

He's like... next to me - I don't feel alone any more, I feel he's really, really there! And you see, for me an important thing which I then relived when this happened with Shaykh was: when Raja Ashman, this Malaysian prince, he passed away... well, in March it was two years ago. And he was extremely close to Shaykh, and he was really the one, and there was this incredible meeting, the last meeting he had with Shaykh Nazim - this was before Shaykh Nazim started getting very ill, so this was in January 2012. Raja Ashman, whose father at some point was the King of Malaysia, and where we went there for the coronation and all that. And so Raja Ashman, he came to Cyprus in January 2012; with him he had a

Malaysian minister, the Malaysian Minister of Transport - the same guy who's now, you know, really in trouble with the disappearing plane.

But in any case - so, he came there, and these were the days these were the days when Shaykh Nazim, poor thing, always had a camera on him - especially during his meals. And there was always these very special, select people who were allowed to come to eat with him, and have the camera on them too. So there they were and the camera was on, and this was Shaykh Nazim, and this was the Malaysian Minister, and it was Raja Ashman - and Shaykh Nazim is praising Raja Ashman in front-- and saying to the Minister, "Oh, Raja Ashman - he is going to be the *Wazir*, he's going to be the one leading the whole army of Mehdi and *alayhi s-salam* in the Far East, he's going to have an army of 70,000 following him, and he's got this job, and this job, and this job..." And the Malaysian Minister is sat there, you know - impressed!

A few weeks later, Raja died -- asthma attack, 52 years old: gone. And I got very confused, I got really confused, and Shaytan was in my head big-time, you know - *waswasah*, whisper-whisper, "Well, there you go - he was supposed to be doing all these jobs, now he's dead. Hmm - is this whole story even..."

You know - "Is this really gonna happen? Mehdi *alayhi s-salam* - is this really gonna happen now one of the main players is dead?" And after two days of that, scrambled up there, I phoned Shaykh Adnan and I said "Shaykh Adnan, I'm very, very, very confused..." - you know...

"What's going on?"...?

"...Raja Ashman's supposed to be the *Wazir*, and now he's dead." He said, "Raja Ashman was a king-sized *alwiya* - a Saint! He's not dead! And he's gonna be coming back!" I said, "Really?" He said, "Yeah! All these big, big Saints are coming back!" and he said, "Abdul-Qadir Gilani..."

[gasps]

Yeah!

Ibn Arabi?

Yeah! "All these big, big Saints are going to be here at the time of Mehdi alayhi s-salam." So he said, "Don't worry - he's up there, he's arranging things... don't worry, he will be back." But, you know - after he said that, it didn't even once occur to me that the same thing could happen to Shaykh!

And all the time, when Shaykh was making these *duas* and saying, "Oh *Allah*, please let me be there when Mehdi *alayhi s-salam* comes," I somehow thought he means non-stop, he's gonna be there. It didn't occur to me, "No, he's going to go and come back." And it was really when he then - now just little more than two weeks ago - passed away. And it all came to me - I thought, "My god, why didn't I get the message? Raja Ashman was a bit like a rehearsal to what's going to happen with Shaykh Nazim, and it is fine!"

When they say he's-- they're going to come back, is it going to be them like as we are, physical and corporeal, or...?

Well - Shaykh Nazim, for example, is going to be forty-four. No - forty years old.

But he'll be a physical person?

Yeah.

Not just like a spiritual force?

No, no, no, no, no, no, no!

 [in reference to Shaykh Mehmet] - *So he's officially the Shaykh of the* Naqshbandis *now?*

Yeah, yeah-yeah-yeah. But somehow - I haven't been listening to all these little talks - but I heard that he himself had said, "When you make *medit*," - meaning, when you connect - "connect to my Father, don't connect to me." So, I... I don't know, I keep thinking that... I mean, who knows, who knows? Maybe he will develop into-- I don't know. But... I see him more a bit like a technicality.

Like a holder.

Yeah, you know. That he is someone-- yes, when it comes to, you know, "Should I now consider to get--" - you know those three things you have to ask? Marriage, divorce, or a long journey? Sure, I'll ask him, and I will assume - really believe - that he is connected, getting the message from the reserve tablet, that this should happen or this shouldn't happen. And I don't know - with new people, now, who then come in and who've never met Shaykh Nazim or anything like that, maybe he will play that really important role -- one of the needs to have a living Master is that he embodies the hadith, that you don't sit and read in a book, "Oh, you walk with your right foot into the room," - no, you watch your Shaykh and you see that is what he does, so that is what you also do. So there will probably be a difference between newer *murids* and older *murids*, and all that. But at the same time, who knows how short the time is, you know?

And considering we've got Mehdi *alayhi s-salam* around the corner, anyone who listens to news will know that it is imminent. Whether it takes a few weeks, months - maximum seven years - it's happening. And it doesn't matter - whatever brings us closer to *Allah*, you know? We don't need to be cautious. No need. It even has the advantage of really bringing in more people, because people are so diverse now. How important it is that each group is kind of left alone, because they're all so different. You can't impose one style on everyone.

Appendix Three: Rabiah on the significance of the omphalos

Can you tell me about the omphalos?

So, when Shaykh Nazim came to Glastonbury in 1999, the only place he wanted to visit was the Glastonbury Abbey. And he came in there, and we walked all around, and then he stopped in front of the Omphalos which is there in the corner outside of the Abbot's kitchen. And all he said - he pointed at it and I wasn't aware of the significance at the time - he just said "This has been brought here by Khidr alayhi s-salam, and it comes from the Holy Land." Khidr *alayhi s-salam* being the, you know, the one who never dies.

Who met Moses.

Yes. And in the English tradition we have kind of worked out that this is also the Green Man.

So then a few years later - it must have been several years later - we had a Shaykh from Kenya, Shaykh Abdul Hamid who at the time was the imam of the mosque in St. Anne's, and he came to visit in Glastonbury, and we took him around and showed him the Omphalos. And on that day it had rained, so there is a dent on top of the stone and that was filled with water, and he just stared at it and he said, "Look! Doesn't this remind you of the *Maqam Ibrahim*?" *Maqam Ibrahim* is the footprint of Ibrahim - of Abraham - which is right next to the Kaaba in Mecca.

You can look in and there is actually, on a stone, the footprint of Ibrahim. And it looked very similar. So Shaykh Abdul Hamid, being on quite a high level, he then said, "Well, I'm going to go inside and pray to *rakats,* and just pray on it and see whether this is true." So he then came out after a few minutes and he said, "No, it's not a footprint of Ibrahim *alayhi s-salam* - it is the footprint of Isa *alayhi s-salam*" - of Jesus. And we were very surprised, and I went home and I phoned Shaykh Nazim and I said, "Shaykh Nazim, this is what Shaykh Abdul Hamid has said," and Shaykh Nazim confirmed it and said, "Yes, that is true." Then, again, a few years later Shaykh Bukhari, he was in Glastonbury, so I took him there to the stone and I said, "Look, Shaykh Bukhari - this has been confirmed by Shaykh Nazim that this is a footprint of Jesus," and he just stood in front of it and he was in absolute trance. He was staring at it - must have been several minutes - and then he came back and just said that he'd had this vision that the stone was directly connected to Jerusalem - this is going in, and going out of the stone was, just like Jacob's Ladder, a ladder leading up to Heaven.

That's what he said. And that, of course, brought this very interesting-- I mean, many interesting stories; first of all the fact that there was a footprint of Jesus there, and you then think about the song "Jerusalem": "And did those feet, in ancient times..." Blake, obviously, was a man of visions also who could see a lot of things. And then the very fact that this stone has been brought from Jerusalem does remind also of the Stone of Scone, which of course had exactly that function - that while Jacob - Israel - was sleeping on it, he had this dream that there was a ladder going up to Heaven, and as we know this is now the stone where the coronation has been taking place and will take place, and which has now been brought up again to Scotland. So whether these are now

sister stones, or-- ? But I do see a real strong connection between the two of them.

It also brings the story that-- this whole point of Glastonbury being a kind of Jerusalem. I've always thought that it has something to do with the End of Times. Shaykh Nazim told us -- he held up and orange one day, and he was then pointing to the top and the bottom and saying, "This is the North Pole and this is the South Pole," and then he twisted the orange around just forty-five degrees so that the top and the bottom became the Equator, and he said, "This is what is going to happen at the End of Times when the magnetic fields get changed." And this is something - an occurrence, roughly... roughly every twenty-four thousand years - and this is what's actually happening right now, that every-- well, twenty-four thousand years or so, the magnetic field has to be recharged: so, let's say the plus of the magnet is in the North Pole; it will then swap over and become the South Pole. And while this is happening, this is also one of the re-- this is already happening, slowly-slowly, which is one of the reasons why there are so many Northern Lights and magnetic things happening in the atmosphere.

Personally, with this whole question of, "Why is anyone even suggesting that Glastonbury could be the new Jerusalem?" The reason why it is called the Holy Land - and the Holy Land is much, much bigger than this ridiculous little Israel and this tiny little annex of Palestine - the Holy Land as it's described in the Old Testament goes all the way from Damascus all the way to Baghdad, and then it goes all the way down, including Saudi Arabia, including Yemen, including a small strip of land from... from Egypt; and this is physically the axis on which the world turns. And it is because of that that it has enormous magnetic pulling power - and physics and spirituality, they are always connected.

You know, in Glastonbury they often speak about that the ground is very thin, and that you have these connections to the outer-worldly... well, faeries we'd call them, *jinn*, whatever. But this is part of the whole business with the ley-lines and all that. And, I mean, who knows? If now, really, the world swings over forty-five degrees, then you'd have a completely new piece of land which will be the axis, and maybe that is Jerusa-- maybe that is Glastonbury.

Glossary

Adhan	The call to prayer
Ahlan wa salam	Welcome, be at home
Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a	People of the Sunna and Community
Allahu Akbar	God is great
Arbaeen	The Forty
Awliya	Friends of God
Aya	Verse of the Qur'an. Also translated as 'sign'.
Banu Asfar	Blond people
Baraka	Blessings
Bayt al-mamur	The much frequented house. The place the angels visit in Heaven
Ba'ya	Allegiance, in Sufism given to a shaykh
Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim	In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful
Bushra	To give good news
Caliphate	An Islamic 'state' ruled under a Caliph according to Islamic Law.
Al-Dajjal	The deceiver. A figure who will appear at the end of times and draw people away from Allah. Also translated as Anti-Christ.
Dar al-Harb	The realm of war (place where Islam is not practiced)
Dar al-Islam	The realm of Islam
Fana	Annihilation. A mystical experience in which the mystic loses themselves in the Divine Presence.
Hajj	Pilgrimage. One of the five pillars of Islam.
Hijra	The Prophet's migration from persecution in Mekka to safety in Medina.
Insha Allah	If God wills it
Isa	Jesus
Jalhilliya	The state of ignorance that existed before Islam.
Jihad	Struggle for God. Also associated with holy war.
Jihadi	One undertaking jihad.
Khawarij	From the group Kharijites. Used to describe an early group of Muslims who split from the community.
Karamat	Miracles

madhhabs	School of law
Mahdi	A messianic figure who will appear as a sign of the approaching apocalypse.
Mehdi	See Mahdi
Maqam Ibrahim	Footprint of Abraham
Malaika	See *malik*
malik	Angel
mi'raj	The Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey into Heaven
Muharram	First month of the Islamic calendar
Mujaddid	Renewer
Murid	An individual who has given ba'ya to a shaykh.
Nafs	The self. Used in the Naqshbandi-Haqqaniyya to refer to ego.
Rabita	Binding one's heart to a Shaykh
Salaf	The first generations of Muslims who practised Islam in the manner of the Prophet.
Silsila	The chain of authority in a Sufi order leading back to the Prophet Muhammad
Shahid	Martyr
Sharia	The law proscribed by Allah for humanity
Sohbet/sohbat	Sermon
Sura	Chapter of the Qur'an
Tafsir	Commentary on the Qur'an
Tajdid	Renewal
Tasawwuf	The practice of Sufism
Tariqa	Commonly translated as 'brotherhood' or 'Sufi Order' and used to refer to a way of practicing Sufism under the guidance of a shaykh.
Tahwid	God's oneness.
ulama	Relgious scholars
umma/ummah	The worldwide Muslim community
Wali	A friend of God. Sometimes translated as saint.
Yajuj and Majuj	Gog and Magog. End Time figures who will cause havoc throughout the world.
Yawm al-Qiyama	The Day of Resurrection
Zakat	Alms. One of the five pillars of Islam.
Zikr	Rememberance of God.

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