



## Chapter 5

# Participation in the Real

### *The Healing Power of Breath, Words, and Things*

Breath is the principal power needed in healing.

—Hazrat Inayat Khan<sup>1</sup>

Healing is hidden in the effects of healing. But there is one requirement. You have to say, Allah!

—Sheikh Eşref Efendi<sup>2</sup>

Music, dance, art, therapy, medicine, psychology, and spirituality can find connections with each other. They can enrich each other and support the physical, mental, soul, and spiritual healing process.

—Andrea Azize Güvenç<sup>3</sup>

Once a week, usually on Saturdays, I lay down on my bed, listening to the voice of Khidr, my primary Sufi teacher, guiding me in the practice of the weekly Sufi healing meditation. It is an audio recording that I have been listening to at least once a week since 2013. The instructions are always the same, and the deep-throated booming voice of Khidr is still the voice I knew when he was alive. Yet, every Sufi healing meditation session brings the unique challenges of the day and the past week. Practicing regularly has made it easier for me to concentrate, the moment I put on my headphones. Yet, as I write the final lines of this book, translating a Sufi healing practice for uninitiated (and first-time) readers, remains a challenge:

Stretch out on the ground or in your bed and relax. Make sure that your spine is straight. Breathe deeply and let go of all tension and stress. You don't have to believe in any part of the following text, but it is required



**Figure 5.1.** Things and elements arranged for the Inayati healing ritual (*Heil-ritual*), 30 May 2014. © Nasima Selim. The image shows the healing symbols of water (in a glass), life (a freshly plucked flower), earth (amber stone), and air/prayer (an incense stick on the left and the *tasbīḥ*—prayer beads on the top) spread on a golden yellow cloth with the Inayati winged-heart symbol. Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat retreat at Haus Schnede, Salzhausen, Germany.

that you be open-minded and open-hearted and, above all, willing and clear to use this tool by just listening or reading or both and doing this Sufi healing exercise exactly as indicated and explained here. It is not required to convert to anything. You don't have to become a Muslim, or any type of believer, or enter the Sufi path to do this healing exercise. Just do it! The sole purpose of it is trying to help you with your health. However, for the time of the duration of the exercise, you should be willing to link up with the energy of the Sufi Tradition and the source of all life and allow it to have a positive impact on your body and being. (recorded, 12 October 2013)

Khidr, the postmigrant Sufi healer, offered this Sufi healing meditation for everyone who was “willing to link up with the energy of the Sufi tradition.” For a “positive impact” on the “body and being,” we must participate and allow the “energy of the Sufi tradition” to



do its work. Whatever may happen in a healing session of this kind, is a matter of intimacy with the Real. As an anthropologist, it is difficult, if not impossible, to articulate what happens in these intimate encounters. But the questions such healing encounters raise, are worth asking.

How are the subtle-material bodies transformed through Sufi techniques? I return to the question raised in chapter 3 to ask: How can Sufi techniques of transformation lead to healing? How do they provide existential resources in dealing with suffering? Sufi healing practices not only involve the enactment of bodies with the techniques of transformation but also implicate a nonhuman being known as *al-Haqq* or the Real. In this chapter, I seek to address the above-mentioned questions by framing Sufi (healing) practices as participation in the Real.

To breathe, move, and dance is human, and music is “humanly organized sound” (Blacking 1973, 10; Hannah 1979). Breathing, dancing, and moving can become a way of being religious, as a form that mobilizes the body in diverse traditions (Gaston and Gaston 2014). However, instead of regarding breathing, sounding, and movements as purely aesthetic forms, we can think of them as techniques of the body that generate the possibilities of inner transformation (chapter 3). Such transformations may lead to postsecular imaginations of healing, cutting across the strict domaining of religion, medicine, and performing arts.

## Postsecular Sufi Healing

Most anthropologists consider healing to be different from curing. Healing is a generic term for practices that address various forms of suffering. Healing practices, address the “cognitive-discursive” and “embodied self” to be effective (Seligman 2010, 298). Sufi healing practices are “medicine of the imagination” (Kirmayer 2014, 42), exerting the performative effects of breath, words, sounds, and the things they mobilize for the metaphorical and sensorial transformation of the subtle/material (and mindful) body (Scheper-Hughes and Locke 1987). Quintessential Sufi breathing practices, such as *dhikr*, combine the discursive allusion to the metaphysical (breathing) Heart and its embodied enactments with bodily techniques to create the possibility for healing transformations (chapter 3).<sup>4</sup>

Creating healing conditions requires bodies to be present in the performances of breath/ing, words, sounds, and things. In Sufi healing practices, certain words become materialized sounds imbued with sacred meaning and ardent articulation. These sounds are subtle and fragile. Soon after breathing out, speaking, and hearing words, they evaporate. Even when sounds are recorded and later retrieved, they no longer belong to the same order nor the same material as in their immediate utterance. Repeated participation ensures the retention of breaths, words, and sounds. Objects are matter in space, and there is no questioning their materiality. As soon as certain objects (e.g., sound-making instruments and the *tasbīḥ*/prayer beads) are re-assembled in (Sufi) ritual action, they become energized, enlightened, imbued with subtle/spiritual power drawn from utterances. Repeated participation in the company of these things reveals to the participant that more than the human senses are present in such events.<sup>5</sup> Breaths, words, sounds, and things are mobilized toward healing in the “presence” (Desjarlais 1996, 152) of the Real.

“Things are either spiritual or corporeal, since they may also be *barzakhī*, that is to say, neither spiritual nor corporeal but somewhere in between” (Ibn Arabi in Chittick 1989, 14). While imagination is a faculty that provides meaning to the sensory forms, the imaginal realm is *barzakh*—transforming boundaries and creating diverse conditions of non-dual possibility. The “corporealization of the spirits” and the “spiritualization of the corporeal bodies” happen in a *barzakh* or the imaginal realm (1989, 15). Without imagination and the spiritualization of the corporeal bodies, a healing ritual (*Heilritual*) cannot occur. One must develop the capacity to imagine and ultimately become a subtle/spiritual body receiving healing energy from the transcendental/immanent Real. During *sohbet*, one must learn to listen as much as imagine that the breath, the glance, the words, the movements, the physical presence of the spiritual guide, and the objects one mobilizes are entering one’s subtle body, bypassing the mind to reach the “seat of knowledge”—the subtle/spiritual (breathing) heart. Like the human body, breath, words, things, and the sounds the body makes, are both material and subtle/spiritual. All these breaths, words, sounds, and things are assembled in the Sufi healing practices as *barzakhī* entanglements of participatory performances.



## Participatory Performances of Healing

<i>Wer die Wesenheit kennt, erkennt die Wahrheit:</i>	Who knows the attributes of Being, recognizes Truth:
<i>mit den Ohren ALLAH hören,</i>	Hearing ALLAH with the ears,
<i>mit den Augen ALLAH sehen,</i>	Seeing ALLAH with the eyes,
<i>mit der Nase den göttlichen Duft riechen</i>	Smelling the divine fragrance with the nose
<i>und mit dem Mund ALLAH sprechen.</i>	And speaking ALLAH with the mouth.

In the Islamic tradition, one of the ninety-nine names of Allah refers to “the Real” or “the Truth.” At the beginning of my fieldwork, I found the above-mentioned poem circulating through the leaflet of an Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat healing seminar (1–3 March 2013). A few months later, the same poem appeared in an announcement for the music-and-movement therapy seminar of Tümeta-Berlin (18–20 October 2013). The poem embodies the Real, engaging the senses. The affective, sensuous world of Sufi practice involves breathing in and out, uttering and hearing words and sounds, and making sounds with energized things. They require “tasting” or *dhawḳ*—a technical term for intuitive sensory perception in the classical Sufi discourse. It is the power of such aesthetic perception that moves the heart, with direct experiential knowledge, distinct from discursive knowledge (Ridgeon 2015b, 134; Rahman 2012).<sup>6</sup>

What is considered *dhawḳ* in Sufi discourse has to do with participation in any enactment of Sufism if afflictions and the problems of living (including secular and religious suffering) are to be healed (chapters 2 and 4). In the context of Sufi practice, the ninety-nine names of Allah (*al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā*)<sup>7</sup> are tasted as breaths, words, sounds, and things in recitations, spoken words, hushed/silent breathing, and inscribed objects. Finding healing necessitates learning how to resonate with these names. Learning how to participate in the reality of all things may require stepping away from an everyday secularist or prescriptive, literalist confinement of religiosity toward opening up one’s body to the healing power of expansive Sufi practice, resonating with the breaths, words, and sounds of the names of the Real.

Ritual healing is often understood as an event belonging to a certain genre, taking place in specific acts, with the rhetoric of persuasion through which the participants come to share the perspective of the ritual leaders (Csordas 1996, 96). Khidr's weekly healing meditation instruction was meant for individuals in the private space of a home, lying in bed. The Inayati healing ritual (*Heilritual*) was performed by the Inayati network in private gatherings, to be practiced alone or collectively. The Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sheikh Eşref Efendi delivered public lectures (*sohbet*) on healing attended by a few members of the network, guests, and outsiders/newcomers. Tümeta-Berlin's music-and-movement therapy was a monthly event, accompanied by a few members and occasional outsiders/newcomers. These events are constituted by acts drawing from bodily, sonic, visual, material, and textual repertoires with the inspirational rhetorics of persuasion.

### ***Learning to Feel and Inhabit the Elsewhere: The Inayati Healing Ritual (Heilritual)***

The *Heilritual* plays a crucial role among the Inayati Sufis. Spiritual healing is among the five core practical dimensions elaborated by the founder Hazrat Inayat Khan.<sup>8</sup> The *Heilritual*, also known as absent or distant healing, is designated as a “selfless spiritual service” without any financial transaction.<sup>9</sup> When *Heilritual* takes place in its localized embodied sites, it becomes an event that cannot be repeated, although the ritual structure is often repeated.

It was a spring afternoon in 2013. On this particular Thursday evening, a small group of mostly white German women gathered in a local kindergarten after working hours. Sandra, a senior member and dance leader in the network, opened the door and greeted me. I usually attended the practice in Pankow, but hearing that there was going to be a *Heilritual* here in Charlottenburg, I decided to join. Conversations were taking place in German (fieldnote, 16 May 2013).

A few moments of hushed silence hung in the air before Murshida Rabeya led the Inayati invocation in English and German: “Toward the one . . .,” ending with *Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim* (In the name of Allah, the beneficent the merciful). A table was already prepared with water, a freshly picked flower, *tasbīḥ* (prayer beads), amber, and an incense stick standing on a piece of yellow cloth (fig-



ure 5.1). Murshida Rabeya repeated the invocation and read out a text from Hazrat Inayat Khan, titled *Die Reise zum Ziel* (The journey toward the goal). Her voice was low, steady, and calm.

She discussed the basic questions on the path to healing and spoke of the pitfalls resonating with the concerns of the six *murids* (Sufi students) who gathered there. The novices struggle with a lack of patience, and therefore the most important skill to learn is how to keep going (*durchhalten*). Later, the advanced *murid* might experience pride on the way, having made progress in acquiring knowledge of the path, and therefore gratitude and humility are key lessons to learn. As Murshida Rabeya continued to read, we were cautioned of the possibility of falling back to a previous state, either through a lack of patience or too much pride due to achievements on the path. We were told that no one could take anyone along on that path but could only offer meaningful advice. To get a better grasp of the text, I asked if I could read it out again: *Der Beginn auf dem Weg ist immer schwierig und uninteressant. Es ist schwer für jedermann . . .* (The beginning of the path is always difficult and uninteresting. It is difficult for everyone). After I finished reading it out loud, the silence appeared again before dhikr began.

Murshida Rabeya led the following dhikr with *Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*, at first slow and monotonous, but later the repetition rhythm became faster and deeper. We passed a huge *subḥa* (rosary of prayer beads; Pl. *tasbīḥ*)<sup>10</sup> connecting our bodies. We were moving the upper parts of our bodies from left to right. Gradually Murshida Rabeya toned down the dhikr, and we followed her lead. Breathing slowed down until there was only breathing in the silence. The next rounds of dhikr were led by someone else in the circle who uttered a few words in Arabic followed by short translations in German: *Subhan Allah – die Reinheit, die Unvermischtheit des Göttlichen!* (The unmixed purity of godliness); *Al hamdulillah – Lobpreisen und Danken an den Göttlichen* (Praise and gratitude to godliness); *Allahu Akbar – Gott ist größer als alles andere* (God is greater than everything else). The three phrases were repeated in various scales going up and down. In those early days of fieldwork, I was often breathing unevenly, making sounds out of tune, and struggling to keep up with the others. The round was short. We sat with closed eyes on our respective cushions. The third and final round was a dhikr of *La Ilaha Illallah Hu* with a collective dance.

A few minutes later, we toned down the dhikr and were breathing deeply; a somber and hushed *La Ilaha Illallah Hu* was coming from the deeper parts of our chests and not just from the throat. We ended with a long *Hu* and silence. We were still holding on to the huge string of prayer beads, which was huge enough to be held by everyone in the circle at once like a rope. As we counted and moved the beads, each member uttered what she wished to say that evening. I was not prepared, but when my turn came, I blurted out the first few verses of *Al-Fatiha* (the Opening) from the Qur'an that I had memorized in my childhood. Marianne, a regular participant in the dances, took up the guitar and played a tune to which we joined. Then we took turns to make the sound of *Hu* again: *Hu Allah—Hu Allah—La Ilaha Illallah!*

It was now time to put ten names of people who were sick on the healing list. Doris, a regular participant in the dances, said she had two sick children. The others entered the names of friends, relatives, and people they knew and cared about. I requested to put the name of my dying aunt on the list and prayed for her peaceful death. We repeated the invocation at first in English. Then a few more times in German, accompanied by a new prayer. Afterward, we sat through a period of silence. I could hear only the sound of shifting bodies, after which each name on the list was uttered slowly with attention, followed by a longer, deeper silence. We were supposed to listen to the names, and allow our bodies to open up healing routes in silence following the utterance of the names. Three of us now uttered a final prayer, *das Heilgebet* (the healing prayer). In gratitude, we repeated another name from the list of ninety-nine names of Allah: *Ya Shakur! Ya Shakur! Ya Shakur!* (supreme gratitude). At the end of the healing ritual, we stood up and went around hugging each other with deep tenderness.

In Pankow, one of my main field sites is where the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat healing rituals take place on Mondays in a small group. Renate, one of my key interlocutors in this Inayati network, was passionately interested in the healing ritual and took part in it often (chapter 2). I asked her to describe how she experienced the ritual. Renate kept saying, "Difficult to say!" Upon my insistence, she described how it was about feeling connected to a "collective energy":

When one sings with others, one is connected with the others. I feel the connection with others also through the voice, the collective energy, and the collective sound. I find that beautiful! This bodily movement with





each other; yes, I am connected with the others, even when finally I do not know them . . . That is, for me, a totality. (interview with the author, 7 May 2014)

From our conversation that day, I found out that Renate had navigated the path of secular biomedicine in her quest for healing a chronic debilitating illness of the joints for a decade before she began to combine prescription drugs, psychotherapy, and Sufi practice. Renate practiced silent, everyday dhikr uttering “*Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi*” (O divine healer, O divine medicine) in the subway on her way to and from her workplace.<sup>11</sup> Breathing in and out of these words, she would feel their healing power. Despite her chronic and often debilitating illness, Renate took part regularly in the collective dances and the healing ritual. She learned not to seek healing only for herself but also for others (see also chapter 2). Like Renate, most Inayati interlocutors practiced the ninety-nine names of Allah in their healing quests.

“Consciously or unconsciously, every being is capable of healing himself or others,” Hazrat Inayat Khan ([1989] 2010, 88)<sup>12</sup> emphasized self-healing. The healing ritual, whether it takes place in Berlin or elsewhere, re-enacts these words and the concept of self-healing. Hazrat Inayat Khan placed self-healing at the top of the hierarchy of healing, above the level of being healed by others or using natural remedies. Sufi practitioners must heal themselves by “*iman* or faith” through developing self-confidence, breathing techniques, and concentration practices. These healing methods employ material objects and written forms of sacred words ([1989] 2010, 89).

“[H]umans communicate with a host of nonhuman beings in a world that is itself communicative but not symbolic or linguistic” (Kohn 2015, 314). The nonhuman can be made palpable in reality, in contexts studied by anthropologists. The Real can be conceived as an all-encompassing, nonhuman being, what Ibn Arabi and other Sufi/Islamic thinkers would refer to as the Being/the Real. In the context of Sufi practice, the ultimate and nonhuman Real (Allah) is itself communicative. What is required is to learn how to resonate with the Real, to feel and inhabit the Elsewhere (Selim 2020a; Mittermaier 2011), in the utterance and silence of the *Heilritual*, the dances, the walks, breathing and reciting the names in dhikr, listening to the *sohbet*, allowing the sounds produced by energized things

in *sema* to resonate with one's body, and the active/passive practice of Sufism informed music-and-movement therapy.

During *Heilritual*, the Inayatīs sit together in a circle to create a collective body and transmit healing energy from Allah. They dance with simple steps and breathe-recite the names of Allah. What about a practice where words constitute the speech acts that require responsive listening for healing to take place? In the next site of Sufi practice, the Haqqani-Naqshbandi *sohbet*, the healing power of words and sounds invoke the Real in a context where Qur'anic hermeneutics is at the center of inspired speech acts.

### ***Healing Companionship in Conversation: The Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sohbet***

There are words that have so much energy that when you hear them, they stay with you for life . . . That much energy is contained in a word. The word is the secret . . . When you discover this secret, . . . a word like LIVE or BE, *Kun!*<sup>13</sup> How much energy is in that? Indescribable energy! (Timur Efendi on *Hu*, Sufi-Center Berlin, 17 May 2013)

*Sohbet* is a Sufi devotional practice of “companionship in conversation” (Silverstein 2008, 118).<sup>14</sup> During my fieldwork in Sufi-Berlin, *sohbet* in the Haqqani-Naqshbandi (and Tūmata-Berlin) network was simultaneously an oral and aural practice in which the expert (Sufi teacher) spoke to an audience who listened, in private and public settings, in large and small gatherings. *Sohbet* often took the form of questions and answers after the leader/teacher had delivered an inspired, contemplative lecture. During his *sohbets*, I frequently brought up the matter of healing for discussion with Sheikh Eşref Efendi at the Sufi-Center Berlin (2013–2014) and the Haqqani-Naqshbandi retreat (2014) in southern Germany. Conducting a formal interview seemed inappropriate, but asking a question during *sohbet* offered an opportunity to participate in the practice. In that sense, the dual apprentice reworked the Sufi *sohbet* as an ethnographic method (see chapter 1).

Sheikh Eşref Efendi spoke to a large audience about healing.<sup>15</sup> He cited a Qur'anic verse, which was also the epigraph of Sheikh Nāzīm's Book of Healing: *Wenn ich krank bin, heilt mich der Herr* (When I am ill, the Lord heals me, Qur'an 26:80). The sheikh em-



phasized what the ultimate utterances (from the Qur'an) have to do with healing:

This verse ["when I am ill, the Lord heals me"] can be recited by an authorized person to someone sick . . . We must recognize our limits/boundaries and should not play God. And we should also not pray to the medicine, the surgeon's scalpel, or the physician. They are all media to reach the goal . . . From the beginning to the end, we should pray: "Allah, you are the healer, who heals." (*Sohbet*, 20 April 2013)

This resonates with the utterance of the healing breath meditation of the Inayati Sufis—*Ya Shafi*, *Ya Kafi*—as well as the Tümata teacher Oruç Güvenç's *sohbet* (see later in this chapter) on the ninety-nine names of Allah and the contemplative utterance of the healing word, *Ya şifa* (invoking healing), as well as the healing phrase that Khidr practiced very often (*Ya Shifa*, *Ya Salam*, *Ya Wadud*—invoking healing, peace, and compassionate love). I make this comparative point here to suggest that resonating with Allah as the ultimate healer is not restricted to Sufi Muslim spaces, but cuts across diverse Sufi sites and interlocutors, whether in Inayati places or the more explicitly therapeutic sites, such as Tümata-Berlin or among the nomadic Sufis, like Khidr. Beyond the divine causality of healing, this Haqqani-Naqshbandi *sohbet* also tackled the nagging question of where to locate the healing effects:

The suggestion for healthy living and healing when you are sick will be provided to you. But you are not supposed to become sick, you should live in health. So learn first to live healthily, so that you do not need to fall sick . . .<sup>16</sup> Whatever you do, . . . when you drink, say before you drink: In your name, O Lord, *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim* . . . If this is too long, just say Allah and drink! Say Allah and eat! Pray before and after eating! Wash your hands before eating, and also afterward . . . so that everything, all that you eat and drink, makes you heal. Allah has hidden healing in nature . . . You do not need to look for it elsewhere. The healing is in the effects of healing. There is one requirement: you have to say Allah!

The sheikh made a compelling point about tracing healing in the effects of healing. Following the rules of nutrition and hygiene is not sufficient. While one must find healing in fruits, bread, plants, and elements like water and the earth, the sheikh placed the central requirement to be an utterance. Not surprisingly, it is the word "Allah" that appears again.



**Figure 5.2.** Sheikh Eşref Efendi in conversation with his students during a Sufi retreat in southern Germany, 22 April 2014. © Nasima Selim.

Later I interviewed a few of those who participated in that healing *sohbet*. Their narratives (Ayşe, Abu Bakr) draw attention to the powerful effects of inspired speech acts and attentive listening to a discourse that allows the audience a reiterating relationship, a possibility of being healed, whether they suffer from daily problems of living or chronic illness. During his *sohbets*, whether in Berlin over the weekends or the Easter retreat in southern Germany, on various occasions, the sheikh said, “If you have an illness, first see the doctor and then come see me.” However, he always emphasized that the greatest healer was Allah.

One year after the Berlin healing *sohbet*, I was once again listening to the sheikh at a retreat in southern Germany (figure 5.2). The conversation moved from enjoying the elaborate meal (breakfast) to the question of cooking and the importance of “symbolic” cooking. The sheikh often called on someone from the audience and used his or her life example to instruct his crowd about the possibility of healing. I wondered what happened to those who listened to the sheikh’s words with such attention, even if their stories did not always become examples of public instruction. What did they learn,



and how? A few months later, an engaged member of the Sufi network, Ayşe, explained to me that one had to learn to listen *with* the heart. If the heart allowed the words of the sheikh to enter, healing could take place:<sup>17</sup>

Everybody who sits in a *sohbet* with a sheikh . . . hears the words of the sheikh. And many notice what happens with them . . . The heart is operated on, yes, the sick places and the sickness is always in the hearts, says our sheikh. The heart is operated on through the words of the sheikh. (interview, 21 July 2014)

The “ethics of listening” in Islamic contexts of audition (or hearing) has to do with a range of practices that engender the “felicity conditions” for such modes of listening (Hirschkind 2006, 85). If certain conditions are not met, “the listener will not be able to adopt the attitudes, the dispositions of the heart, upon which successful and beneficial acts of audition devolve” (2006, 86). The Haqqani-Naqshbandi *sohbet* in Muslim-minority Berlin and the sermon cassettes on the streets and mosques in Muslim-majority Cairo do not speak to the same audience, and neither do they mobilize similar content. Yet both modes of listening and cultivating constitute what Charles Hirschkind called the “disposition of the heart.” The heart discourses that circulate across Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority societies bear family resemblances with Sufi Islamic underpinnings in these healing practices.

The actions of the hearer/listener and the speaker demonstrate “forms of involvement performed by parties within evolving structures of talk” (Goodwin and Goodwin 2004, 222). The *sohbet* utterances require responsive listening. The sheikh becomes present as an inspired speaker, and the audience is present as attentive listeners engaging with the bodily cues that the sheikh initiates, to laugh, to add vocal resonance to his flowing speech, and breathe with him during the *dhikr* in the beginning and at the end of the *sohbet*.

Most of what the sheikh said during his *sohbets* resonated with the words of his teacher and the leader of the global Haqqani-Naqshbandi network, the late Sheikh Nāẓim. In the first parts of his book, Sheikh Nāẓim recommended concrete prescriptions and their use in the order of illnesses, symptoms, and medicinal substances. As a disclaimer, a medical doctor’s testament was published in the book stating that the readers should pay attention to the “spiritual”

doctor (sheikh) with a comment on the limits of the healing knowledge of the physician. The final chapters of the book focus on the spiritual healing substances: Qur'anic verses (for example, *al-Fatiha*) and the ninety-nine names of Allah (the beautiful names, *al-asmā al-ḥusnā*) as “help, refreshment, and healing substance” (Nāzīm 2004, 167). Healing is supposed to happen when humans incorporate the divine qualities expressed in these names.<sup>18</sup>

What is evident from the *sohbet* and the grounding text mobilized by the Haqqani-Naqshbandi network is that there is juxtaposition and de-differentiation of the religious and the medical. As far as the Sufi sheikhs are concerned, they navigate both spaces and do not shy away from combining what they consider physical, mental, and spiritual.<sup>19</sup> According to the Haqqani-Naqshbandi sheikhs, daily living consists of fluid navigation, not rigid boundaries.

### ***“Old Tradition Newly Discovered”: Tümata-Berlin’s Music-and-Movement Therapy***

In Sufi-Berlin and related sites, connecting verbal discourse with practice is done by a skillful assembling of bodies, breaths, things, and sounds. With time and repeated participatory performances of invoking the Real, such arrangements reveal a re-imagined juxtaposition of “Turkish Sufism” and “Central Asian Shamanism” in Sufi healing practices.<sup>20</sup> There is a distinct therapeutic orientation informed by the imagination of a golden age of Islamic medicine and Arab-Ottoman *makam* music therapy.<sup>21</sup> This (indigenous) tradition of music therapy and Central Asian sounds and movement forms has inspired Tümata-Berlin to practice AOM (Ancient Oriental Music-and-Movement Therapy; *Altorientalische Musik- und Bewegungstherapie*), a form of music-and-movement therapy (Güvenç and Güvenç 2009; Bachmaier-Ekşi 2014a, 2014b).

One evening in 2013, I went to the music-and-movement (group) therapy session with a bad cold, a persistent feature of my post-migrant battle with Berlin’s infamous winter. I entered the rented room around eight in the evening. Several instruments were spread out in the front, waiting to be picked up. Hannah, Halima, and Raphael—three members of the Tümata-Berlin group—were tuning their instruments. Raphael provided a short introduction with basic instructions. In the first passive/receptive phase, he welcomed every-



one and invited us to lie and relax on the floor. Then he began to play a long reed flute (*ney*). A slow, haunting tune came out. I closed my eyes. Fifteen minutes later, he asked us to open our eyes, sit up, and invited us to participate in the active phase.

This time other (string) instruments were accompanying the *ney*: we began to move with the mellower *oud* and the rapid tunes of *dombra*. Hannah accompanied Raphael with the sharper sound of *rebab* while Halima continued to pour water from a small bowl into a much bigger bowl creating ripples and the sound of falling water. Raphael showed the basic movements we followed: placing one hand on the chest and the other stretched with palm upward and turning the face toward it, and a series of movements with shoulders and head in various directions. Halima joined in illustrating these movements.

Raphael did not offer an elaborate explanation of these movements in this session. In Tūmata discourse, however, these movements are considered archetypal, sacred, and therapeutic.<sup>22</sup> As in most of the music-and-movement therapy sessions, the first set of active movements in the second phase of AOM was about allowing the different parts of the body to get in touch with each other as “loving and conscious contact between the eyes, the heart, and the hands” (Güvenç 2014, 54). During this phase, in the sitting position, Raphael instructed us to attend to our hands, hearts, and eyes. With the right hand on the heart (center of the chest), we were asked to look at the left palm. That is how the eyes, hands, and the (breathing) heart were to be connected.

Afterward, we changed our positions, placing the left hand on the heart and eyes focused on the right palm. Until the sound of music ended, participants continued to connect the (subtle and material) body and body parts to the sound. The second set of movements was done with closed eyes while sitting, with a circular movement of the head and upper part of the body. The participants hummed the tone played by the musicians. The third set of movements was the same, with open eyes, and gradually increased in tempo, resonating to a waltz-like rhythm of the sounds coming from the instruments.

The fourth set of movements was done by pulling and putting the shoulders up and down in short, fast, gentle turns.<sup>23</sup> The fifth set of movements had to do with relaxing the head and neck. With hands resting on the waist, we were instructed to move the head-neck area

to the front and back, and then from right to left and vice versa. The sixth and final set of movements was about improvisation. Halima stood up and sped up the movements by whirling and making random steps. Raphael picked up the *dombra* and sang ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. We followed him and ended up in giggles. In the end, we returned to our relaxing position with Raphael calming us down with his *ney* once again.

While writing the last lines of this book, I return to the Tümeta-Berlin AOM recordings and listen to our shared breathing, the words we uttered, and the sounds we made together. This helps me to remember the movements and relax the contracted scholar body and allow it to resonate with the sounds. I return to feeling and inhabiting the Elsewhere, “the place of placelessness,” where healing occurs by the grace of the teacher and Allah, by invoking the human master (*Pir*) and the Divine Master (Allah), turning around them, and requesting them to send healing (*şifa*), and then ending the invocation with “Hu” (Güvenç 2014, 26).

The blooming abundance of breaths and sounds mobilized in the music-and-movement therapy sessions are reproduced in other Sufi practices, such as *dhikr* and *sema* (chapter 3). Some of the bodies that were receiving these sound effects and were moving with these sounds in the (group) therapy sessions were also whirling in other places, at other times. Like the more active breathing bodies in *dhikr* and *sema*, the bodies in Tümeta-Berlin’s Music-and-Movement Therapy constituted a breathing-sounding body (*Klangkörper*).

Human sound bodies can take on several positions and effects: bodies and instruments can make sound together, receptive bodies may lie on the floor with closed eyes, and there are rested bodies and active bodies mimicking the movements illustrated by the expert body. Jointly they produce the effects of sounds on their bodies in stillness and motion. The wind instrument, *ney*, as played by Raphael, usually led a session, giving space to the string instrument, *oud*, and the more rapid rhythms played through the strings of the *dombra*. The vertical strings of the *rebab* (played by Hannah), with the accompaniment of the sound of water pouring into water (by Halima), created ripples of waves in the air. The receptive and active bodies were breathing, listening/sensing these sounds, sensing the presence of other bodies, the temperature, and the voiced instructions. In addition to the human body as a (sound-making) instru-





ment, musical instruments shared the human longing for union with the divine with their nonhuman bodies.

### ***Things of Longing, Sounds of Rebab and Ney***

“Sounds [and things] carry forces which are not only good to think about, but good to feel” (Stoller 1996, 179). The sounds of words (and things) carry their performative healing power in resonance (Stoller 2008, 1997; Stoller and Olkes 1987). The *ney* and the *rebab* were most frequently played in the music-and-movement therapy and during *sema* events. They were portrayed as longing bodies, illustrated with Rumi poems on a flyer of the music therapy seminar:

#### *Ney*

A bamboo flute, the seven holes representing [body parts of] humans [two eyes, two ears, two nasal openings, and the mouth]. The *ney* is a bridge between the thoughts and the heart, a balance between thinking and feeling:

*These tones of the reed flute are not made of wind but fire,  
Woe to those who do not possess this fire.  
The flute is the friend of all those separated from their friend.  
Her melodies tear up our veils.*

#### *Rebab*

A string instrument, originally from Central Asia, brought to Turkey by the mystic Hazreti Mevlana Rumi.

*The heart is like the rebab, and love is in the heart of the bow.  
The resonance of the heart occurs through the striking of the bow. The  
sound happens when the bow strikes the strings.  
When the string vibrates, no thought can force its way between the bow and  
the string.  
The sound of the Rebab drives sadness away from the heart.*

If one listens carefully, one learns to notice the difference between the basic sounds of these two musical instruments. The listener has to imagine the dual possibilities inherent in such listening. The first possibility lies in sounding the human body by allowing the sound of music to work. The second is in imagining the nonhuman bodies of musical instruments as energized things, filled with longing. The breathing heart learns to resonate with these energized things to be able to participate in the Real. As the poem about the *ney* describes,

its sounds are not made of wind, but fire. With fire, the listener is invited to tear up his/her veils of separateness and forgetfulness.

Listening to the sounds of the instruments, whether playing them or allowing them to work their effects on the human body, requires attunement, and the education of attention (Gibson 1979; Ingold 2013). That is how the instruments (the human body and sound-making objects) become energized and exert their healing power. This kind of education or training is not only receptive. By continuing to attend group music-and-movement therapy sessions, attention can be learned from advanced practitioners. Although it usually requires a lengthy process, at times, these lessons are unexpected, triggered by the serendipitous effects of a singular melody.

In the following year (2014), I was listening to Gertrud, another longtime member of the Tümata-Berlin. It was a bright summer day, and we were sitting in a café, sipping herbal tea. Gertrud was telling me her life story when we hit upon the theme of sound and her engagement with the sound of Sufism in relation to Tümata's music (chapter 4). She remembered an old melody she used to hum as a twenty-year-old. She recognized this melody later when she began to take part in the meditation songs praising Allah (*ilahis*) with Oruç Güvenç.

Gertrud (G): I have sung a melody where I thought, "What's happening?" It was in the modulation of what we [Tümata] do today . . . I did not know at that time!

Nasima (N): Where did you hear that?

G: I just felt I had to sing; I noticed people did not find it amusing. For me, it was just somehow it was important! That was a *Modulation* [musical passage] in my center.

N: How did that happen?

G: Like the meditation songs [*ilahis*] that we make with Oruç [Güvenç].

N: Could you sing it?

G: I do not have it! That was over in a few weeks. I feel it. But I do not have it in my head . . . But it was there, and I did it, and that was really so! And then I forgot . . .

N: What did you feel?

G: I do not know. That was just, that was just my tune [*meine Melodie*]!

N: Sometimes I have such an earworm!

G: Yes! That was a tune beyond all that I had [heard] otherwise.

(Interview, 16 June 2014)



How did the healing power of sound work in this instance? Gertrud said she had never heard such a tune before, but the melody appeared at her body's center. When she heard it in Tümeta, she knew it was her tune, her melody. Whether the Tümeta melody was really her melody is beside the point. The fact that Gertrud found resonance in the Tümeta sound and its version of the so-called oriental Sufi music had to do with the act of correspondence, as "living attentionally with others" (Ingold 2014, 389). In this case, the correspondence is not with another human subject but a modality of sound. At the beginning of our conversation that day, when I asked Gertrud how she came to Sufism, she said it was *Musikverständnis* (knowing of music) (chapter 4). This was not a trained aesthetics of music appreciation but an embodied recognition of the tunes resonating with her center. Gertrud's healing narrative invites the possibility of expanded reasoning and resonating with Sufi-designated sound-making practices. Thereby Sufism, often perceived as a religious tradition, is also rendered as therapy.

### ***Sufism as Therapy: The Healing Sounds of the Ninety-Nine Names***

Tümeta's music-and-movement therapy (AOM) is offered as a semi-public form of group therapy where illnesses and symptoms are not discussed extensively in public. Participants share their immediate experiences briefly. It is neither a form of talk therapy nor addressed to specific illness episodes but mobilized as a "healing technology" to promote well-being, addressed to relieve everyday stress and melancholy. During one of the sessions in springtime, Raphael addressed the seasonal mood and possible symptoms associated with the head area and disabilities:

Now we make a short sequence of *makam* music therapy.<sup>24</sup> Today we have selected a *makam* . . . According to the traditional conception, it is dry, warming . . . that is, above all, effective for head-related illnesses, which means headache, facial pain, and shoulder pain. Traditionally it was used for paralysis. It fits the season. It is a warming *makam* and belongs to spring or summer. So now breathe in and out once more. Move your fingers and toes a little bit. And then the musical travel ends. (field recording, 25 April 2013)

These group therapy sessions were open for all. Raphael informed me that he had conducted AOM in his medical praxis for patients willing to try it as complementary medicine. As a physician, he was able to introduce this form of therapy to local hospitals in Berlin, most often as part of intercultural/transcultural psychotherapy and in a rehabilitation clinic. I did not get access to observe these interactions. I heard reports from Halima that she had played in AOM sessions, on occasion, for people suffering from Alzheimer's disorder and a number of disabilities.

In a subsequent interview, the physician and music therapist Raphael did not differentiate between the body and the soul that came together in these practices: "You cannot separate them [spirituality and healing] . . . On one side, there is this aspiration for unity, and on the other side, they [the Sufis] are involved with healing, the *shifa* . . . We do music therapy . . . It is the healing of the soul" (interview with the author, 7 July 2014).

A few weeks later, I traveled to the *sema* in Yalova (Turkey) where Hoca Oruç Güvenç was leading the dhikr of ninety-nine names and explaining the significance of these names in his *sohbet*. The whirling bodies were resting downstairs on the carpet, listening, and joined the collective breathing, repeatedly reciting the ninety-nine names, while others continued to whirl. The *ney* produced a haunting, inviting sound. Soon after, Hoca Oruç Güvenç spoke, reciting a verse from the Qur'an: "To Allah belong the East and the West. Wheresoever you turn, there is the Face of Allah" (Qur'an 2:115). Drawing from the Qur'anic and prophetic hermeneutics and the discourse of Mevlana Rumi, he continued:

Allah has beautiful names. Pray to Allah with these beautiful names. In Qur'an, we learn about the ninety-nine names . . . As Hazrat Mevlana [Rumi] says, practicing these beautiful names and understanding these names increase the feeling of love in humans.<sup>25</sup> So, [let us ] continue from the dhikr in the morning. [Hoca Oruç Güvenç begins with the thirty-third name] *Al-Azim*—the mighty. *Ya Azim!* (11x) . . . *Al-Ghafur*—the all-forgiving. *Ya Ghafur!* (11x) . . . *Ash- Shakur*—the appreciative. It comes from thankfulness. *Ya Shakur!* (11x) . . . *Al-Ali*—the highest; everything is lower than that. *Ya Ali!* (11x) . . . *Al-Kabir*—the greatest one. *Ya Kabir!* (11x) . . . *Al-Hafiz*—the preserver. *Ya Hafiz!* (11x) . . . *Al-Muqit* (the maintainer) . . . *Al-Hasib* (the recorder) . . . *Al-Jalil* (the sublime one) . . .



*Al-Karim* (the generous one) . . . *Ar-Raqib* (the watchful) . . . *Al-Mujib* (the responsive) . . . *Al-Wasi* (the all-embracing) . . . *Al-Hakim* (the wise) . . . *Al-Wadud* (the loving one) . . .

He continues until he reaches the sixty-sixth name, *Al-Wahid* (the One), and ends with the collective dhikr of *Ya Wahid!* (11x) and sura Fatiha. His *ney* announces the completion of one dhikr and the beginning of another in a circle while the *sema* continues. A female *semazen* shouts, “Ya Hu!” and begins to clap while a huge drum begins to beat in unison with the clapping, and rapid breathing of Ya Hu! Hu! Hu! Hu! Allah Hu! (fieldnote, 17 August 2014, on-site English translation)

Hoca Oruç Güvenç connected the names recited during *sema*, dhikr, and elaborated the importance of chanting the names of Allah in his *sohbet*, combining discourse and collective remembrance to accompany whirling movements. In addition to the recitation of names, Tümeta-Berlin’s repertoire included combinations of indigenous sound traditions from different parts of Turkey and Central Asia. The hybrid tendencies of the network are also illustrated in the maneuvers to present (Sufi) music as therapy, mobilizing a language of things and the healing power of sounds and words.

Rhetorical persuasion is prominent in practices where sonic/aural participation is vital, as in Khidr’s audio instructions for the weekly healing meditation and the Haqqani-Naqshbandi *sohbet*. In the Inayati ritual, the embodied movements and sounds of words are acts of bodies coming together in “apt performances” (Asad [1986] 2009, 20). In Tümeta-Berlin’s music-and-movement therapy, events are structured not only around rhetorical persuasion but also in the pedagogy of mimesis, in terms of postures and participation in the sounds of instruments and the human voice. Without participation, none of these practices can be expected to exert any healing power.

## What Is Sufi Healing? Inhabiting the *Barzakh*

“What is Sufi healing?” I asked Murshid Saadi, a senior teacher in the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniyat. Instead of a direct reply, he sent me a story about sorting hair: “A man goes to a barber and says, ‘I have to go for a job interview. Can you cut all of these white hairs out of my beard?’ ‘Certainly,’ says the barber, and proceeds to cut off the man’s whole beard and wrap up the hairs. ‘Now take this home. You

can sort out the white hairs for yourself” (personal communication, 20 July 2013). The story was both instruction and a cautionary note about my analytical assumption behind the question.

Asking “what is Sufi healing?” makes little sense if it keeps the healing dimension separate from the rest of Sufi practice. “There is nothing in existence but *barzakhs*, since a *barzakh* is the arrangement of one thing between two other things” (Ibn Arabi in Chittick 1989, 14). We must learn to take into account the interconnections of all created entities and the uninterrupted nature of connected existence. The Sufi path of breathing, wayfaring hearts requires embodying the traits attributed to Allah (1989, 21). The aspiration of actualizing the qualities (traits of Allah) is enacted in breathing the ninety-nine beautiful names (*al-asmā al-ḥusnā*), uttering these qualities in endless repetitions to open one’s body for healing. The *barzakh* in Sufi discourse is akin to the liminal space of “creative imagination, of provocative linkages, . . . of personal empowerment” (Stoller 2008, 6). Human beings, as anthropologists, writers, artists, or Sufis, step into the *barzakh* to invoke and intersect imagination, connection, and empowerment into their bodies and narratives of healing, which show the power of “between” (2008, 6).<sup>26</sup>

Shahab Ahmed (2016) emphasized the importance of labeling Sufi practices as Islamic to help conceptualize “Islam in terms which include and account for the historical and social centrality among Muslims of the physically, psychologically, emotionally, and cosmologically explorative practice(s)” (2016, 288). He proposed that “we must similarly expand ourselves to think in terms *beyond orthodoxy*” (2016, 288). As a dual apprentice of anthropology and the Sufi tradition, I could not agree more. Learning Sufi practices trains the novice to consider the conditions of metaphysical possibilities of healing. It also inspires the analytical capacity of the anthropological repertoire to expand and grow its conceptual vocabulary.

The specific reception and enactment of Sufi practices in Germany are closely related to the “post-secular quest for new forms of religion, spirituality, and healing” (Klinkhammer 2015, 202). In Sufi-Berlin, the postsecular imagination of healing engages with “old traditions newly discovered.” Sufi healing is made of techniques and discourses drawn from various repertoires of Sufism in Turkey, Central Asia, India, North America, and Western Europe, and the transhistorical and deterritorialized connections made by Sufi inter-



locutors. Bodily techniques of breath and structured rituals of healing are re-enacted to fit locations and audiences. For example, the translocal line of practice (as in *sema* and music therapy) that connected Berlin with Yalova was intersected by lines that connected music therapy with Sufism, the bodily and the sonic, small town and urban metropolis, imploding the boundaries of a conventional ontology of medicine and religion. Similar tendencies can be traced in the Inayati healing ritual. By opening up one's body to become a healing channel for affliction, a human actor can heal his/her troubled affects and others by sending and receiving healing energies from the Elsewhere to the here and now.

Sufi practices are “humanly organized interaction with the sacred other” (Newell 2007: 653)<sup>27</sup> and materialize the transcendent/immanent Real. When human actors participate, what is activated is the “collective imagination” of the Real. Without a consistent presence of the *barzakh*—transforming boundaries and creating diverse conditions of non-dual possibility—healing cannot happen. It does not matter how compassionate the participants are to a body of distress nor how many wonders the breaths, words, sounds, movements, and bodily presences are presumed to produce. The mobilization of the transcendental/immanent Real (Allah) in Sufi practice connects, infuses, transcends, and transforms boundaries between religion, medicine, and performance arts. Sufi healing illustrates an ontological agility to create diverse conditions of possibility that require participation in a non-dual reality to allow the performative power of the Real to do its work.

Healing practices are always already “embedded in local social relations and forms of embodied experience” (Connor 2001, 3). Healing can take place across two scales: healing as in “relation to the highest reality” and healing when it “addresses the particularities of individual episodes of suffering” (Barnes 2011, 15). Healing practices combine “techniques of changing consciousness to enable participants to experience an expanded state of mind” (Greenwood 2009, 125). Tüмата-Berlin, the Haqqani-Naqshbandi, the Inayati networks, and the nomadic Sufis continue to invoke the ninety-nine names of Allah, the transcendent and immanent Real of Sufism (as in Islam). The significance of the ubiquitous presence of these names across these networks cannot be overestimated. Despite differences in identity formations, engagement with Islam, history-making, and

ontological politics, all kinds of Sufi networks come together in their participation in and performance of the Real.

“Healers neither repudiate nor maintain allegiance to the ontological boundaries of biomedicine or scientifically defined and bureaucratically controlled forms of traditional medicine” (Langwick 2011, 235). Healers transgress the domaining of separated fields to “articulate a space outside of biomedicine, marking its limits,” while they also rework the knowledge and tools of clinical medicine “to formulate new techniques for discerning the matter of maladies, of bodies, and of the range of entities that sustain and threaten life” (2011, 235). Langwick described how postcolonial healing “challenges ethnographers to find ways to describe healing in all its diversity without fixing difference in a priori assumptions about what is material or physical and what is immaterial or conceptual” (2011, 236).

Postsecular Sufi healing practices differ significantly from the postcolonial contexts of healing practices elsewhere. Yet, there are family resemblances between their boundary-crossing moments. Therapeutic authority in secular modernity rests on the figure of the biomedical physician (Dole 2012). Ritual healing is not as systematized as biomedicine and “recalcitrant to standardization” (Sax and Basu 2015, 13).<sup>28</sup> The religious, the medical, and the aesthetic – their boundaries are transgressed in Sufi practice. In Berlin, Sufi healing practices challenge taken-for-granted secularist ontologies of medicine, religion, and aesthetic performance.<sup>29</sup>

Healing practices do not necessarily result in ending (secular or religious) suffering but can provide the frames of reference to live with suffering (Barnes 2011, 15). Religious/spiritual practices make human suffering “sufferable” because one problem of suffering is “not how to avoid suffering but how to suffer physical pain, personal loss, worldly defect, or the helpless contemplation of agony [as] something bearable, supportable—something, . . . , sufferable” (Geertz 1973, 104). So far in this book, I have foregrounded the experiential, the sensuous, and the existential conditions of possibilities to “breathe well.” Without the political implications of Sufism, however, the story of breathing, wayfaring Sufi subjects, bodies, and healing practices remains incomplete.

Sufism has not always been an explicitly political formation. But, considering Sufism to be apolitical is a grave analytical oversight, in spite of the insistence by many Sufis that they are “not political.”





For the uninitiated, such a statement might seem to be a profoundly anti-political announcement. Yet, politics is integral to Sufi practice, since Sufis are people who learn to feel (and inhabit) the Elsewhere as much as they engage in the here and now. What, then, are the notions of politics and political action that can be derived from the enactments of Sufism and healing in Berlin? What does it mean to “breathe well” as Sufis in a place where Islam is increasingly marginalized? In the next chapter, I elaborate on the political implications of breathing, wayfaring practices, reflecting on the emergent notions of politics and political action in Sufi-Berlin, engaging Sufism and public anthropology.

## Notes

1. Khan ([1989] 2010).
2. Efendi, interview with the author, 20 April 2013.
3. Güvenç (2014, 65).
4. Such healing transformations have been discussed across diverse Sufi contexts of healing, predominantly in Muslim-majority settings and rarely in Muslim-minority societies (Pandolfo 2018; Abenante 2013, 2017; Abenante and Vicini 2017; Basu 2014; Clarke 2014; Frembgen 2012; Flueckiger 2006; Werbner and Basu 1998; Van der Veer 1992; Sidky 1990).
5. The performative dimensions of healing often emphasized the “presence of the senses in the rites and the extent to which ritual performances change how people feel” (Desjarlais 1996, 152). For earlier discussions of ritual healing as performance, see Turner (1967), Schieffelin (1976, 1985), and Laderman and Roseman (1996).
6. Paola Abenante (2017) discussed how the words and experience of *dhawq* (taste) are enacted as pathways of connection to the divine, combining religious aesthetics and *Gestalt* psychology, in a contemporary Egyptian Sufi network with branches in Europe.
7. The practice of invoking the names of Allah with the help of the ninety-nine beads of the *subḥa* (collections of *tasbih*) is drawn from a Qur’anic verse (Qur’an 7:180) and a number of *hadith*. The conventional list of ninety-nine names does not exhaust all the names/attributes mentioned in the Qur’an. See Gardet (2012b) for a theological discussion of these names. The leading figures in the Haqqani-Naqshbandi and Inayati networks published several texts about the names of Allah (Nāẓim 2004, 167–172; Douglas-Klotz 2005; Meyer et al. 2011).
8. In addition to spiritual healing, there are four core dimensions of Inayati practice: the universal worship, brotherhood/sisterhood, the inner (esoteric) school, and spiritual ecology/symbology. Sufi teachers in the Inayati lineages later added diverse elements and practices, but the above-mentioned dimensions remain central to Inayati practice.

9. Murshid Hakim Sauluddin, who leads the Dervish Healing Order of the transnational Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat network, considered the healing ritual to be something used as a tool in addition to the other “practices of breathing, visualization, healing meditation, and a close reading of the [Inayati] literature on healing” (conversation, May 2014).
10. *Subḥa* (in Arabic) refers to a rosary, and in the plural, it is known as *tasbīḥ* (also in Farsi), *tesbīḥ/tespih* (in Turkish). In the non-Arabic-speaking world, the *tasbih* often refers to a singular collection of beads. Most Muslims use the *tasbih* during regulatory and supererogatory prayers (Bearman et al. 2012b). For Sufis in Berlin, the *tasbih* assists in dhikr. During my fieldwork, I observed numerous variations of the *tasbih*, with eleven, thirty-three, and ninety-nine beads (occasionally nineteen), and made of wood, glass, and stone. I came across a 999-bead *tasbih* (with one extra bead for the all-encompassing name Allah) during a collective dhikr.
11. *Ya Kafi* is usually translated as the Sufficient or Sufficing One. Murshida Rabeya explained “Ya Kafi” as “O divine medicine, not more or less than we need” (*Du göttliche Medizin, nicht mehr, nicht weniger, als wir brauchen*) (conversation, 28 February 2018). Inayati Sufis occasionally visited the towers of Berlin with the same utterance, mobilizing their efforts to “heal the city” and its past traumas (Selim 2015b).
12. Like all other books by Hazrat Inayat Khan, this volume is based on the transcripts of his lectures during the years 1918 to 1926.
13. *Kūn* in Arabic means “Be.” Timur referred to the imperative “Be” in Qur’an, with repeated reference to the divine creative act (Qur’an. 2:117; 3:47,59; 6:73; 16:40; 19:35; 36:82; 40:68), indicating the way all things are brought into existence through the Word, and specifically through the imperative *Be!* (Nasr 2015, 666).
14. Through such conversations and companionship, in the context of a contemporary Turkish Naqshbandi order, “morally structured dispositions” were cultivated in the audience, which can be understood as “disciplines of presence” (Silverstein 2008, 118).
15. Abu Bakr taught me how to whirl during his Sunday workshops at the Sufi center. When I asked him about healing, he directed my attention to a healing *sohbet* by Sheikh Eşref Efendi. The center recorded the *sohbet* and displayed it on its website for public access.
16. This begs the question of whether sickness and suffering might be perceived as an individual’s failure to live healthily.
17. Suffering from chronic depression, it was not until Ayşe became involved with the Sufi Muslim community that she was able to begin her healing process. For her, the Sufi Center Berlin was a welcoming space, supporting her pursuit of flourishing with an alternative set of healing practices, grounded in Sufi tradition, that Ayşe described as “spiritual psychiatry” (Willen et al. 2021, 3; see also chapter 2).
18. The Sufi healing discourses in the Haqqani-Naqshbandi *sohbet* and published texts draw extensively from the *Book of Sufi Healing* (Chishti 1991), which in turn derived from the *Canon of Medicine*, an encyclopedic text



by the eleventh-century Muslim physician, philosopher, and polyglot Ibn Sina/Avicenna. The five volumes of Ibn Sina's *Canon of Medicine* consist of the theory and practice of medicine, a treatise on hygiene, and surgical and pharmacological elements (Eckart [1990] 2005, 54). Once translated into Latin, it was used as the main textbook of medicine in Europe for centuries (Bynum 2008; Magner 2005). The students of the Unani system of medicine in many parts of the world still use Ibn Sina's canon.

19. Sheikh Nāzīm (2004) was critical of biomedicine to the point of rejecting it. In contrast, Sheikh Eşref Efendi did not seem to reject biomedicine but focused on its limited healing power.
20. Shamanistic practices were reinterpreted and integrated with Sufi Islam between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries in Turkey and Central Asia (Zarcone and Hobart 2013; Zarcone 2013b, xxiii). Like many other currently Muslim-majority societies, the Islamization of these regions happened through contacts with the traveling Sufi masters and the presence of both literalist, prescriptive (*shari'a*-oriented), and heterodox (more or less antinomian) trends within the Sufi tradition (Zarcone and Hobart 2013).
21. The early development of the Arabic *maqam* music therapy is attributed to the Arab (Iraqi) physician-philosopher in the Middle Ages, Al-Kindi (c. 800–873 CE, Latinized Alkindus), who made the initial connections of the four strings of the Arab lute with particular body parts, within the broader configuration of the humoral medicine (four humors) practiced at that time (Bachmaier-Eksi 2014a, 86–90). Al-Farabi (870–950 CE) contributed to the theory, and Ibn Sina (980–1037) used Al-Farabi's *maqam* theory for treating patients (Yöre 2012, 267). Later, during the thirteenth century, Şafīyyedīn al-Urmawī (d. 1294), a famous musicologist and councilor of the last Abbasid Khalifa, published his system of twelve major *makams* (Bachmaier-Eksi 2014a, 120–23), which forms the basis for the *makam* therapy, widely practiced at medieval hospitals in the Islamicate societies. See Peregrine Horden (2000) for a detailed history of music therapy. See Peregrine Horden and Elisabeth Hsu (2015) for historical and ethnographic studies of humoral theories.
22. Andrea Azize Güvenç, an occupational therapist and a leading figure in Tümeta, explained the movement of hands as the drawing of the word Allah in Arabic, keeping the alphabet in imagination (Güvenç 2014, 54).
23. In explaining the sacred function of the human shoulders, Andrea Azize Güvenç drew attention to the Islamic discourse on the presence of angels on each shoulder, one writing up the good deeds and the other the bad (2014, 60). She also discussed the anatomical significance of the human shoulder and its possible pathologies in terms of sustained contraction caused by everyday stress. In her text, she provided sacred and (secular) medical functions of the AOM movements.
24. During the Selçuk and Ottoman periods, *makam* music was played in hospitals as a form of therapy (Shefer-Mossensohn 2009).

25. Sufi practices (e.g., dhikr and *sema*) are “designed to articulate a special semiotics of love” (Netton 2013, 13). Discussion of “love” is prominent in Sufi discourse but lies beyond the scope of this book.
26. The notion of the liminal is a classical term extensively discussed by anthropologists (Turner 1967; Van Gennep 1961). See Paul Stoller (2008) and Vincent Crapanzano (2003) who engaged with the Akbarian notion of the *barzakh* in Sufi discourse to discuss the liminality and power of “between” in anthropological theory. See Amira Mittermaier (2011) for a more recent discussion of the Akbarian *barzakh* as an “in-between space” (2011, 30) akin to the poetic notion of “Zwischenwelt/In-between world” (Anamika 2023) that I discussed in chapter 4. While the *barzakh* or “in-between space” relates to the Elsewhere, the notion of Zwischenwelt or “in-between world” relates to the here and now, in between multiple worlds.
27. Sufi practices in the South Asian context have the collective memory of a long history of engagement with the Islamic tradition and Sufi modes of expression. In Sufi-Berlin, such collective memory is neither stable nor uniform but dispersed in an assortment of practices, persons, and traditions. The sense of a coherent symbolic cultural self is not evident in Berlin, but the deployment of symbolic and multisensorial imaginaries is at play when Sufism is enacted in practice. What James Newell perceived in the South Asian context as the “symbolic, unseen reality” (2007, 655), however, resonates with the Real in my research context.
28. William Sax and Helene Basu (2015) argued how the interventions of the modern, secular states are invested in discouraging, eliminating, and often criminalizing ritual healing practices. Ritual healing continues because these practices respond to human needs, be it in East and South Asia, the African Continent, or a postsecular city like Berlin. Here, it is not only biomedicine that is systematized but complementary and alternative medicines as well. Sufi practices inhabit and exceed such rigid systematization, navigating ritual healing across the religious/spiritual, aesthetic, and therapeutic fields.
29. See Vincanne Adams, Mona Schrempf, and Sienna Craig (2013) for the entanglements and translation processes between science and religion in Tibetan medicine. See Dorothea Lüddeckens and Monika Schrimpf (2018) for the constitution of medical discourses and practices beyond the Tibetan context.