

Darul Irfan Research Journal

A Journal on Sufism

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**Darul Irfan
Research Journal**
A Journal on Sufism

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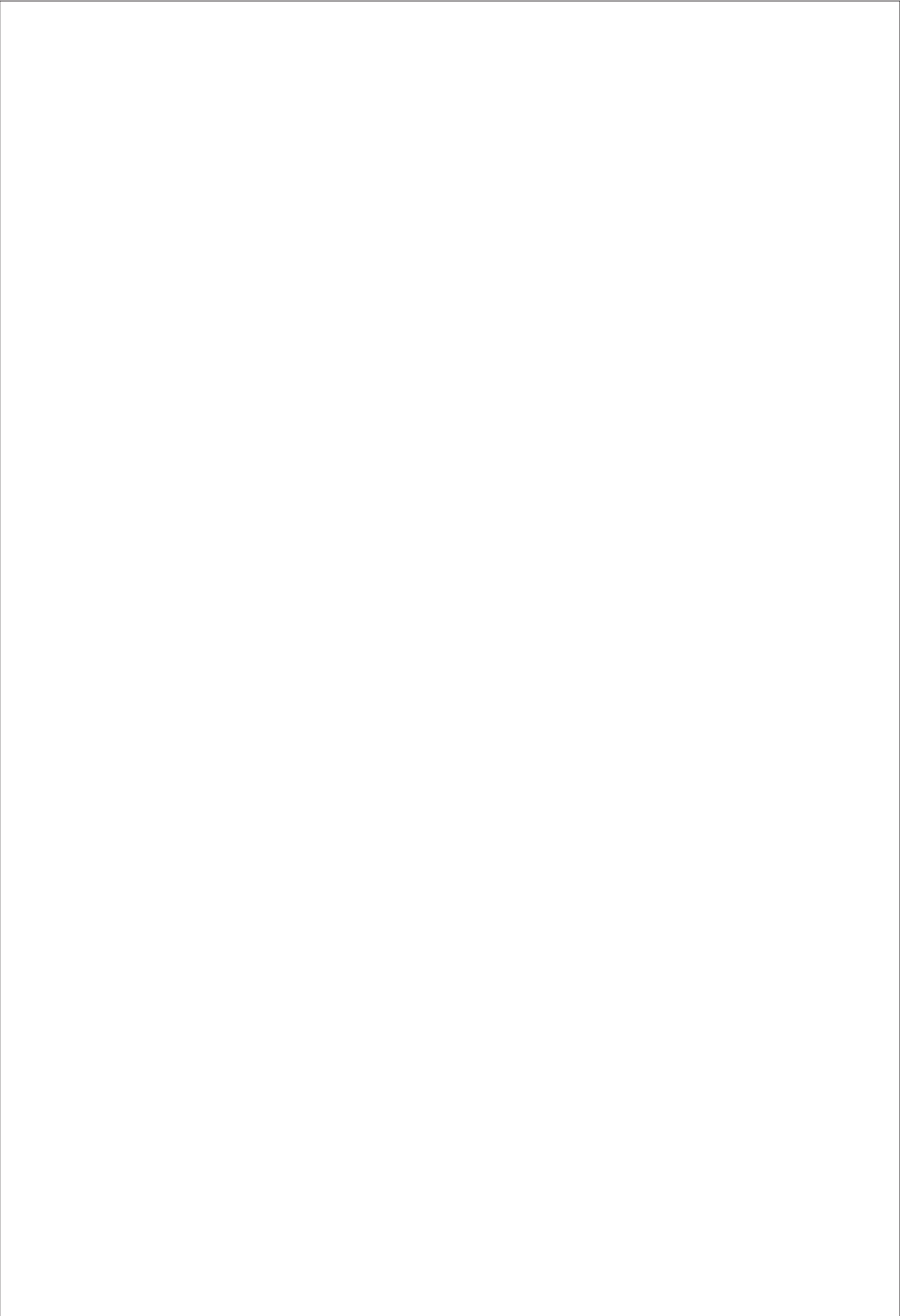
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Editorial

Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI) has made its mark on academic arena very recently and from the very beginning of its journey it has successfully been striving to offer a global platform for the academics and researchers on Sufism. DIRI is also trying to provide a transformative space to the scholars and young researchers to create and disseminate knowledge on Sufism, interfaith dialogue and communal harmony. In this regard Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI) is regularly organizing international e-conference and publishing a yearly academic journal. We are happy to see *Darul Irfan Research Journal* Volume 2 Issue 1.

This volume is the result of Darul Irfan Research Institute (DIRI)'s second international e-conference on Sufi Music, Perfected Humanity and Divine Love, ICSMPHDL2021. Though Sufi Music has a very controversial position in the Islamic arena, it has a universal appeal among the people and the Sufi communities. The international e-conference on Sufi Music, Perfected Humanity and Divine Love mainly focused the issues on Sufi Music. The papers presented in the conference shed light on Sufi Music from various perspectives. This issue of the *Darul Irfan Research Journal* brings out four peer reviewed papers on the four most dimensional views.

We would like to thank and congratulate the contributors of the issue of the journal. We would especially like to thank the members of the editorial board and the reviewers for their continuous support and contribution to the publication of this issue of *Darul Irfan Research Journal*.

We have been fortunate enough to have the guidance and support of our honorable patron and the incumbent *Pir* (Sajjadah Nasheen) of Maizbhandar Darbar Sharif Syed Emdadul Hoque Maizbhandari, without whose blessings and guidance this venture would have not been possible.

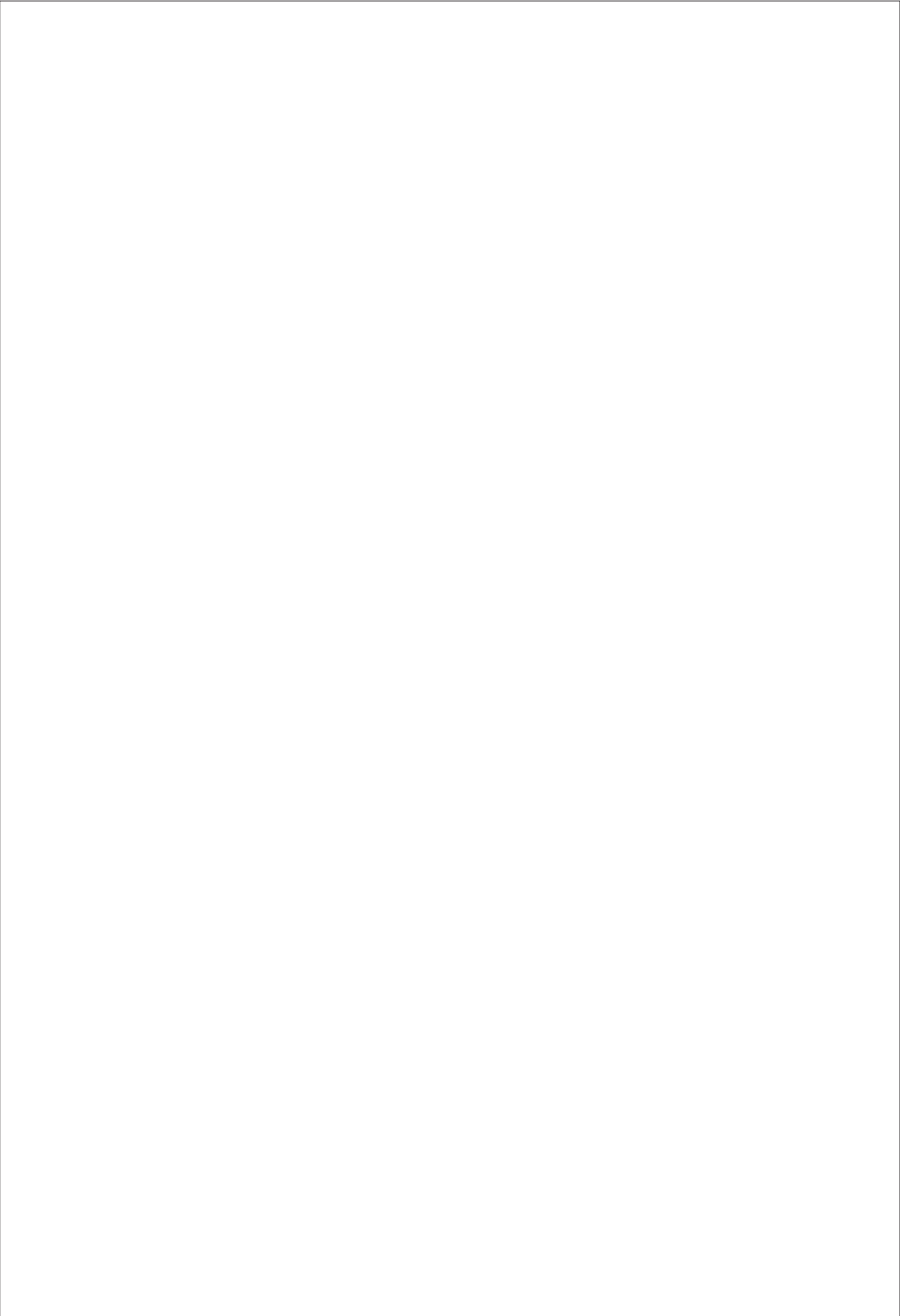
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Like Attracts Like: principles of Kubravi esotericism in Mevlevi esotericism

Giselle Guilhon Antunes Camargo, PhD¹

Abstract

Samâ’– musical listening accompanied by whirling – is one of many practices used in Sufism with the aim of opening the individual’s mind and heart to their greatest potential. Just as with *zikr* (repeating the Names of God), *samâ’* is considered a means of releasing spiritual energy, that is, of allowing the portion of divine light which lies dormant in the mystic to awaken, uniting with its counterpart in the Cosmos. The spiritual hermeneutics which governs the principle of ‘like attracts like’, widely discussed by philosopher Henry Corbin in his *L’Homme de Lumière dans le Soufisme Iranien*, was established between the 12th and 13th centuries by the Persian mystic Najmuddin Kubra and continued by his direct disciple ‘Alâ’-al-Dawla Semnâni. Considering the parts which make up the human being as fragments of their cosmic counterparts, Kubra developed an esoteric physiology of subtle organs of perception (*lataif*) in which each subtle organ or center is associated with a metaphysics of reflected light in Infinity. This law of mutual attraction and recognition of like for like, illustrated by Kubra in the most diverse ways, is based on the communication between the human and The Divine, the seeker and The Sought, the contemplator and The Contemplated, the lover and The Beloved. Kubravi esotericism connects – this has been my insistent hypothesis – Mevlevi esotericism to its deepest roots. And it is precisely these roots that provide the necessary elements for understanding the principles which govern the practice of *samâ’*. Some of these principles can be expressed in the following terms: *samâ’* is ‘the art of spreading the inner wings’; ‘an intensive transformative process between the two poles: Heaven and Earth’; its objective is, through the ‘balancing of the interior with the exterior’, to lead the individual to the experience of the divine energy.

Keywords

Samâ’, Kubra, Rumi, Kubravi esotericism, Mevlevi esotericism.

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Turning in *samâ*' is not simply spinning around oneself in circles. It means developing the sensation of internal and external balance, of Heaven and Earth. This is the balance of life itself, in perfect communion with the creation and in deep respect for the 'Truth behind the truth' and the 'Light behind the Sun' What's the use of making precise turns around your own axis if your life sinks into chaos? Before considering the practice of *samâ*', we should critically re-examine our own life. We must know what can happen to us if we are to grow beyond the training of *samâ*. Like everything else in life, *samâ*' has its price. This is a path that confronts us with our own imbalance. The sufi Way leads, through accepting the work and the constant practice of the exercises, to an openness to realization. The work has to do with renunciation. Thousands of individual tasks make up this Way and all of them together lead to the domestication of egos – *nafs*² (Bauer and Bauer 43-44).

Ingrid and Kurt Bauer synthesizes the authors' personal experience of the initiatory process of *samâ*' in their inspiring book *Sema: der Wirbeltanz der Derwische; die kunst der lebensbalance*. The couple, who traveled by motorhome to Turkey in search of the Whirling Dervishes or *Mevlevi*, ended up having much more than a cursory contact with Sufism. The vivid way their experience is

²*Nafs* (plural: *enfus*): literally, 'soul'. According to the spiritual hermeneutics of Najmuddin Kubra (1145–1220) and his disciple Alâoddawleh Semnânî (1261–1336) – first Sufi masters to fix their attention on the physiology of the seven subtle organs of perception or supersensible centers (singular: *latifa*; plural: *lataif*) – the *enfus* correspond to the seven levels or degrees of consciousness that the sufi can experience in his process of spiritual evolution. They are: *nafs ammâra* (the inferior self), *nafs lawwâma* (the judgmental mind or soul-consciousness), *nafs mulhama* (the inspired soul), *nafs mutmayanna* (the pacified soul), *nafs radyya* (the realized soul), *nafs mardiyya* (the soul which realizes) and *nafs kamila* (the purified or complete soul). (See Henry Corbin, 1971; Idries Shah, 1977; Yashar Öztürk, 1988)

narrated – of a practical teaching method being revealed to them – ranks the text amongst the most authentic and instructive contemporary sufi accounts.

The great contribution of the book lies, however, in the field of ‘pre-expressivity’³. We find in it the extra-quotidian principles and techniques that guide the praxis – the turn – of the *Mevlevi* dervishes. *Samâ’*, like any traditional art or practice, is taught progressively, in successive degrees, through steps that can be followed. This is why it is said that this is a path which can be followed by beginners.

We must remember, however, that dervishes – *Mevlevi*, or of any other sufi school – are not, by definition, actors (although some actors may be dervishes!) They are, rather, ordinary people who have the most diverse roles and professions in the world and who have chosen Sufism, the mystical Way of Islam, as the path for their spiritual development. Likewise, the practice of *samâ’* is not primarily aimed at scenic representation – although some practitioners of *samâ’* have become professional ‘Whirling Dervishes’, performing the dance ritual artistically in theaters and concert halls.

Samâ’ is one of the many meditative techniques used in Sufism with the aim of opening the individual's mind and heart to their greatest potential. As much as *zikr* (repeating the Names of God), *samâ’* is considered ‘a means of releasing spiritual energy’, that is,

³ Pre-expression is the level that deals with making the actor's or dancer's energy scenically alive, that is, with how an actor can become a presence that immediately attracts the viewer's attention. This pre-expressive substrate becomes implicit at the level of expression and can be perceived by the viewer. During the training process, the actor can work at the pre-expressive level, as if at this stage the main objective was energy, presence, the *bios* of their actions and not their meaning: “The pre-expressive level, thought of this way is, therefore, an operative level, not a level that can be separated from expression, but a pragmatic category, a praxis, whose objective, during the process, is to strengthen the scenic *bios* of the dancer or actor” (Barba and Savarese 188).

of ‘allowing the portion of divine light that lies dormant in the mystic to awaken, uniting with its counterpart in the Cosmos:

Every time the heart strives for the Throne, the Throne reaches to the heart, so they meet. Each precious stone (that is, each of the elements of the being of light) which is in you, brings about a mystical state or a visualization in Heaven that corresponds to it, be it the fire of a burning desire, of a special preference or of a love [...]. Each time a light ascends from you, a light descends towards you, and each time your rays of light ascend, rays of light corresponding to them also descend towards you [...] If these energies both have the same quality, they will meet half-way, between Heaven and Earth. But when the substance of light that dwells in you grows, it will be the Whole, in relation to that which is of the same kind in Heaven. Then it will be the substance of light in Heaven that will sigh for you, for it will be your substance that will attract it and it will descend towards you. This is the secret of the mystical path (Corbin 84).

The spiritual hermeneutics which governs the principle of ‘like attracts like’, widely discussed by philosopher Henry Corbin in his *L'Homme de Lumière dans le Soufisme Iranien*, was established between the 12th and 13th centuries by the Persian mystic Najmuddin Kubra⁴ and continued by his direct disciple ‘Alā’-al-Dawla Semnānī. Considering the parts which make up the human being as fragments of their cosmic counterparts, Kubra developed an esoteric physiology of subtle organs of perception (*lataif*) in

⁴Born in 1145 in Khwarizm and killed in 1221 in Samarkand, during the invasion of Genghis Khan, Najmuddin Kubra was one of the great initiates of his time, with disciples from all over Central Asia. Many became famous, including: Bahauddin Walad, father of Rum; Baba Kamal, who is cited as one of the masters of Shams of Tabriz (the most important Sheikh of Rumi); Najm Rāzi, author of a mystical treatise in Persian; and Fariduddin Attar.

which each subtle organ or center is associated with a metaphysics of reflected light in Infinity:

In every purified part of human being, the counterpart which corresponds to it is reflected, for things can only be seen and recognized by things that are similar to them. When the esoteric nature that designates geniuses and faculties becomes pure, what is its homologous in the Macrocosm is contemplated in it. The same is true for the soul (*nafs*), the intellect (*'aql*), the heart (*qalb*), the spirit (*ruh*), the trans-consciousness (*sirr*), the arcane or intuitional center (*khafi*) – the inner place where the divine attributes that intoxicate are revealed [...] – even deep consciousness (*haqq*) (Corbin 80).

The hypothesis of an influence of the *Kubravi* or *Kubrawiyya* Order on the *Mevlevi* or *Mawlawiyya* Order – either through Rumi's contact with Shams (who was a disciple of Baba Kamal, a pupil of Kubra) or through the teachings of his own father, Bahauddin Walad (who also received teachings from the Persian master) – is supported by Michel Random, in his book *Rumi, la Connaissance et le Secret*. According to Random (60), it is in *Adâb Al-Tariqa*, a short treatise on initiation that Kubra sets out the rules of the *Kubravi* Order. These rules resemble the essential prescriptions of the Whirling Dervishes: members must wear the robe corresponding to the *tariqat* (school), sit on prayer mats, and so much repetition of Divine Names (*zikr*) that they become cosmic dancing (*samâ'*).

Kubra's influence on the *Mevlevi*, I hypothesize, goes far beyond the rules of behaviour (*adab*) and meditation techniques (*zikr* and *samâ'*) prescribed by the Sheikhs of the *silsila* (the 'current of transmission' among the sufis). Kubra dedicated himself to studying and describing the phenomenon of 'luminosity', making visionary perceptions an experimental method. And, from the colour of the lights seen by the disciples in a meditative state (or perceived by the master as emanating from them), it was possible to know their

degree of spiritual elevation. Although this metaphysics of light is not directly addressed by most Rumi scholars, the *Mevlevis'* emphasis on activating the subtle heart (*qalb*) – the fundamental organ of supersensible perception – demonstrates that this initiatory knowledge not only continued to be transmitted through of centuries, but continues to be, even today, one of the central points of *Mevlevi* esotericism.

The heart (*qalb*) is the axis around which the dervishes turn. Its purification is part of the sufi Way and leads – when the spirit triumphs over the negative tendencies of the soul (*nafs*) – to the unveiling of the ‘eye of the heart’ (*‘ayn al-qalb*). In it an embryo of mystical origin develops, like a pearl in its shell, which will give rise to the ‘true self’ of the individual (*latifa anâiya*).

According to Kubra, the Divine Being has different loci and abodes. The heart (*qalb*) – as well as the spirit (*ruh*), the trans-consciousness (*sirr*), the arcane (*khafi*) and the deep awareness (*haqq*) – is one of the inner places where the Divine Attributes manifests:

The heart participates in every Divine Attribute, and even in the Divine Essence. This participation does not cease to expand, and the mystics differ from one another in the degree of their participation. As each Attribute has its seat in one of the loci or abodes, and the heart participates in each of the Divine Attributes, these are epiphanies in the heart because of the heart’s participation in these Attributes. This is how the Attributes show themselves to the attributes, the Essence to the essence (or the Self to the self). On the one hand, these are the Attributes (or places) that contemplate the heart (which make it present). On the other hand, it is the heart that contemplates the places of the Attributes (becomes present to them) (Corbin 83).

If 'in every purified part of being the counterpart which corresponds to it is reflected', the purified heart (*qalb*) also seeks its cosmic counterpart. 'Every time the heart aspires to the Throne, the Throne will aspire to the heart', says the Iranian master. When this attraction occurs, from the 'celestial heaven' towards the 'heaven of the heart' (or 'heaven of the soul'), the heart (*qalb*) is called the 'Holy Spirit':

The Holy Spirit in human being is a subtle heavenly organ. When given the concentrated strength of spiritual energy, he attains Heaven and Heaven merges into him. Or rather, Heaven and Spirit are one and the same. And this spirit does not cease [...] to rise, until it acquires a nobility above the nobility of Heaven, and everything aspires to meet it's original source and kind (Corbin 81).

Here is the essence of Kubra's intuition: if the parts that constitute the human being are fragments of their cosmic counterparts, if a substance only sees and knows the substance that is similar to it (just as it can only be seen and known by its own kind), if each kind seeks to unite itself with its own kind, then the 'precious stone' (a metaphor of the cosmic fragment in the human being) will seek, itself, to unite itself with its 'original source', being, therefore, able to see and only recognize the source that was its origin and towards which all its desire and longing are directed.

This law of mutual attraction and recognition of like for like, illustrated by Kubra in the most diverse ways, is based on the communication between the human and The Divine, the seeker and The Sought, the contemplator and The Contemplated, the lover and The Beloved:

There are lights which ascend and lights that descend. The lights which ascend are those of the heart; those that descend are those of the Throne. The creaturely being is the veil between the Throne and the heart. When the veil is broken and a door to the Throne is opened in the heart, like rushes

towards like. The light rises towards the Light, and Light descends towards light, and it is 'Light upon Light' (Corbin 83).

This brief introduction to Kubra's esotericism – almost archaeological work – connects, I suggest, *Mevlevi* esotericism to its deepest roots. And it is precisely these roots which provide the necessary elements for understanding the principles that govern the practice of *samâ'*. Some of these principles were fixed by Ingrid and Kurt Bauer in the book *Samâ': the Whirling Dance of the Dervishes or the Art of Life Balance* and can be expressed in the following terms: *samâ'* is 'the art of spreading the inner wings' (27); 'an intensive transformative process between the two poles: Heaven and Earth' (35) its objective is, 'through the balancing of the interior with the exterior' (45-46) to lead the individual to the experience of the divine energy.

But what exactly does it mean to 'spread the inner wings', 'alchemize the twin poles of Heaven and Earth', 'balance the interior with the exterior'? (Do you realize how much Kubravi hermeneutics is able to decipher these metaphors?) If we connect Kubra's esotericism to Rumi's esotericism, we can easily deduce that 'opening the inner wings' means 'release the spiritual energy', i.e. 'to allow the portion of divine light that lies dormant in the mystic to awaken, uniting itself with its counterpart in the Cosmos'.

Spiritual energy is not, however, released quickly. There are well-defined steps that must be followed. The different stages in the process of learning *samâ'* are, in a way, wrapped up, like a box within a box: you open one of them and discover that there is something else inside, noticing that it is the next box. The complete process of *samâ'*, the totality of the steps, 'leads to a progressive opening of the heart and a breathing in God' (Bauer and Bauer 66).

Ingrid and Kurt Bauer's book provides a clear indication that, in order to learn *samâ'* – meaning learning the bodily technique of

turning – it is not enough to master, in isolation, the choreographic sequences of the preparatory exercises. Rather it is necessary to develop an internal attitude of trust, which also extends to the external context of life:

Before the first step and the first turn, a process of becoming rooted in God begins. The condition for this is the decision to trust. The relationship with God unfolds from there, as in every process of trust and love, and develops more and more. Once rooted in God's trust, the path to freedom is open to human beings. All this precedes *samâ'*. Indeed even before the *semazen* (whirling dervish) turns for the first time, the process of inner growth and life change is well under way. An intense learning process has already taken place. He was rooted in trust (Bauer and Bauer 67).

Trust, therefore, is not automatically gained through the practice of *samâ'*. It is, rather, a prerequisite. Sometimes, as Kurt Bauer explains, the *semazen* can confuse the feeling of comfort that comes with practice with a feeling of confidence. True confidence, however, does not depend on the immediate results – pleasant or unpleasant – of *samâ'*. 'Trust in Life', or 'trust rooted in God', depends, rather, on the individual's capacity for surrender. This is a never-ending process as one can always trust a little more. Thus, the more palpable the experience of trusting, the warmer the inner energy current will become and the stronger will be the recognition of Truth (*al-Haqq*).

Once 'rooted in trust', the individual is able to put into action the principles and techniques concerning the practice of *samâ'*. Each posture, step or attitude has an intention, a goal and a meaning, which must be fixed in the memory of the *semazen* so that, moments before starting *samâ'*, they can connect, through their creative imagination, to that symbolic frame of reference and its implicit meaning.

The awareness of the meaning of each position, gesture, step or turn – either by the adepts involved in the practice or by those who participate in *samâ*’ as observers – provides the movement’s ‘universal structures’ (turning, walking, crossing arms, raising hands to the sky), identifiable in other traditional arts, in an absolutely particular sense. Without these references or ‘semantic particularities’, it would not be possible, for example, to distinguish the *Mevlevi samâ*’ from an Afro-Brazilian Candomblé turn or even from the turn of a shaman in a trance in an Amerindian healing rite.

Samâ’ is the art of balance – the balance of life. The turn around the axis of the body is performed with the left leg firmly fixed to the ground, while the right leg performs the movement. In the turn, the white robe of the *semazen* opens like a rose that, greedy for water, stretches towards the sky. Beauty and charm find their most perfect expression in this movement. The right hand is turned up and the left is down. With the right hand raised, the *semazen* grasps the *baraka* (grace) of Heaven, which is carried to the heart and, through the left hand, passed on to the world. *Samâ*’ means to be rooted in the Earth and reach up to Heaven. It means belonging, at the same time, to this world and the other world.

The aim of *samâ*’ is to induce in the practitioner a conscious state of union with the Cosmos. This experience reaches both the deepest levels of existence and into the individual’s daily life. It is for this reason that *samâ*’ can be conceived – individually and collectively – as a kind of ‘training for the perfect balance of life’:

Samâ’ is the ritual of cosmic balance. Every *semazen*, dervish or sufi occupies a specific space in *Samâ*’. The positions of the participants represent, respectively, the Sun, Moon and Planets. In this way, the great turn [the collective ritual] becomes a cosmic anthem. As the stars revolve in harmony around the Sun, the sufis revolve around God [*maallah*] and ‘in God’ [*fillah*]. In Tradition it is said that through *Samâ*’ the energy of God is made available to the

world. When we come into contact with this energy unprepared, it can produce a shock (Bauer and Bauer 54).

Based on my own experience of learning *samâ'* – through my direct contact, between 1990 and 2005, with Seyyed Omar Ali-Shah (1918–2005), sufi Master of the Naqshbandi Order; between 1996 and 2009, with Sheikh Mevlevi Yakup (Baba) Koyuncu ⁵, master of *samâ'* in the Jerrahi Order of Istanbul, Turkey; and in 2009, with the German Master of Circle Dances of the People, Gabriele Wosien, with whom I was able to effectively train and improve my practical knowledge of *samâ'* – I have tried, in this paper, to emphasize the esoteric aspects of *samâ'*, also present in other sufi meditation techniques.

⁵ It was Yakup who pointed me to the book by the Germans Ingrid and Kurt Bauer, who were instructed in Konya to study.

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Development of *Qawwali* in *Awadh* Region of India

Yousuf Saeed¹

Abstract

Qawwali, a group song performance that inspires and elevates the Sufis in their mystical experiences is unique to South Asia, sung in a variety of languages and dialects. *Awadh*, a cultural region in the heart of Uttar Pradesh in north India has had a rich history of literature, music and performing arts that evolved over centuries through the meeting of many civilizations. *Qawwali* is one such rich tradition that evolved in *Awadh* region in many *khaneqahs* or Sufi hospices all over the region, which were established by Sufis who arrived from Central Asia to settle here. This paper explores some centres of *qawwali* and Sufi poetry in *Awadh* region, such as Ayodhya, Kichhauchha, Dewa, Jaunpur, Lucknow and Bahraich etc., besides Rohilkhand, that still boast of many Sufi masters who promoted *qawwali* and allowed a unique regional style to emerge here.

Keywords

Qawwali, Urdu, Uttar Pradesh, *Awadh*, Sufi, North India

Qawwali, a passionate form of vocal musical form is popular among the Sufis or mystics all over South Asia, featuring lyrics by a number of well-known poets who composed in various languages from Urdu and Hindi to Persian, Bengali and Punjabi among others. Much of the base for a *qawwali* rendition is north India's classical music, although some *talas* (rhythmic time-cycles) are specific only to *qawwali* and not commonly used in Hindustani music. Some elements of north India's folk music can also be found in many performances.

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It is popularly assumed that qawwali was innovated by Delhi's poet-composer Amir Khusrau (b. 1253) to be performed at the *sama* (listening) gatherings of saint Nizamuddin Aulia (d. 1352) (Saeed 220-232). However, historians today believe that musical forms named *qaul* and *qawwali* existed in India as well as Arabia and the larger Persianate world since at least a couple of centuries before Amir Khusrau, although their styles or musical modes might have been very different from what we witness today. In India, the growth of qawwali or other musical and poetic forms among Sufis was prerequisite not only for their spiritual salvation but also as a medium to attract local populace who were already entrenched in the use of pietistic music, as has been acknowledged by saints like Moinuddin Chishti who encouraged the use of music. Undoubtedly, the music and poetry in local dialects were probably the most important vehicles for the popularity and expansion of Islam via the Chishti Sufi order in South Asia in general and the Awadh region in particular. Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri asserted that

In the spread of sufic ideology, specially of the Chishtis, the Sufi music (*sama*), which had been a contentious issue from quite early times—the orthodox section has never reconciled with the whole idea, while the Chishti Sufis never gave up the practice—has played an extremely important role (276).

Although the region of Lucknow and Awadh is traditionally associated with musical forms such as *thumri*, *dadra*, *tappa*, *mujra*, *kathak*, and other forms of classical arts and courtesan culture, mostly patronised by the aristocratic nawabs and provincial taluqedars of the yesteryears, qawwali has also been nurtured here abundantly. The devotional arts of shi'as, such as the recitation of *marsias* and *nauhas*, associated with the memory of Karbala battle, were also developed significantly in the region (Trivedi 41-71).

The history and richness of Awadh's musical past has been well documented by many authors (Sharar 1994).²

However, what has not been explored in detail is the practice of qawwali and Sufi music or literature that thrived in the region in equal terms. For instance, one does not hear of Lucknow region producing any qawwali 'maestros' and grooming schools, at least in the 19th and 20th centuries, just as one finds them in the nearby Rohilkhand region, Delhi, Punjab, or Hyderabad. Such mystic culture of Awadh did not come into limelight probably because its patronage was limited mainly in the popular and rural domain rather than the ruling elite which largely followed the shi'a ideology, although one may find exceptions, such as in Rampur. This short essay tries to survey the spaces and institutions that nurtured qawwali and Sufi music in Lucknow and its environs, knowing that more research work is still required to ascertain its larger impact in the past and present.

The Arrival of Islam and Sufis in Awadh

Islam and Muslims had arrived in the Awadh region much before the typical nawabi era of 18th and 19th centuries that saw the pinnacle of the Indo-Muslim cultural practices in Lucknow. In fact, many Muslims believe that some pre-Islamic prophets (mentioned in the Quran and Bible) like Hazrat Yaqub (Jacob), Hazrat Shees, and Hazrat Nooh (Noah) are actually buried in Ayodhya – a fact that has been mentioned by several mediaeval commentators including the Mughal courtier Abul Fazl in *Ain-e Akbari*, although unconfirmed by historians. Ayodhya in any case has been a place of great spiritual importance for Hindus and Buddhists since millennia. Muslims and Islam may have arrived in the Awadh region in the last quarter of 12th century when Mohammad Ghauri

² The History is elaborately discussed in Abdul Halim Sharar's *Lucknow The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture*, edited and translated from Urdu by E. S. Harcourt and Fakhir Hussain, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994

established his rule over Delhi and north India after defeating the local rulers. Though he returned to central Asia after handing over the rule to Qutbuddin, this is the first time when governors were appointed by a central government for local regions under their control. Thus, Bakhtiyar Khalji was sent to govern the Awadh region, although he did not sustain his rule for long due to constant changes within the government. For several reasons, the Awadh region, which constituted not only the town of Ayodhya but also Kara, Qannauj, Dalmau, Sandila, Behraich and Jaunpur, was considered very strategic for all kings and dynasties of Delhi. Hence, almost all famous rulers, such as from among the Tughlaqs, the Sayyads, the Mughals, and even the British paid visits here and ensured strong governance which benefited their own rule in the centre.

Many scholars and Sufis arrived at various locations of Awadh along with the Muslim rulers. One of the earliest-known Muslim saints in the region is a warrior named Salar Masud Ghazi who came with the army of Mehmud of Ghazna at the age of 16, and was martyred in a battle by the local Hindu rulers in Behraich in 1032 AD. He is buried at Behraich and his shrine is a centre of pilgrimage for thousands of Hindus and Muslims every year, especially due to its supposed healing powers. Since Ghazi was unmarried before he died, an annual memorial at his shrine, just outside the Behraich town, is supposed to celebrate his post-mortem wedding with one Zohra Bibi. “Thousands of pilgrims visited their graves expecting to be freed from illness and suffering” (Schwerin 143). Even today, many young unmarried women dressed like a bride visit the shrine for Ghazi’s blessings and recite traditional poetry. Even a khadim or caretaker of the shrine sings verses in the local dialect.

*Miyan ka pujan chala sevakia garh Behraich naagari
Chhod chhad ke baal bachche taj ke ghar aur baakri,
Miyan ka pujan [...] (Azeez 418)*

(To worship Miyan, the devotee embarks on a pilgrimage to Behraich town, Leaving his children, and giving up his home and wife. To worship Miyan...)³

There are also popular music videos and audio cassettes available outside the shrine, featuring devotional songs in praise of the warrior-saint.⁴ However, it is not known as to what formal Sufi order Salar Masud belonged and what were his mystic inclinations. It is noted that,

The Sufi shrines are well maintained by the people and are visited by persons belonging to all communities, including many people from the majority community. Ayodhya is also called '*Khurd Mecca*' or the '*Small Mecca*' because of the presence of several tombs or dargahs of Sufi saints (Rajalakshmi)⁵.

Among other early Sufis to have arrived in Awadh was one Qazi Qidwat ud-Din, who came from central Asia on the behest of Usman Haruni (the Sufi master of Moinuddin Chishti who settled in Ajmer). Considered an ancestor of the famed Qidwais of Lucknow, Qazi Qidwat died in 1208 and "His grave, often referred to as 'Qazi Qudwat's Tomb' is still visible on the paved platform in front of the Babri Mosque on the east side" (Kamal 30).⁶ Many of these early Sufis were scholars of Islam, philosophy and mysticism, and some also practiced the listening of sermons, *sama* or poetry for their mystic or devotional experiences. Some information about their lives can be gleaned from the *malfuzat* or hagiographical accounts available in old manuscripts. Shaikh Badruddin Wa'iz, an orator par excellence from Ayodhya, lived in

³ Author's own translation from Urdu text.

⁴ A video CD titled *Ghazi ka Karam* (Blessings of the Warrior-Saint), artists: Neha Mehmood Khan, Asif Saidpur, produced by Golden Eye Films.

⁵ "Ayodhya, a picture of diversity - Frontline." by T.K. Rajalakshmi *Frontline*, 7 November 2003,

⁶ The extract is translated from original Urdu text.

the period of Alauddin Khalji (13th-14th c.). His spirited sermon gatherings were attended by all, and made much of the audience to faint with crying (Kamal 33). The early Sufis may not have strictly followed the doctrine of any one particular Sufi order such as Chishti, Qadiri, Suhrwardi, Qalandari, or Naqshbandi that came into India, although the Chishti silsila was definitely one of the most popular orders whose members were appointed by their shaikhs into small and large towns of Awadh region.

Syed Ashraf Jahangir Samnani, buried in Kichhaucha, a small town near Lucknow, came from Samnan in Iran where he was born in 1308 in a ruling family. He was a Sufi of both the Chishti as well as Qadiri orders, and naturally listened to *sama* and *qawwali*. Before coming to Awadh region he had already stayed for some years in Uchch town (now in Pakistan, near Multan) and Bengal. It is said that when his time of death came, at the ripe age of 120 years, Ashraf Jahangir asked for a mehfil of *sama* to be arranged, and died trembling like an injured bird (*murgh-e bismil*) while listening to a particular verse of poet Sa'di⁷. Even today, his shrine gets thousands of devotees for its supposed healing powers, especially during his urs when *qawwalis* are performed (Ashrafi 132-135).

Chishti Sufi Linkages between Delhi and Awadh

Many disciples of Chishti saint Nizamuddin Aulia of Delhi (or others in his lineage) were appointed the spiritual heirs in Awadh, Qazi Mohiuddin Kashani being one of the important ones. He left his courtly job of a *qazi* (judge) in Awadh during Alauddin Khalji's rein to follow the mystic path taught by Nizamuddin Aulia – often disappearing into forests with his book of prayers to meditate. Similarly, Nasiruddin Chiragh Dehlavi, the most famous disciple of Nizamuddin Aulia, himself was born in Ayodhya

⁷ Quoted by Razi Ahmed Kamal in Makhdum Ashraf Samnani's *Lataif-e Ashrafi* [Urdu], vol. 2, pp. 406-12.

around 1274, and his descendents till today have connections with Awadh. There are many others such as Shaikh Shamsuddin Awadhi, Jalaluddin Awadhi (d. 1337); “As Nizamuddin Auliya's disciple, Shaykh Jalaluddin Awadhi was a profound scholar of syntax, jurisprudence, and principles of jurisprudence as well as a saint distinguished by asceticism and piety” (Kamal 47).⁸ Jamaluddin Awadhi, Qiwanuddin Awadhi, and Kamaluddin, who were either direct or hereditary disciples of Nizamuddin Aulia, and practiced the listening of *sama* and *qawwali* in their spiritual experiences.

Another disciple of Nizamuddin Aulia based in Awadh was Maulana Alauddin Neli (d. 1360), popular for giving powerful *wa'z* or sermons about mysticism. His Friday sermons were even attended by the famous Arab traveller Ibn Batuta (born 1304) who describes these as full of ecstasy with regard to the listeners. In this regard Razi Ahmed Kamal stated Ibn Batuta's experiences

During one of Neli's sermons, when a particular *ayat* (passage) of Quran was recited, a restless listener in the mosque reacted with a loud scream. When the passage was repeated during the session, the person screamed with ecstasy again and ultimately died on the spot (Kamal 61).

Ibn Batuta also claimed to have attended his funeral too. One can find many other accounts about the early Sufis of Awadh where their deep interest in poetry and music are apparent. For instance, Syed Ali of Jaunpur (1423-1500) was never particular about any specific song or style of music for *sama*, “I can get *wajd* (ecstasy) with any ghazal or verse being recited”, he would say (Dehlvi 481). Similarly, Shaikh Adhan Jaunpuri (born 1452) lived for over 100 years and used to get so mesmerized by listening to *qawwali* that “he had to be controlled by over 10 people even in his old age” (Dehlvi 481). Shaikh Adhan may have also been an important person for the Mughal ruler Babur in Delhi since he is said to have

⁸ The extract is translated from original Urdu text.

organised mehfiles of *sama* in the latter's court, along with another courtier, Shaikh Dhoran. Moreover, Adhan's disciple, Shaikh Banjhu, a 'very sweet singer' from Jaunpur, got employed with King Akbar and was rewarded suitably for his music performances. (Brahapati)⁹

Lucknow's most prominent Sufi shrine today (near the present Medical College) is that of Hazrat Shah Mina Chishti (d. 1479) who was the son of another Sufi Shaikh Qiwanuddin and a disciple of Shaikh Sarang. Being initiated into not only Chishtiya but also Qadiriya, Suhrwardiya and Qalandaria, Shah Mina is also attributed with many miracles which he is supposed to have conducted since his childhood.

Shah Mina is important also for another reason: The line from Shah Mina resurfaces in the nineteenth century in the figure of Hafiz Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali Khayrabadi, marking the expansion of the Nizami branch of Chishti Sufism through disciples of Shaykh Sulayman Taunawi in the upper Punjab. Khayrabadi, a native of the same suburb of Lucknow as his spiritual predecessor, became one of the major successors of Shaykh Sulayman (Lawrence 57).

Mehfiles of *qawwali* and *sama* are still held at his shrine which is also famous for its healing powers. But it is difficult to say if such an institution nurtured any robust schools or *gharanas* of *qawwali* in the town. Among other Sufis of this region, Alauddin Husaini Awadhi (died 1560) was not only a Persian poet par excellence but also an expert in Hindustani music. He is buried in the *Khurd Mecca* cemetery of many other Sufi shrines of Awadh from the medieval period which have remained centres that promote *qawwali* during the *urs* ceremonies.

The Emergence of Lucknow and its Musical Heritage

⁹ Kailash Chandra Brahapati's *Muslims and Bhartiya Sangeet*, Delhi, Rajkamal, 1974.

When nawab Asaf-ud-Daula shifted his capital from Faizabad to Lucknow in 1775, he and the later nawabs nurtured all kinds of cultural and literary activities and talent in the new capital. The convergence of great artists and musicians from nearby areas in Lucknow allowed the growth of rich traditions of music and performative arts. Husain Shah Sharqi, the ruler of nearby Jaunpur (r. 1458–1479) had already played an important role in the evolution of several forms of classical music, especially *khayal* (slow and elaborate rendition of vocal music). According to some, Sharqi's court had benefitted and influenced from the experiments in music carried out by composers like Amir Khusrau in Delhi via the blending of Indian and Central Asian musical forms and instruments. There was also a constant give and take between the musicians and patrons between Delhi and Awadh. With the decline of the Mughal Empire in 18th century, many of the talented musicians and artists started migrating to Awadh. Hence, Lucknow slowly became a platform where the best talent of north India was gathering and entertaining the nawabs and courtiers with their fine art. "Despite the influx of musicians from Delhi, it is interesting to note that no *sitar* player is mention for this period in Lucknow" (Miner 97). However, while we know about the nawabs' patronage and special interest in classical dance and vocal music, instruments like *sitar* and *tabla*, and the Shi'a-oriented devotional arts, there is very little information available about how much the Awadh's court patronised *qawwali*.

Among the unique institutions of Lucknow that did support Sufi ideology and *qawwali*, albeit indirectly, is one known as Firangi mahal. Although Firangi mahal (literally meaning a 'foreigner's palace' which was indeed inhabited in Lucknow by a European trader in 17th century) refers to one of earliest Muslim families migrating into Awadh from the Afghanistan region, it is more popular as a madrasa or educational institution that this family of great scholars established centuries ago. "[...] the Farangi Mahall

family have good claim to have been the leading learned family of Muslim India for much of the past 300 years” (Robinson 70). Mullah Nizamuddin, a prominent member of this family from 17th century compiled an elaborate syllabus for the study of Arabic and Persian that is still taught in some madrasas of India, and known as the *Dars-e Nizami* (Nizam’s syllabus). Besides being authors of hundreds of books (and exegesis of older works) on philosophy, jurisprudence, religion, literature and mysticism, the members of Firangi Mahal family were also Sufis themselves (Ansari 40-52). Many family members not only composed mystical poetry but also listened to Sufi *sama* and *qawwali*. According to Maulana Azad, several members of Firangi Mahal were well versed in music.¹⁰

One of the last well-known Sufis and scholars of the family was Maulana Abdul Bari (d. 1926) also known as Bari Miyan, whose *urs* (death anniversary) is still celebrated at the *bagh* or cemetery where most luminaries of Firangi Mahal are buried. Scholar Salim Kidwai of Lucknow (whose father and grandfather were *mureed* or disciples of Bari Miyan) still remembers attending Firangi mahal’s *qawwali* performances in his childhood with his father. According to him, ‘until the mid seventies, any *qawwal* worth his *qaul* would have paid tribute at the *urs*’. Until recently, the last surviving good *qawwals* such as *murli* performed at the *bagh* in Firangi mahal. The *urs* is still held but it doesn't have the same cultural significance it seems. This obviously has to do with the decline of Firangi Mahal both in terms of spiritual authority as well as the physical decline of Firangi Mahal into a ruin/slum.¹¹

Saints and *Qawwali* in Lucknow’s Vicinity

While many Sufi saints lived and practiced their mysticism in the Awadh region throughout the last one millennium, very few

¹⁰ Abul Kalam Azad’s *Ghubar-e Khatir*, edited by Malik Ram published by Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, 1967.

¹¹ The author would like to thank Salim Kidwai for providing help in this matter.

may have matched the popularity of Haji Waris Ali Shah of the 19th century. Waris Ali was born in Dewa town of Barabanki district (near Lucknow) around 1809 and travelled extensively, all over the country as well as other parts of the world, especially on his pilgrimages to Mecca, as a barefoot fakir wearing an *ihram* (two unstitched pieces of white cloth worn by Hajj pilgrims) throughout his life. Waris Ali was fond of listening to poetry and sama, and one of his most favourite disciple was Avghat Shah Warsi, a poet from Bachhraon (near Moradabad) who composed mystic poetry, especially *dohas* (couplets) in Awadhi, Braj and Urdu languages, for his Sufi master.¹² Some of Avghat Shah's poetry is still sung by qawwals, such as Meraj Nizami of Delhi who featured at least one such verse in his collection – a song in Braj in praise of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) (Qawwal 342)¹³.

The mystics at the shrine of Haji Waris Ali still follow the tradition of wearing a light yellow-coloured ihram or unstitched cloth, attending ceremonies like qawwali *mehfils*. Most followers of Haji Waris, including qawwals, use *Warsi* as their title, and are spread out outside the Awadh region too – as far as Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh), Karachi (Pakistan) and even some western countries. A well-known follower of the saint was poet Bedam Shah Warsi (d. 1936) whose poetry is regularly performed by qawwals in India and Pakistan. At least seven of Bedam Shah's poems are documented by Meraj Ahmed Qawwal for the purpose of qawwali performance. For instance, these verses describing the Chishti saints celebrating the festival of Holi in Braj dialect:

*Ganj-e Shakar ke lal Nijamudeen Chisht nagar mein phaag rachayo,
Khaja Moinudeen aur Qutub ke prem ke rang ki raini chadhayo.*

(Nizamuddin, the favourite of Baba Farid, plays the Holi in the town of Chisht,
Fills the water fountain with the colour of love for Khwaja Moinuddin and Qutbuddin Ka'ki)

¹² Avghat Shah Warsi's Faizan-e Warsi [Also known as Zamzama-e Qawwali] compiled by Anis Ahmed Warsi, Delhi: S.A. Publications, 2006.

¹³ Meraj Ahmed Qawwal's *Surood-e Ruhani, Qawwali ke Rang*, Delhi, 1998, p. 342.

There are many other poets of the region such as Aar Zoo Lakhnavi, Behzad Lakhnavi, Shakeel Bayuni, Majnun Lakhnavi, Nadir Kakorvi and others whose devotional verses are part of the qawwals' repertoire¹⁴. Several rural areas on the outskirts of Lucknow nurtured literature and performative traditions related to devotional Islam and Sufism that carry strong bonds of pluralism. One of them is Kakori, a small historic town outside Lucknow that has been famous for the scholars, poets and Sufis it produced. One of its poets, Mohsin Kakorvi (died 1905), not only wrote *na'tiya qaseedas* (long poems in praise of the Prophet Mohammad), but also syncretic Urdu songs like *Simt-e Kashi se chala janib-e Mathura badal* (a cloud from Kashi sailed towards Mathura...) that is full of devotion for lord Krishna. Kakori is also famous for Sufis Shah Muhammad Kazim Qalandar and Shah Turab Ali Qalandar whose poetry is full of mystic philosophy bearing Indian symbols of bhakti and references to lord Krishna (Tariq)¹⁵. These poet-mystics were also well versed in music and "their poetry is filled with *shanta rasa* (the emotion of tranquillity)" (Tariq 118) one of the nine *rasas* of Indian aesthetics. Poet Hasrat Mohani, born in 1875 at Unnao near Lucknow, was also a great admirer of Krishna and wrote several Urdu verses celebrating the romantic lore of Krishna and Radha as Sufi symbols of love.

***Qawwali* and Sufi Saints in Rohilkhand**

While exploring the *qawwali* and Sufi literature in Awadh, one cannot ignore the nearby, smaller provincial centres such as Rohilkhand which comprise towns like Rampur, Bareilly, Badaun and others, and had their own unique centres of Sufi culture, especially the shrines of several important saints. Nizamuddin Aulia himself was born in Badaun in 1238; the tomb of his father,

¹⁴ Anwar Kamal Hussaini's *Mehfil-e Qawwali*, [Urdu], Delhi: Farid Book Depot, 2004.

¹⁵ Shamim Tariq's *Sufta ki She'ri Basirat mein Shri Krishn*, Delhi: Educational Publishing House, 2009.

Syed Ahmad Bukhari, in the town is still visited by a large number of devotees. Many poets from Badaun (such as Fani Badayuni and Babu Haya Badayuni) wrote mystical and romantic poetry that is used by the qawwals. Bareilly is known for the Islamic scholar Ahmed Raza Khan (b.1856), whose followers have over the years inculcated a more syncretic and pantheistic Islam, involving 'innovations' or local religio-cultural practices, especially the listening of sama. Another Sufi, Shah Niyaz Barelvi (d. 1834), wrote hundreds of devotional and mystic poems in Persian and Urdu, that are sung by qawwals all over South Asia. For instance, the following is one of his Urdu ghazals that have been sung by the famous Pakistani vocalist Abida Parveen:

Ishq mein tere koh-e gham sar pe liya j oho so ho

Aish-o nishat-e zindagi chhod diya j oho so ho

(In your love, I took a mountain of woes on my head, let whatever happens, happen. I abandoned the luxuries and pleasures of life, let whatever happens, happen).¹⁶

While many of Shah Niyaz Barelvi's poems sung by qawwals such as his *maquebats* (praise) for personalities like Imam Ali (Raziallahu Ta'ala), saint Abdul Qadir Jeelani, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, and saint Nizamuddin Aulia are in Persian, some are also in Hindi or its local Bhojpuri dialect, such as the following verse:

Rooth gaye mose pritam pyare, kaho ri mein kaise mana'un re

Birha ki aag jarawat jiyara, un bin kaise bujhaun re

(My pretty beloved is angry with me, how do I please him now, The fire of separation burns my heart, how do I put it out without him) (Qawwal 375).

The region is named Rohil-khand due to the Rohilla pathans who came from Afghanistan and settled here in 18th century. Among other towns, Rampur was probably one of the strongest

¹⁶ Abida Parveen's *Raqs-e Bismil*, (audio cassette), Music Today, New Delhi, 2000. The English translation is author's own.

and culturally richest provincial regions after Lucknow, whose nawab's patronised music and literary traditions so much so that an entire *gharana* or school of classical music known as Rampur-Sahaswan *gharana* evolved, its many well known exponents having been active until today. While Nisar Husain Khan, Ghulam Mustafa Khan, Hafeez Ahmed Khan of this *gharana* regaled the audiences with their finest renditions of *khayal* and *tarana* throughout the 20th century, its most famous maestro today is Rashid Khan – representing one of the greatest *khayal* and *tarana* singers in India today. Besides the practice of classical music forms, the Rohilkhand region had a rich tradition of qawwali performance and learning, with many famous qawwal families active even in the 20th century. While Rampur still has north India's finest qawwals, such as Mohammad Ahmed Warsi (whose father performed in the court of the erstwhile nawab of Rampur), one of the best qawwals of 20th century was undoubtedly Jafar Husain of Badaun. The biggest reason for this region nurturing the qawwali tradition is the presence of a large number of tombs of different saints where *sama* is held. Besides the Sufi shrines, qawwali was/is also performed in this region at public venues such as during annual *melas* or fetes, which originally started as cattle fairs. Such venues promoted qawwali and poetry sessions in other nearby towns as well, such as in Aligarh, where 20th century's famed qawwals like Habib Painter had a great following. Habib Painter's qawwali had an emphasis on powerful lyrics rather than music and instrumentation – he often wrote his own poetry and also used verses from bhakti poets like *mirabai* and *kabir*.

What could be the reasons why qawwali thrived much more in the Rohilkhand region of north India than in Awadh, at least in the 19th and 20th centuries? Some of the reasons are certainly the Rampur nawabs' preferences for Shi'a-related liturgical music and the classical entertainment forms. But another factor could be the presence of a large number of Rohilla pathans who migrated from

Afghanistan into the Rampur-Bareilly region and brought with them their own rustic musical forms, especially a song type known as *chahar bayt*, literally meaning a quartet or ‘four lines’. Although *chahar bayt* sounds very little like other Indo-Muslim musical forms such as qawwali, *ghazal* or any classical vocal form, but qawwali of Rohilkhand region, it seems, may have been influenced slightly by this high energy singing style of the *pathans*, especially in the delivery of its lyrics. The *dafs* (a large-sized frame drums) are the main instruments of *chahar bayt* singing that are not only played by a couple of group members, but also used to improvise the dance-like actions of the singers. A solo recitation of the main poem in moderate or slow tempo is interspersed by vigorous repetitions or refrains of the first line. There is no clapping involved, but the singers do raise or wave their hands towards the audience to stress on certain words. A direct and frank addressing of the lyrics to the audience and the refrains in a chorus are at least some of the elements that can be found common between *qawwali* and *chahar bayt*.

Contemporary Situation of Qawwali in Awadh

Despite Lucknow’s meagre heritage of contemporary qawwali, one cannot ignore the few qawwals from the town that did perform in 20th century. Artists such as Agghan Qawwal, Asif Ali, Faruq, Patrick Qawwal, Raju and Sarvar Husain performed both at the shrines as well as concerts. The town of Kakori itself boasted of many qawwals in 20th century, such as Ali Waris, Azimullah, Jaffar Husain, Kalam, Mohammad Umar, Nusrat, and Rais whereas M. Zahir Khan came from the town of Malihabad and Murli qawwal from Shahjahanpur.¹⁷ Interestingly, Murli’s father was called Kanhai Qawwal and his son performs with the name Raju, even though they are Muslim. Much of their repertoire carries lyrics in local Bhojpuri or Awadhi dialect. Sadly, many of

¹⁷ Regula B Qureshi’s *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context and Meaning in Qawwali*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 261.

these qawwals could not find larger popularity, probably because they were not promoted either by the recording industry or the Bombay cinema, which incidentally brought many other qawwals such as Ismail Azad, Jani Babu, or Shankar-Shambhu into limelight. But at least one important qawwali group hailing from Lucknow, whose live concert recording was released in 1983 by the Gramophone Company of India Ltd. (EMI), is Afsar Husain Khan and party. Afsar's rustic and seasoned voice reveals the traditional style of qawwali that was common in north India in much of early part of 20th century. He not only sings a traditional *Basant* composition (normally performed at Chishti shrines) but also several contemporary Urdu compositions such as Bedam Shah Warsi's *Be khud kiye dete hain* or one of Jigar Muradabadi's popular ghazals *Yeh hai maikada yaha rind hain*.¹⁸

A question that one may ask is whether the qawwali of Awadh region (or north-central India) is any different from the qawwali style of Punjab region or Pakistan where it is equally (or probably more) active. One of the important differences is that Punjabi or Pakistani *qawwals* are characterized by a vigorous and powerful folksy style of singing in which rhythm and vocal intonation play a significant role (for instance in the case of the late Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan or Abida Parveen), whereas the qawwals of Awadh/Uttar Pradesh or Delhi often give more stress on the lyrics to inspire the Sufis in their spiritual quest. For instance, Jaffar Hussain qawwal of Badaun uses a subtle and comparatively slow style of singing Urdu poetry without using too much vocal dramatics. The repertoire of north India's qawwals features nuances of Urdu/Persian poetry and literary idiom, often combining the bhakti of Krishna-Radha and other local lore whereas the Punjabi musicians use their own regional legends like Bulleh Shah, Heer-Ranjha and others.

¹⁸ *In Concert... The famous qawwal of Lucknow*, Afsar Husain Khan with Kafeel Husain Khan, EMI, ECSD 2922, 1983. (Features 6 songs)

Conclusion

Lucknow, which evolved between 18th and 20th centuries as one of the most important centres for the promotion of music and devotional arts in north India, is sadly losing much of its cultural sheen today. Besides *thumri* and *kathak* which still survive, there is hardly any other form whose practitioners can still be proud of their current state of the arts. According to the late Naushad - one of Lucknow's best known imports in the field of Indian cinema - 'Lucknow's *gayeki gharana* (vocal music school) could not survive the way other *gharanas* such as those from Gwalior or Kirana, even though the city produced great maestros of music in the past.' One of the reasons for this, according to Naushad, is that the writers who compiled history did not think of documenting the lives of musicians and other traditional performers, assuming them to be of 'low' strata of the society (Naushad 20). Abbas (2006) expressed that "Naushad moved from Lucknow to Mumbai in the late 1930s to try his luck in films. Initially, he had to struggle and even had to spend nights on the footpath."¹⁹ Naushad himself worked hard through several decades to become one of the greatest music composers of Indian cinema, often using devotional and mystic music in his scores. While the still-surviving qawwals in Awadh, especially those connected with the Sufi shrines like *Dewa sharif*, try hard to make a living, they do remember music directors like Naushad with nostalgia for the old times that may seem difficult to come back now.

¹⁹ Abbas Shirin's "Naushad passes away in Mumbai; from Barabanki, qawwal mourning," *Indian Express*, Lucknow, May 06, 2006.

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Maizbhandari Sufi Music: A Study from Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

Sufis spread Islam worldwide through 'love', the essence of Islam. Sufi Music is a type of music that is composed around the Sufis' divine love and rapture. Sufi music has been known under various names and forms over time for example, - 'Mystic Music', 'Qawwali Song', 'Lalan Geeti' etc. Similarly, this form of music has been known as Maizbhandari Sufi Music from the time of Gauth al-Azam Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah (R.). Although this form of music has been known as Maizbhandari music, it is actually Sufi music. Sufi music and Maizbhandari Sufi music have the same characteristics. Maizbhandari Sufi music is unique in that it is the most recent independent version of Sufi music. The Quran and Hadith validate the lyrics of the Maizbhandari Sufi songs, which arouses love for Allah. Due to a lack of awareness regarding Sufi songs and Maizbhandari Sufi songs, some people are spreading false information, claiming that these types of songs are not permitted under Islamic legislation. The purpose of this study is to show that the Maizbhandari Sufi songs do not contradict the Quran, Hadith, Ijma, and Qiyas, rather is supported by the four Sharia jurisprudence and it is a technique of scientific approach for attracting people to the way of Allah. The data have been collected from books, journals, and periodicals and analyzed using the qualitative research approach to verify the Maizbhandari Sufi songs. The findings of the study reveal that Maizbhandari Sufi music is approved by Islamic Sharia and when it is practiced, divine love is aroused in the heart of the travelers on the path of Allah. Hopefully, the truth-seeking human community will find the proper way in regards to Maizbhandari Sufi music through this study.

Keywords

Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari (R.), Sufi Music, Spiritual Music, Maizbhandari Sufi Music, Mystic Music

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Introduction

Sufism is the essence of Islam, and one of the key themes of Sufism is Sufi music or *sama*. The Sufis used a variety of techniques and approaches to attract people to the path of Allah. Sufi music (the devotional song) is one of the strategies for arousing ecstasy and divine love in the hearts of those who are apathetic or sleeping. It is composed and sung with the intention of arousing devotion to Allah and His Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh). This song is a manifestation of Allah's, the Prophet's, and the Sufi master's admiration. Sufi music, *sama* (the devotional song), and Maizbhandari Sufi music are interrelated. The contents of those songs are approved by four Islamic legislations. Sufi music can be traced back to the Prophetic period. The greatest Sufis were those who accompanied the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh). We can see that there were songwriters, melodists, and artists among the Prophet's companions (pbuh). Although Sufi music has taken on numerous titles over time, the basic theme has stayed unchanged throughout centuries. Hussain pointed out that

When Hazrat Khawja Mu'in al-Din Chisti arrived in India, he noticed that the Indian people enjoyed music; therefore he developed a new approach known as Sufi music. He had succeeded in bringing the masses of India beneath the shadow of Islam by adopting this strategy (150).²

For ages, there has been a debate and dispute between legalists and Sufis on *sama* (the devotional songs). The debate includes a wide range of issues concerning *sama*, including listening to music, using musical instruments, dancing in the *sama*, and clapping hands and stamping feet during the *sama*. The non-Sufi legalists' main argument is that listening to music is outlawed in

² The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text:

“খাজা মঈনুদ্দীন চিশতী (ক.) পাক ভারতে আসিয়া ভারতবাসীকে বাদ্য প্রিয় মজাকী রুচি সম্পন্ন দেখিয়া তাহাদের রুচি অনুযায়ী বাদ্যযন্ত্রকে তরীকতের উপাদান ও হেকমত হিসাবে গ্রহণ অনুমোদন করিয়া ভারতবাসীকে হেদায়ত করিতে সক্ষম ও সফলকাম হইয়াছিলেন।”

Islam and they have quoted verses from the Holy Quran as well as Hadith quotes to back up their claims. However, these verses and Hadith cannot be used to argue that the Sufi songs (*sama*) are unlawful. Sufi theologians have researched and analyzed non-Sufi legalists' proof that there are no clear instructions in those references about the topic of whether Sufi songs are prohibited or not which has been clear by Gribetz's analysis, He says, "The weakness in these arguments stems from the fact that 'music' and 'singing' are not specifically mentioned, but are Merely inferred" (45).

Ibn Taymiya (661-728 AD), a Hanbalite theologian who was a detractor of the *sama*, divided it into three categories: lawful *sama*, permissible *sama*, and unlawful *sama*. Ibn Taymiya's usage of the word "*sama*" does not refer to Sufi music; rather, he is referring to the verbal sense of the word "*sama*," which is "listening," as in "listening to the Holy Quran. According to his interpretation, the lawful *sama* is listening to the Holy Quran, and to prove his claim, he quotes the following verse from the Holy Quran, 'For, Believers are those Who, when Allah is mentioned, Fell a tremor in their hearts, And when they hear His revelations rehearsed, find Their faith strengthened, And put (all) their trust In their Lord;' (Al-Quran, 8:2).

We shall attempt to explain the legalists' arguments and provide an answer based on the Quran, Hadith, *Ijma*, *Qiyas*, and Sufi theologians' opinion such as Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali, Abu Nasr al-Sarraj, al-Hujwiri, and Shihab al-Din Suhrawardy. Sufi songs, *sama*, and Maizbhandari Sufi songs are designed in such a way that the songs' objectives are to arouse divine love. A Sufi's sole purpose is to enhance his relationship with Allah. As a result, a Sufi engages in a variety of spiritual pursuits in the path of Allah, and Sufi songs and Maizbhandari Sufi songs are among the spiritual pursuits that can assist him in achieving ecstasy in the love of Allah. Therefore, the aim of the study is to show that the

Maizbhandari Sufi song does not contradict the Quran, Hadith, *Ijma*, and *Qiyas*, but rather is supported by the four Sharia jurisprudence and it is a technique of scientific approach for attracting people to the way of Allah.

Research Objectives

The Objectives of the current research are:

- a. To present the arguments of non-Sufi theologians and legalists who are against Sufi songs and to refute their arguments on the basis of the Quran, Hadiths, and Sufi theologians' judgments.
- b. To show that Sufi song and *sama* are permissible in Islam.
- c. To prove that the Maizbhandari songs are one kind of Sufi songs and it does not contradict the Quran, Hadith, *Ijma*, and *Qiyas*.
- d. To prove Sufi Songs and Maizbhandari Songs are the scientific approach for bringing people to the way of Allah.

Research Questions

The current research tries to find out the answers of the following research questions:

- a. What are the arguments of non-Sufi theologians and legalists against Sufi songs and how can we refute them on the basis of the Quran, Hadiths, and Sufi theologians' judgments?
- b. What kind of song is the Maizbhandari song? Can it contradict the Quran, Hadith, *Ijma*, and *Qiyas*?
- c. How can we prove that Sufi Songs and Maizbhandari Songs are the scientific approaches for bringing people to the way of Allah?

Literature Review

Islam is a sophisticated, liberal, peaceful, and loving religion. The core principle of this religion is the creation of a union between humans and the Creator. Sufi music has the ability to

create ecstasy (*wajd*) in the heart of the seeker of the way of Allah. Sufi music includes the *sama* as well. Listening, and audition are the literal meanings of *sama*, which alludes to music, singing, chanting, and reciting that can evoke religious emotion and ecstasy (*wajd*). In this case, Gribetz says, “*sama* (‘listening,’ ‘hearing,’ ‘audition’) refers to the listening to music, singing, chanting and measured recitation designed to bring about religious emotion and ecstasy (*wajd*)” (43). *Sama*, according to Leonard Lewisohn, “The creation of a specific liturgy, composed of prayer, litanies, singing, music and sometimes dance, known as *sama*” (1).

Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 AD) believes that the heart is the seat of secret things and that it contains a valuable mine of jewels. The most valuable jewels are hidden in the heart, just as fire is hidden in stone and iron, and water is hidden at the bottom of the ground. There is no way to rouse someone up from sleeping unless they hear sweet sounds. “There is no path of sound entering into heart without the door of ear. The feelings that lie hidden in heart are brought out by sweet, melodious and rhymed sounds” (162).

Chishti and Khan state that in *sama*, the most important thing is ecstasy. Higher levels of love and real devotion to the Almighty Allah might lead to ecstasy. The *sama's* fundamental purpose is to establish a profound link between the Creator and human beings. The ecstasy known as truth (*wajdal-haq*) can be experienced in *sama*. In order to get the best benefit from *sama*, the early Sufis prescribed three criteria. “These include time, place and company. If anyone among these is missing, *Sama* will not prove to be a profitable” (286). Hussain asserts that

In Maizbhandari *tariqa*, there is no precondition to recite *dhikr* with musical instruments. Because *Gauth al-Azam Hazrat Maulana Syed Ahmad Ullah* is the *Mujaddid Auliya* (the age-reformer saint), he has appeared in gatherings and assemblies of various nations and religions with various scientific tastes in the modern scientific age. As a strategy

based on place, time, and individuality, he used to allow Sufi songs, musical instruments, and *ghazals* to be used as *dikir's* material (150).³

Bertocci affirms that following the Chishtia sect, *Hazrat Maulana* Syed Ahmad Ullah permitted the practice of Sufi music with musical instruments as a mode of worship. The Maizbhandari School is reported to have generated hundreds of published Sufi songs in the first century after its inception, representing a distinct lyrical tradition (the Maizbhandari *gaan*) within the genre of native Bengali sacred music. The Chishtis believe that *sama*, the use of musical performance, is a unique significance that has been an integral part of this order from the Delhi sultanate times on to the Mughal era, and they insist that according to Bruce Lawrence “*sama* was an essential component of spiritual discipline” (14).

Methodology

The data has been analyzed using a qualitative research method. Primary and secondary data sources have been used. The information has been gathered from books, journals, periodicals, and previously published and unpublished research papers. In the findings and results section, we have first attempted to demonstrate non-Sufi theologians' objections to *sama* as well as Sufi songs, and then we have responded to them using an analytical research approach to determine whether it is permissible or not. Second, we have attempted to show that Sufi songs and *sama* are permissible in Islam, citing the Quran, Hadiths, and Sufi theologian perspectives to support our claims. Third, we have created a historical context for the Maizbhandari songs, as well as the songwriters, in order to prove that the Maizbhandari song is a kind

³ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text: “মাইজভাণ্ডারী তরীকায় বাদ্যযন্ত্র সহকারে জিকির করিতে হইতে এমন কোন বাধ্যবাধকতা নাই। যেহেতু গাউড়ুল আজম মাইজভাণ্ডারী (ক.) আধুনিক বৈজ্ঞানিক যুগের বিভিন্ন মজাকীয় বৈজ্ঞানিক রুচি সম্পন্ন বিভিন্ন জাতির ও ধর্মের সমাবেশ ও সংমিশ্রণস্থলে আত্মপ্রকাশিত মোজাদ্দেদ আউলীয়া। গান, বাজনা ও গজল গীতিকে স্থান, কাল, পাত্র ভেদে জিকিরি উপাদান বা হেকমত হিসাবে অনুমোদন ও করার অনুমতি দিতেন।”

of Sufi music incapable of arousing divine love and ecstasy in the hearts of devotees.

Findings and Results

***Sama* and Sufi music: A historical background**

Arabic music was utilized for dancing and marching in the pre-Islamic period, with drums and flutes as instruments. This sort of music elicited emotion as well as a serious tone. During pre-Islamic periods, the Arabs continued to practice this culture. There are many hadiths related to Islamic music during the time of the Prophet (pbuh). The hadiths prove that Islamic music or Sufi music is valid. In this connection, Gribetz quoted a Hadith which is mentioned in the following:

Abu Bakr coming into 'A'isha's presence on the Day of B'ua'th, and finding two young girls singing and beating on tambourines, while Muhammad is resting with his robe over his head. When Abu Bakr rebukes them for their singing, Muhammad intervenes and permits them to continue, since it is a holiday (46).

The word *sama* is most likely derived from the Arabic word 'sami'a', which means 'he heard'. Music is said to be *sama* because it must be heard with the heart's ear. Music was once thought to be a branch of philosophy and mathematics. Al-Kindi (801–873 AD) of Iraq was a great Muslim scholar who demonstrated the impact of melodies on the hearts and souls of humans. He was the first to use music's therapeutic qualities, which he had stated in his book *Tales of Wise Men*. Al-Farabi (870–950 AD) also discussed about the impacts of music and it was stated in IECRC booklet,

Man and the animal under the impulsion of their instincts emit sounds that express their emotions, as they can be one of joy or fear. The human voice expresses greater variety – sadness, tenderness, rage. These sounds in the diversity of

its notes cause in the person that listens to them such shades of feelings or passions, raising him, controlling him or tranquilizing him. (IECRC 12).

Although *sama* has been practiced since the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), “by the end of the 11th century, *sama* was a spiritual concert” (IECRC 12-13). It was sometimes performed by soloists or choruses with instrumental accompaniment. *Sama mahfil* was held at the time under the supervision of a Sheikh or Sufi master. Although there is dispute and controversy about *sama*. However, Sufi theologians believe that *sama* is the only type of spiritual pursuit that awakens divine love in the Sufi follower's inner heart.

***Sama* and Sufi music controversy: An analytical response to non-Sufi legalists**

Gribetz says that the debate and dispute surrounding *sama* began as early as the ninth century when the Hanbalites came to power, and a rich literature against the *sama* was also formed. The *sama* and Sufi songs are forbidden by the legalists because it is comparable to common songs like sensuous music, pre-Islamic and non-Islamic music. Because this type of song is not sanctioned by the Islamic Shariah, *sama* is also considered an illegal song and is therefore prohibited. The legalists have presented verses from the Holy Quran to back up their claims. But the illegality of listening to music is not explicitly stated in those verses. However, their claim is that “Music is equated with poetry, and therefore considered to be forbidden” (44). The following verse is presented on behalf of their claim:

And the Poets, It is those straying in Evil, Who follow them. Seest thou not that they Wander distracted in every Valley? And that they say what they practice not? (Al-Quran, 26:224-226).

Brelovi points out that

The above verse was revealed in the context of the *kafir* (unbeliever) poets of Arabia. Because those poets used to write poems condemning the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh) and would claim that they could write whatever the Prophet told. And the misguided people of their community used to compile the poems from them (683).⁴

As a result, the Almighty Allah revealed the verse above, chastising the poets. In this Quran, Allah warns us not to follow in the footsteps of those poets who used their poetry to attack the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh). Therefore, the verse was revealed reprobating those poets who had composed the poems condemning the Prophet. It will be permitted if the poem's contents are composed in praise of Almighty Allah and the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). In this context, Gulam Rasul Sayeedi stated that

Hazrat Abu Hurayrah (R) narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said that the most truthful saying is that what a poet said, as the poet Labid's saying: Listen! Everything is destructible except Allah (541)⁵.

The poet Hazrat Hassan bin Sabit (R) was also blessed by the Prophet since he authored poems praising him. He was blessed by the Prophet, who said, "Oh Allah, help him through Gabriel".

It is lawful to write poetry in which the contents are written in praise of Allah and His Prophet. It is not reasonable to prove that listening to music is forbidden by the above verse. If it is

⁴ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text: "এ আয়াত কাফির কবিদের প্রসঙ্গে অবতীর্ণ হয়, যারা বিশ্বকুল সর্দার সাল্লাল্লাহু তা'আলা আলায়হি ওয়াসাল্লামের সমালোচনা করে কবিতা রচনা করতো। আর বলতো, 'মুহাম্মদ মোস্তফাসাল্লাল্লাহু আলায়হি ওয়াসাল্লাম। যেমন বলেন, আমরাও তেমনি বলতে পারি। আর তাদের সম্প্রদায়ের পথভ্রষ্ট লোকেরা তাদের নিকট থেকে উক্ত কবিতাগুলো সংকলন করতো।"

⁵ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Urdu text: حضرت ابو ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ بیان کرتے ہیں کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا سب سے سچی بات جو کسی شاعر نے کہی ہے وہ لیبید کی بات کی ہے۔ الا کل شیء ما خلا اللہ باطل

permissible to compose poems praising Allah and His Messenger, Sufi music will also be permissible as the contents of both are the same.

Ibn al-Jawzi (1116-1201 AD), a Hanbalites theologian in Baghdad in the twelfth century, provided three verses from the Holy Quran to show that singing was forbidden. These three verses are: (1) But there are, among men, Those who purchase idle tales, Without knowledge (or meaning), To mislead (men) from the Path Of Allah (31:6) (2) Wasting your times in vanities? (*wa-antum samidiina*) (53: 61) (3) And Arouse those Whom thou canst among them, With thy (seductive) voice" (17: 64). To emphasize the disapproval of singing from these verses, he brought up the following arguments.

The first verse above relates to singing, which is supported by tradition. Gribetz argues that "the word '*samada*' is a Himyarite word" (45) that alludes to singing in the second verse of the above-mentioned. The third verse of the above mentioned refers also to singing and music.

Music and singing are not specifically addressed in such verses, according to Quran interpreters, but are just assumed. The following responses can be gathered from non-Sufi legalists' arguments based on the verses above: The word "*samada*" implies "singing" in the perspective of Akrama (R). When the Holy Qur'an was recited in front of disbelievers, they used to sing to divert themselves from the words of the Qur'an. Here, the term "*samada*" refers to such a type of singing which is non-Islamic. Although it is forbidden to sing either an Islamic or a Sufi song while reciting the Holy Quran. As a result, singing a non-Islamic song while reciting the Holy Quran, which is *haram*, is out of the question. Therefore, using the above-mentioned verse to express disapproval of Sufi

music or *sama* is not acceptable. Sayeedi states that “Dhahaq wrote: “*Samdun*” means the arrogant” (573).⁶

Brelovi pointed out that regarding the commentary of the third verse mentioned above, Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas (R) said that “The voice that comes out of the mouth which is contrary to the contentment of Allah is the voice of *Satan*” (524).⁷ Therefore, this verse does not prove that Sufi music is not permissible.

***Sama* and Sufi music: An Islamic perspective on its legitimacy**

Sweet voices and tones have a significant impact on us all. Even Allah, the Almighty, has exalted the sweet voice and disliked the bad voice. This topic has been stated in the following verse, Allah declares, “And be moderate In thy pace, and lower Thy voice; for the harshest Of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass” (Al-Quran, 31:19).

It has been observed that when Sufi songs are sung in a melodious, lovely tone, the listeners are influenced. In some cases, ecstatic listeners lose their senses. Thus, Sufi music can contribute to developing divine love in the hearts of listeners. The following verse has also been used in defense of *sama*: “So announce the Good News To My Servants, Those who listen To the Word, And follow The best of it” (Al-Quran, 39:17-18). In the above verse the term ‘the Word’ refers to *al-qawl* which means according to Gribetz’s statement that “*al-qawl* is thought by some to refer to *ghina*” (45).

Innocent music or Sufi music is not forbidden in Islam, but it is in accordance with the Sharia. In this connection, Aminul Hoque Forhadabadi quoted the following hadith,

⁶ The quoted extract is authors’ own translation from original Urdu text:

ضحاک نے لکھا: “سامدون” کا معنی ہے: تکبر کرنے والے

⁷ The quoted extract is authors’ own translation from original Bengali text:

“যেই আওয়াজ আল্লাহ তায়ালার সন্তুষ্টির পরিপন্থী, মুখ থেকে বের হয় তা হচ্ছে শয়তানী আওয়াজ।”

Hazrat Imam Ahmad and Hazrat Imam Bukhari narrated from Hazrat Ayesha (R) that when a newly-married woman was taken to the house of one of the Ansar, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'Did you not play music with them? Because of the Ansar love music (52).⁸

It is permissible to sing innocent songs with or without the accompaniment of instruments. These kinds of music can bring joy to the listeners as well as divine love.

In his book *Kitab al-Luma' fit –Tasawwuf*, Abu Nasr al-Sarraj al-Tusi (d.988 AD), a famous Sufi of Islamic mysticism, discussed in detail about *sama*. He has shown the topic through references from the Quran, the traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and the views of the Sufis to prove the *sama* is valid by Islamic Sharia. In his book, he addressed the importance and significance of a beautiful and melodious voice, citing the Quran and the Prophet's traditions. In this regard, he quoted the Prophet (pbuh) as saying, "Allah has not sent any prophet who has not been endowed with a beautiful voice." (Al-Tusi 338).⁹ Sweet and beautiful voices have the ability to draw people to Allah's path. In the book, he also explored the ideas of a few other Sufis who argued in favor of *sama*. The following are a few of these quotations:

When Hazrat Dhoun al-Noon Misri was asked about *sama*, he said that it is a state revealed by Allah that makes people's hearts restless and drives slaves towards Allah. As a result, everybody who listens to it with sincerity becomes

⁸ The quoted extract is author's own translation from original Bengali text: ইমাম আহমদ এবং বুখারী (রা:) হযরত আয়শা (রা:) হইতে বর্ণনা করেন যে, এক নব বিবাহিতা স্ত্রীলোককে (তাহার স্বামী) জনৈক আনছারের ঘরে নিয়া যাওয়া হইলে হযরত রাসুলুল্লাহ (দ:) বলিলেন, "তোমাদের সহিত কি গান-বাজনা নাই। কেননা আনছারগণ গান-বাজনা ভালবাসিয়া থাকেন।"

⁹ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Arabic text: "ما بعث الله نبيا الا احسن الصوت"

a truthful person. And whoever hears it with evil desires becomes irreligious (Tusi 397).¹⁰

Tusi (1996) also quoted that when Abul Hasan Nuri was asked about Sufis, he replied that “A Sufi is a person who listens to *sama* and distributes his wealth to others” (Tusi 1996, 398).¹¹

Chishti and Khan mention that only the exoteric *ulema* (*Ahle-e-zahar*) outlawed *sama*, according to Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058-1111 AD), a famous Islamic philosopher and scholar. They do not believe that *sama* has the ability to generate divine love. They think that love, affection, emotion, and friendship can only exist between people of the same gender or between homosexuals. The Sufis' assertions of adoration, love, or *ishq* with Allah, according to the exoteric *ulema*, are completely false. When they had been asked about what is the meaning of love with Allah which is vital for a man. They simply answered that only the worship of Allah and abiding by the rules of Him (291).

Imam Ghazali presented a lot of documentary evidence in favor of *sama* in his impeccable book '*Thiya Ulumuddin*'. Abu Taleb Makki's opinion is also presented in his book. Al-Ghazali narrates that Abu Talib Makki, after analyzing the opinions of many scholars, has come to the conclusion that *sama* is lawful. In this context, he said, Abdullah Muwayyah and his other companions used to listen to *sama*. He added that on the day of certain blessings, the people of Makkah would listen to *sama* and the Medinites also used to hear to them. The sage Attar had two female slaves having a very melodious voice. His friends used to hear *sama* from them. Apart from them, *sama* was heard by the

¹⁰ The quoted extract is author's own translation from original Urdu text:

کسی نے ذوالنون رحمہ اللہ سے سماع کے متعلق سوال کیا تو انہوں نے فرمایا : یہ حق تعالیٰ کی طرف سے وارد ہونے والا ایک کیف ہوتا ہے جو دلوں کو بیقرار کر کے حق تعالیٰ کی طرف لے جاتا ہے لہذا جس نے اسے حق کے ساتھ سنا وہ صاحب حق ہو گیا اور جس نے اپنے نفس کے ساتھ سنا وہ، زندیق ہوا

¹¹ ”صوفی وہ ہے جو سماع سنتا ہو اور سامان دنیا اوروں کو دے دیتا ہو“

saints Junaid Bagdadi, Sarri Sakti, Junnun Misri, Hares Mohasabi, and Ibne Hasan Askalani. Imam Ghazzali mentioned an incident in Mumsad Dinawari's dream. Once in a dream, Dinawari asked Hazrat Muhammad (pbuh), O Messenger of Allah (pbuh)! Do you dislike anything about *sama*? He replied, "I don't dislike it, but tell them that they should begin it with a verse of the Quran and finish it with its verse" (163).

Chishti and Khan narrate that within the domain of *sama*, Abu Najib Suhrawardi defined three distinct types of listeners. First, those who make contact with Allah during *sama* and hear God's voice. Second, there are individuals who have given much thought to their situation, place, and time; third, there are Sufis whose hearts are devoid of worldly desires, who listen to the *sama* with the purity of heart, and who find their beloved Allah in *sama*. "These people are termed as being the most capable of listening to the *Sama*" (292).

Maizbhandari Sufi song: A historical background

The history of Maizbhandari songs or Maizbhandari Sufi music began in the late nineteenth century. These songs has been written and are continuing to be written based on the honor of *Gauth al-Azam Maizbhandari Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah* (1826-1906 AD), the founder of the Maizbhandari *tariqa*. These songs are usually Sufi music composed in a spiritual style. The lyrics, words, and appeal of these songs are in complete harmony with the concept of Sufi music. Although Maizbhandari music is basically spiritual music, it is inextricably linked with the cultural tradition of folk music of this country. According to Jahangir, although these songs originated in the late nineteenth century, the connection of these songs can be traced back to the old Bengali *Marfati* and *Murshedi* songs. Moreover, Maizbhandari songs can be found in the religious music of the court of Khwaja Nizam Uddin Aulia and Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti in Delhi and Ajmer. "*Sama*" was the genre of music that Khawaja Moinuddin

Chishti enjoyed. Songs of the *sema* (or *sama*) genre are sung at Maizbhandari rituals” (Jahangir 1999, 179).¹²

Jahangir also narrates that dr. Enamul Haque mentioned *sama* or Sufi music as a feature of the Chishti sect. He found a link between the Chishtia sect and the Maulviya sect in Maizbhandar. In this context, he said, ‘*halka*’ and ‘*sama*’ are almost always held ceremonially at the *dargah* of Maizbandar, especially during the annual fair (*Urs*). These two events have now become a feature of the *mastans* (the intoxicated by the divine love) here. ‘*halka*’ or circular dancing is a feature of the ‘Maulvi’ community introduced by Maulana Rumi. And ‘*sama*’ or glorification with the help of music is a feature of the Chishti sect. And Maizbhandari music is also similar to the *sama* features of this Chishtia sect. Jahangir also says that “Syed Murtaza Ali finds similarities in it [in the Maizbhandari song] with the rituals of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi's Maulbiya tariqa, especially the circular method” (Jahangir 1999, 180).¹³

Jahangir also comments that although Maizbhandari songs are related to other types of spiritual music in the spiritual music genre, this music has developed into its own genre in Bengali. The fact that these songs were written and are still being written in praise of *Gauth al-Azam Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah*, the founder of the Maizbhandari sect and later Sufis, is one of their distinguishing features. These songs were not composed by the founder of Maizbhandari *tariqa* or later Sufis, but rather by their devotees. Maizbhandari songs are different from the general genre of Bengali songs for several reasons. Firstly: Rabindra, Nazrul, Lalou, and Hasan Raja composed the songs themselves

¹² The quoted extract is authors’ own translation from original Bengali text:

“খাজা মঈন উদ্দীন চিশতী যেই ধরনের গান পছন্দ করতেন তাকে বলা হতো ‘সামা’। মাইজভাণ্ডারী সাধনমর্গে যে শ্রেণীর গান পরিবেশন করা হয় তাকেও বলা হয় ‘সেমা’ বা ‘সামা’।”

¹³ “সৈয়দ মূর্তজা আলী এতে [মাইজভাণ্ডারী গানে] মাওলানা জালালুউদ্দিন রুমীর মৌলবিয়া তরিকার সাধনমর্গের সাথে, বিশেষত বৃত্তাকারে ঘূর্ণায়মান পদ্ধতির সাথে সাদৃশ্য খুঁজে পেয়েছেন।”

and those songs are known and promoted by their names. But the Maizbhandari songs were not composed by the founder of Maizbhandari tariqa, but by his devotees. Secondly, after the death of Nazrul, Rabindra, Lalon, and Hasan Raja, the composing of those songs has been stopped, but the style of composing Maizbhandari songs is continued. Jahangir also adds that “The Composers of Maizbhandari Songs are the followers of Maizbhandari *Tariqa*” (Jahangir 1999, 182).¹⁴

The songwriters of Maizbhandari *Gaan*

It's difficult to pinpoint who penned the first Maizbhandari song. However, according to some, Hazrat Abdul Hadi Kanchanpuri has been identified as the first composer of Maizbhandari songs. The musical instruments with which Maizbhandari songs are performed are *Khanjari*, *Bella*, *Sarinda*, *Mridang*, Harmonium, and *Setar*. However, the use of harmonium and drums is more noticeable in the performance of Maizbhandari songs at present. According to Jahangir, the evolutionary trend of Maizbhandari songs can be divided into three parts. Firstly, the songs have been composed in honor of *Gauth al-Azam Maizbhandari Hazrat Maulana* Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah, the founder of the Maizbhandari tariqa. The notable composers in this genre are Maulana Abdul Hadi Kanchonpuri, Maulana Abdul Goni Kanchonpuri, Maulana Bajlul Karim Mondakini, Abdullah Bancharampuri, Rainhan and many more. These songs composed by them were performed only in *sama mahfils* at that time. Secondly, songs were composed in honor of Hazrat Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari's nephew and his chief caliph Hazrat Maulana Syed Golam Rahman Maizbhandari (1865-1937). The notable composer of the Maizbhandari songs composed in his honor is folk poet Ramesh Sheel. Poet Ramesh Sheel was not only a lyricist but

¹⁴ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text: “মাইজভাণ্ডারী গানের রচয়িতা হলেন মাইজভাণ্ডারী আশেক ভক্তকুল।”

also a composer, and artist. Jahangir also comments that “He enriched the genre of Maizbhandari songs by composing more than three hundred songs” (Jahangir 1999, 183).¹⁵

Thirdly, Maizbhandari songs were composed in honor of Syed Delawor Hussain Maizbhandari (1893-1982), Syed Ziaul Hoque Maizbhandari (1928-1988), and Syed Shafiul Bashir Maizbhandari (b.1999). Notable composers, in this case, are Fakir Farid Hossen, Abdul Gafur Hali, Syed Mohiuddin (Mohi al-Bhandari), and many more.

Maizbhandari Song: An individual version of the Sufi song

Maizbhandari songs are in perfect accord once with Sufi music in terms of melody, rhythm, language, and mood. The contents of Maizbhandari songs are about *tawhid*, the praise of Allah's messenger, and devotion to the Sufi master. Another special feature of Maizbhandari Sufi music is that it is the latest standalone version of Sufi music. In addition to religious formality, more emphasis is placed on moral religion. That is to say, it gives more importance to the internal beauty of the religion than external beauty. Jahangir mentioned the following Maizbhandari song as evident:

“Practice-Breathing in and out- “La Ilaha Illallah,”

Everywhere-within and without-is “La Ilaha Illallah”.

At each center, the sarangi strings are tuned to precious love.

Utter the name of the Creator, “La Ilaha Illallah.”

Inside the seven-hued abode, she dances to music divine;

Entranced in love, utter “La Ilaha Illallah”

In the heart of every devotee is the ever-presence of Gaus-Pir. Hadi is tutored by his Pir in “La Ilaha Illallah” (Jahangir 2018, 21).

Syed Abdul Hadi Kanchonpuri (1870-1905 AD) composed the aforementioned song. He was one of the spiritual representatives of

¹⁵ The quoted extract is authors' own translation from original Bengali text.

“তিন শতাব্দিক মাইজভাণ্ডারী গান রচনা করে তিনি এ জগতকে সমৃদ্ধ করে তুলেছেন।”

Gauth al-Azam Maizbhandari Syed Ahmad Ullah (1826-1906 AD). The fundamental issue in Islam is *tawhid* (Allah's oneness), which is acknowledged by all religions. The *tawhid* as well as the praise of the Sufi master is covered in the above song. A Sufi song must be linked to the fundamental concepts of Islam, *tawhid*, and *risalat* (prophecy), as well as the Sufi master's appreciation. A Maizbhandari song meets all of the Sufi song's requirements. The above-mentioned song exemplifies this. We can confidently say that the Maizbhandari song is a Sufi song.

Maizbhandari music is a relatively new contribution to the Sufi music world. It conveys the same feeling of divine love as other Sufi songs. The Maizbhandari songs are chanted to conduct *sama mahfil*. However, Syed Delawor Hussain Maizbhandari (1893-1982 AD) has stated several other conditions that must be met in order to do a *sama* program. The Sufi followers must perform ablution before executing a *sama mahfil*, and the presence of the Sufi master or his appointed representative is also required. According to Hussain, in order to carry out a *sama mahfil*, the organizer and the Sufi followers must meet twelve conditions; if any of these conditions is not met, the *sama mahfil* won't be fruitful.

Discussion

Some songs are not recognized as songs by non-Sufi theologians, but they have an appeal to be songs. This type of singing is regarded as *halal* (legal) by all, whether theologians are Sufis or non-Sufis. However, there is a lot of debate over whether Sufi music is *halal* or not. Sufi theologians have stated unambiguously that it is *halal*, that it can assist Sufi followers in developing their spiritually, and that it is one of the most powerful means of arousing divine love. Non-Sufi theologians, on the other hand, have taken a stand to prove that it is forbidden. Apart from that, there is no debate about sensual music. They are all in consensus that sensual music is *haram* (prohibited).

The good and bad sides of an item are determined by whether or not it contains illegal, injurious, or harmful elements. If anything is naturally good, the whole thing will definitely be good. The main themes of Sufi music and Maizbhandari songs are Allah's, His Prophet's (PBUH), and Sufi master's appreciation. If those songs include no illicit or sensual content, no one should infer they are prohibited or in violation of Islamic jurisprudence. That is why Sufi theologians have declared it *halal* (legal).

Limitation

This paper does have a limitation. We gathered data from the books of a few well-known theologians; however, the better the conclusion will be if many more theologians' viewpoints are incorporated to support the validity of the Sufi song. We have studied the songs composed by the early Sufis of the Maizbhandar domain in the case of Maizbhandari songs. We would get a better outcome if we could study more Maizbhandari songs, regardless of when they were written.

Conclusion

The primary goals of both the Sufi and Maizbhandari songs are to establish a link and a bridge between the Creator and His creations. Those songs aren't just for amusement; they play an important role in awakening divine love through the melodious voice of the songs. During the performance of the songs, it is seen that the audience and Sufi followers have lost their worldly senses and are all submerged in a deep sea of heavenly love. Ecstasy (*wajd*) is the term for this state. In Sufi terms, ecstasy is the primary ancillary. The worship of a Sufi devotee will be fruitless until the ecstasy is awakened. Sufi music's sole objective is to awaken the sleeping non-attachment senses to spiritual love. Maizbhandari music occupies a special place in Sufi music. Since most of these songs are composed in Bengali, they easily create a heavenly feeling in the hearts of the devotee. Because of their indigenous qualities, lyrics, and language, Maizbhandari songs are not only practiced by Sufi followers but they're also heard in the mouths of common people in Bangladesh. Due to its distinct characteristics, Maizbhandari music holds a distinctive place in Bangladeshi folk songs.

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Attitudes and Involvements in Maizbhandari Sufi Music of the People of Chattogram: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

Many Sufi saints have travelled to our Indian subcontinent from all over the world to spread the eternal message of Islam for centuries. The music produced around the Sufi's affectionate lifestyle and actual perceptions is called Sufi music. The main purpose of Sufi music is to awaken divine love, overcome all kinds of evils, and develop a pure spirit in humans. One of the most popular Sufi music in Chattogram, Bangladesh is Maizbhandari Sufi music. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitude of Chattogram people about Maizbhandari Sufi music and their involvement in it. The data have been gathered through a survey of 50 people. The descriptive technique was used to conduct this research study. The study found that the majority of respondents like listening to Maizbhandari music and have a positive attitude toward it, while a small minority do not listen to it and have a neutral attitude toward it.

Keywords

Maizbhandari Sufi Music, Field Survey, Sufi Music, Spiritual Music, Divine Love

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Introduction

Sufism is an Islamic path of “getting closer to Allah”, clearing the barriers that separate us from God through improving human lives. The teachings of Sufism are often presented through literature, poetry, dance and prayers. According to Pirani et al., “the wisdom of Sufism is found in their teaching, often appearing as books, poetry, dancing, art, calligraphy, exercises, and prayers” (Pirani et al. 379). It's termed ‘Sufi music’ when the poems are sung with musical instruments. Sufi music's primary aim is to promote Sufi doctrines and beliefs to all people. As a result, several Sufi orders or Sufi sects utilized it as a means of contact with the general public. As Markoff said,

Through ritual, many Sufi orders and Sufi-related sects throughout the world of Islam have been able to articulate doctrines and beliefs through artistic traditions such as sung poetry, instrumental music and dance-like movements (157).

Sufism started in the Middle East and expanded across Islam, particularly in India. About Sufism Hashmi and Khawaja wrote: “Such mystic dimension of Islam formally originated in the Middle East between ninth and tenth centuries and influenced the world of Islam predominantly the Indian Sub-Continent” (1476). The four major Sufi orders in the Indian sub-continent are *Quadriyyah*, *Chishtiya*, *Suhrawardiyya*, and *Naqshbandehiyyah*. About these Sufi order Hasmi and Khawaja stated that,

[...] the Sufi *sīlsīlāhs*(orders) prevalent here especially the Qādīrīyyāh, Chīshīyyāh, Suhārwardīyyāh and also Nāqshbāndīyyāh contributed a great deal in the literature, philosophy, theological ideas, doctrine of peace and upholding of human rights and social justice (1476).

Bangladesh is a South Asian country that belongs to the Indian subcontinent. This region is a hotspot for Sufism. Maizbhandari *tariqa* (Sufi sect or Sufi order) is a popular sect in this country.

According to Harder Maizbhandari *tariqa* is: "... the only Sufi order originated in Bengal and which has gained immense popularity in recent years" (5).

Gauth-ul-Azam Hazrat Shah Sufi Syed Ahmad Ullah Maizbhandari (1826-1906), the founder of Maizbhandari *tariqa*, is a descendant of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He was born in Maizbhandar village under Fatikchhari Upazila of Chattogram city in Bangladesh. It's the reason that Maizbhandari *tariqa* is called after the village. The Maizbhandari *tariqa* is very unique. Because Bertocci said that, "...the Maijbhandari tariqa reflects a melding of several of the Sufi orders..." (14). It is essentially a fusion of two prominent Sufi *tariqas*. As Alam said, "... it accommodates the two most dominant Sufi orders of South Asia, the *Qadiriyya* and the *Chishtiyya*, together" (30).

The Maizbhandari sect incorporates the *Quadriyyah* sect's *telawat-e-ozud* or 7th types of *dhikr* (the remembrance) into its *usul-e-sab'a* (Seven ways). On the other hand, it adopts *sama* (spiritual music) from *Chishtiya tariqa*. Alam explained it as,

Officially part of the Qadiriyya order, the Maizbhandariyya Tariqa integrates *telawat-e-ozud* or seven kinds of *dhikr* (invocation) from the Qadiriyya order with its *usul-e sab'a* or seven fundamentals of restraint (35).

The spiritual songs or Sufi songs produced in the context of the Maizbhandari *tariqa* are referred to as Maizbhandari *giti* or *gaan*. According to Harder, "In a broader, cultural sense, Maijbhandari songs (*māij'bhāṇḍārī gān* or *gīti*) are the centerpiece of the Maijbhandari tradition" (15).

The important feature of these songs is that the founder of Maizbhandari Tarika or the later spiritual greats did not compose any songs themselves, these songs were written around them. All these songs are composed mainly by

Maizbhandari devotees and followers⁴ (Jahangir 2012, 186).

The reformers of the era, the perfect saints, are used to call mankind to the path of Allah by applying various types of technique. They accept or permit *Zikir-e-Jali* or *Khafi* performances in honor of Allah, the Prophet, and the perfect saints with musical instruments and rhythmic dancing for some people in an effort to awaken love for Allah and His Prophet (pbuh) (Hossain Maizbhandari 150).

In the nineteenth century, Maizbhandari songs first appeared. Despite being a nineteenth-century kind of song, it is linked to Bengal's old *Marphati* and *Murshidi* songs. As a result, “Maizbhandari songs are an essential part of the *Marphati* and spiritual music genres” (Jahangir 1999, 179). Followers of Maizbhandari *tariqa* wrote and sang these songs throughout the years, making them famous across East Bengal's various socio-economic classes. These songs influenced people from all walks of life in East Bengal, whether they lived in the city or in the rural, whether they were well-educated or not. As a result, estimating the exact value of the number of Maizbhandari songs and composers is very challenging. However, according to Hans Harder, “While it is certainly impossible to even come close to determining the number of songs ever written, we can quite safely estimate that it runs into five digits – a figure” (15). On the other hand, Jahangir mentions that “Based on the data we have so far, 85 Maizbhandari songwriters have been identified”⁵ (Jahangir 2012, 195). Prominent among them are:

⁴ The quoted extract is translated from original Bengali text:

এই গানের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিশেষত্ব এই যে, মাইজভাণ্ডারী তরিকার প্রবর্তক বা পরবর্তীকালের আধ্যাত্মিক মহাপুরুষরা নিজেরা কোন গান রচনা করেননি, তাঁদেরকেই কেন্দ্র করে এই গানগুলো রচিত। মূলত মাইজভাণ্ডারী আশেক ভক্তরাই এ সমস্ত গানের রচয়িতা।

⁵ The quoted extract is translated from original Bengali text:

আমাদের এ পর্যন্ত প্রাপ্ত তথ্যে ৮৫ জন মাইজভাণ্ডারী গীতিকারের সন্ধান মেলে।

Maulana Abdul Hadi Kanchanpuri, Kabiyal Ramesh Shil, Maulana Abdul Gani Kanchanpuri, Maulana Abdus Salam Bhojpuri, Maulana Aminul Haque Harbangiri, Fakir Abdur Rahman, Maulana Bazlul Karim Mandakini, Abdul Gafur Hali, Monmohan Datta, etc”⁶ (Jahangir 1999, 182) (Jahangir 2018, 20)

Kabiyal Ramesh Shil (1877–1967) was a renowned songwriter, poet, and artist who established a new era in Maizbhandari song. About Ramesh, Priyanka wrote:

[...] Ramesh introduced a new phase for the Māijabhāndārī songs which came to be considered as a genre in itself. Ramesh started composing the Māijabhāndārī songs from 1923, although he is not the originator of the genre (324).

“Maulana Abdul Hadi Kanchanpuri is called the original creator of Maizbhandari songs”⁷ (Jahangir 2018, 21). In 1923, Ramesh Shil paid a visit to *Pir* Golamur Rahman (1865-1937) of Maizbhandar, who was Syed Ahmadullah Maizbhandari's spiritual successor and nephew. Priyanka stated it as, "It was in 1923 that Ramesh Shil first visited the *Pir* Golam Rahman (or Baba Bhandari) of the Māizabhāndār Darbar Sharif in Nazirhat near Chittagong" (324). Ramesh shil wrote many songs in his honor. “He has contributed to the world by writing more than 300 Maizbhandari songs”⁸ (Jahangir 1999, 183). His songs are very popular across East Bengal, particularly in Chattogram. Since Maizbhandari songs are so popular in Chattogram, we have looked at how involved and what kind of attitude people have towards them in this research.

⁶ The quoted extract is translated from original Bengali text:

মাওলানা আবদুল হাদী কাঞ্চনপুরী, কবিয়াল রমেশ শীল, মাওলানা আবদুল গণি কাঞ্চনপুরী, মাওলানা আবদুস সালাম ভূজপুরী, মাওলানা আমিনুল হক হারবাঙ্গিরি, ফকির আবদুর রহমান, মাওলানা বজলুল করিম মন্দাকিনী, আবদুল গফুর হালী, মনমোহন দত্ত প্রমুখ।

⁷ মাওলানা আবদুল হাদী কাঞ্চনপুরীকে এই গানের উদ্ভাবক বলে অভিহিত করা হয়।

⁸ তিন শতাব্দিক মাইজভাণ্ডারী গান রচনা করে তিনি এই জগতকে সমৃদ্ধ করে তুলেছেন।

Research Questions

- a. What is the attitude of the residents of Chattogram to the Maizbhandari Sufi music?
- b. How much involvement does the Chattogram community have in this particular music genre?

Literature Review

Bekkaoui and others (47) conducted a survey on Moroccan 1054 young participants to get a better understanding of how they see Sufism and religion. Their research showed that Moroccan youngsters have a positive view towards Sufism. More significantly, most participants believed that Sufism is crucial in preventing youth from going down the path of extremism. The authors of this paper said that,

The findings reveal that among Moroccan youth the adoption of Sufism's goals of moderation, introspection, spirituality, and mutual respect may be increasing while support for violent jihadism is waning (Bekkaoui et al. 47).

Butler-Dines (28) conducted similar research to evaluate whether youngsters engage in Sufism promotion sponsored by the Moroccan government. Additionally, "they used 2010 survey findings" (Bekkaoui et al. 47) to learn more about the youth perspective (Butler-Dines 3). According to the findings of this research, only a tiny percentage of young people join Sufi orders, despite having a favorable attitude towards Sufism. Butler-Dines claimed that,

The state's promotion of Sufism has not led to significant growth of youth participating in *tariqahs*. Only a small minority of youth actively engages with *tariqahs* and the importance of Sufism to Islam in Morocco is contested (28).

In Egypt, El-Taher and Amin examined what drives someone to listen to religious and spiritual music and then investigated if the music influenced individuals to adopt certain cultural behaviours.

The research found that religious and spiritual music has a strong influence in Egypt. People use this music genre for emotional healing. However, El-TaHER and Amin showed that,

[...] there is no relation between using the spiritual and religious music and doing some cultural activities such as reading books, attending concerts, or buying and selling related objects (93).

Iqbal and Farid made an effort to explain why Sufi shrines are visited. They analyzed why Sufi followers visit Sufi shrines and perform Sufi rituals, as well as how these activities fill them with happiness. After taking interviews from the followers, they found that many devotees travel to shrines to fulfill their most basic human needs, including social, economic, political, religious, physical, emotional, and spiritual ones. Besides this, most people go to shrines out of love and respect for Sufis. Iqbal and Farid asserted that,

The major objective of paying visits to Dargahs is the fulfillment of the desires based upon social, financial, political, religious, physical, mental and mystical aspects of the visitors' life. Also, a majority of visitors visit Dargahs owing to their devotion and reverence for the Sufis (951).

All of the preceding literature focused on people's perceptions of Sufism, Sufi rituals, and spiritual music, as well as their engagement with them. However, in this study, we have tried to study the very specific term "Maizbhandari Sufi music." The main aim of this research is to determine how individuals perceive and engage with this musical genre.

Methodology

Data collection process

We mainly collected data through a questionnaire. The survey was generated using the Google Form application. Later, the survey was made available to everyone via WhatsApp and

Facebook. We sent the form to a number of Facebook and WhatsApp groups as well as to individuals. The people of Chattogram were our primary concern. Before distributing the survey to everyone, a pilot or mini-survey was conducted with four people. Then their feedback was taken into account. We modified the survey based on comments from the pilot survey participants, translated it into Bengali, and distributed it to our target audience. We used these techniques to obtain a decent response.

The questionnaire preparation and analysis process

We have two goals based on our research questions: to assess people's attitudes towards Maizbhandari Sufi music and their degree of involvement with this music genre. This research uses a descriptive method to achieve these goals. Several open-ended and closed-ended questions are produced, which are divided into two parts based on the two goals. Most of the closed-ended questions used the nominal scale measurement.

Figure 1 shows the steps associated with developing the questionnaire. First, we questioned the participants about whether or not they listened to Maizbhandari Sufi music. If they say yes, we have asked 14 questions to determine their level of involvement in Maizbhandari *gaan* as well as their attitudes towards it.

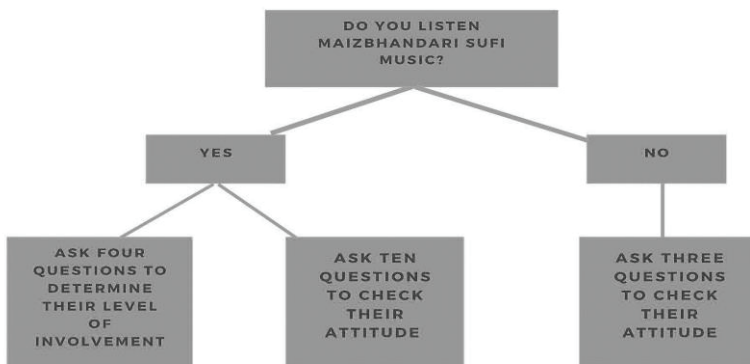


Figure 1: The procedure for designing the questionnaire

If they answer no, we have just asked three questions to assess their attitude toward Maizbhandari Sufi music. We can see that there is a distinction in the question as there is a division of opinion between those who listen to Maizbhandari music and those who do not. After receiving responses to the questionnaire, we evaluated the data using SPSS.

Results

Filtering Question

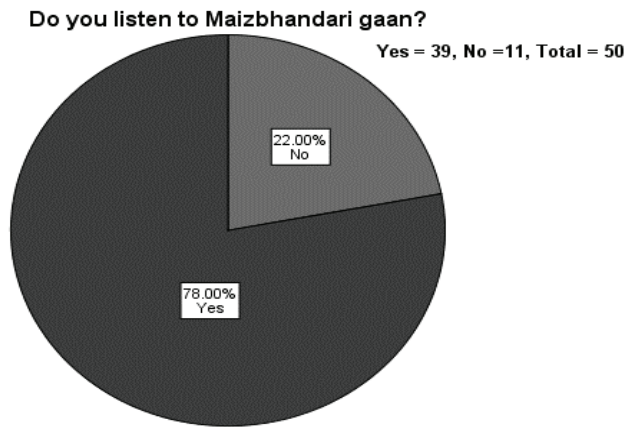


Figure 2: Filtering question

The first question directed towards the participants was “Do you listen to Maizbhandari *gaan*?” “Out of 50 people, 39 listen to Maizbhandari music and 11 do not. That is, 78% said yes and 22% said no.

Involvement in Maizbhandari Sufi music of those people who listen to it

Fourteen questions were addressed to the participants who listen to Maizbhandari music in order to identify their attitudes and participation with Maizbhandari Sufi music. Among these 14 questions, there were four questions in all to assess the extent to which participants were engaged with Maizbhandari Sufi music.

Questions		Frequency	Percent
Do you participate in Maizbhandari <i>gaan Sama</i> rituals?	No	12	30.8%
	Yes	27	69.2%
	Total	39	100.0%
Do you listen to Maizbhandari <i>gaan</i> ___?	daily	9	23.1%
	frequently	8	20.5%
	hardly	3	7.7%
	occasionally	19	48.7%
	Total	39	100.0%

Table 1: Q1-Q2: Listeners' level of involvement with Maizbhandari songs

The responses to these 4 questions are shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Table 1 shows the answers to the first two questions. In the first question, we can observe that 69.2% of people participate in Maizbhandari *sama* rituals. While just 30.8% of people do not take part in *sama*. The second question reveals that 48.7% of individuals occasionally listen to Maizbhandari *gaan*, which is the highest percentage. While 23.1% listen to music daily, 20.5% listen frequently, and 7.7% listen rarely.

From which source do you listen to this music?
(One respondent may hear these songs from multiple sources)

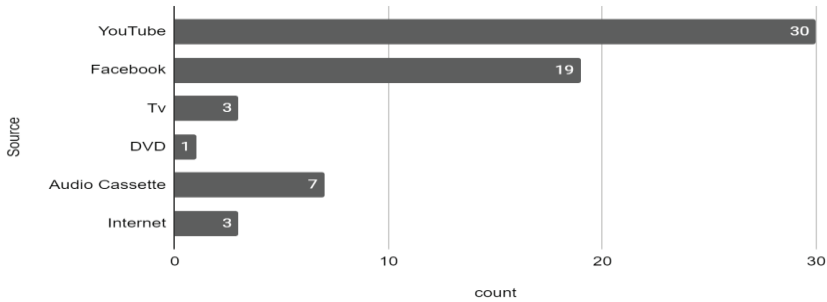


Table 2: Q3: Listeners' level of involvement with Maizbhandari songs

Table 2 illustrates the third question. This question indicates that the majority of people listen to these songs on YouTube and Facebook. Besides, only a specific audience enjoys these songs on ancient DVDs and cassette tapes. Some people watch television and surf the web as well.

Bengali	English (self-translated)	Songwriter	Count
চলো গো প্রেম সাধুগণ প্রেমেরি বাজার। প্রেম হাট বসাইয়াছে মাইজভাণ্ডার মাঝার...	Oh love saints; let's go to the love market. He (<i>Ghawth-ul-Azam</i> Maizbhandari) has set up a love market in the middle of Maizbhandar...	Maulana Abdul Hadi Kanchanpuri	3
চট্টগ্রামে আছে রে ভাই, নাম যে তার ফটিকছড়ি। আরে আজগবি এক কল বসাল আমার বাবা ভাণ্ডারী...	Oh brother, there is a name in Chittagong that is Fatikchhari. My Shaykh Bhandari set up a strange factory there...	Kabiyal Ramesh Shil	2
ইস্কুল খুইলাছে ওর মাওলা। ইস্কুল খুইলাছে। গাউছুল আজম মাইজভাণ্ডারী ইস্কুল খুইলাছে...	<i>Maula</i> opened the school. He opened the school. <i>Ghawth-ul-A'zam</i> Maizbhandari has opened a school...	Kabiyal Ramesh Shil	12
অন্যান্য	Others		22

Table 3: Q4: What is your favourite Maizbhandari song?

Participants were asked to share their favorite Maizbhandari songs in the fourth and final question of this section. Participants mentioned many songs. We've just included the top 3 Maizbhandari songs in Table 3. Kabiyal Ramesh Shil's songs are the most popular among the community. Besides, Maulana Abdul Hadi's Kanchanpuri-written songs are noteworthy.

The attitude of those people who listen to Maizbhandari music

Table 4 illustrates the 10 questions. Among them, the first five questions are about how Maizbhandari music assists individuals in times of distress, connects them to the Almighty, and enriches their lives and spirituality. These five questions have a high proportion of positive replies (71.80%, 61.50%, 69.2%, 76.90%, 82.10%) relative to negative responses (2.60 %, 5.10 %, 2.60 %, 5.10 %). This proves that the vast majority of them had affirmative responses to these queries. A further key finding from these five questions is that 82.10 % of respondents indicated that Maizbhandari songs help them to cope with distress. This percentage is the highest of the five questions. Moreover, 76.90% believe that Maizbhandari songs improve their spirituality. Notice that this question has no negative responses.

Questions		Count	Subtable N %
Does it improve our way of life?	No	1	2.60%
	No opinion	10	25.60%
	Yes	28	71.80%
	Total	39	100.00%
Do you believe the presence of spiritual master while listening these songs?	No	2	5.10%
	No opinion	13	33.30%
	Yes	24	61.50%
	Total	39	100.00%
Is it one of the ways by which people can get closer to the Almighty?	No	1	2.60%
	No opinion	11	28.20%
	Yes	27	69.20%
	Total	39	100.00%
Do you think Maizbhandari gaan improves our spirituality?	No opinion	9	23.10%
	Yes	30	76.90%
	Total	39	100.00%
Does it console in our distress?	No	2	5.10%
	No opinion	5	12.80%
	Yes	32	82.10%
	Total	39	100.00%

Questions		Count	Subtable N %
Do you think it is a blessing to all it's followers?	No	2	5.10%
	No opinion	9	23.10%
	Yes	28	71.80%
	Total	39	100.00%
What do you think about using the musical instruments in Maizbhandari gaan? Is it necessary?	No	8	20.50%
	No opinion	7	17.90%
	Yes	24	61.50%
	Total	39	100.00%
Can every nation can quench its thirst by hearing this music genre?	No	3	7.70%
	No opinion	7	17.90%
	Yes	29	74.40%
	Total	39	100.00%
Does it encourage or guide us to do good things?	No	1	2.60%
	No opinion	4	10.30%
	Yes	34	87.20%
	Total	39	100.00%
Do you think is it allowed in Islam?	skip	1	2.60%
	No	1	2.60%
	No opinion	11	28.20%
	Yes	26	66.70%
	Total	39	100.00%

Table 4: Q1- Q10: The attitudes of Maizbhandari music listeners

From the sixth to tenth questions, the topics include whether Maizbhandari songs are blessings for their followers, if they are permitted in Islam, whether musical instruments are required in these songs, and whether this music may serve to do good and satisfy nations' thirst. As can be seen in Table 4, the vast majority of respondents (71.80%, 61.50%, 74.40%, 87.20%, 66.70%) answered these questions favorably, while only a small percentage (5.10%, 20.50%, 7.70%, 10.30%, 2.60%) answered negatively. Notice that the biggest percentage (87.20%) of respondents among these 10 questions feel that Maizbhandari songs motivate them to perform good things. About two-thirds of respondents (66.70%) agreed that Maizbhandari music is acceptable within the Islamic faith. In contrast, using musical instruments in Maizbhandari *gaan* is required - received 20.50% unfavorable answers, greater than other questions.

The attitudes of those who are not listeners of Maizbhandari music

Out of 50 respondents, 11 people who do not listen to Maizbhandari Sufi music were given three simple questions to assess their opinions on the music. Table 5 shows the questions and their replies.

Questions		Count	Subtable N %
Do you have a positive view of Maizbhandari gaan?	No	3	27.30%
	No opinion	6	54.50%
	Yes	2	18.20%
	Total	11	100.00%
Do you think is it allowed in Islam?	No	6	54.50%
	No opinion	4	36.40%
	Yes	1	9.10%
	Total	11	100.00%

Question		Count	%
Why don't you listen to Maizbhandari gaan?	Because, I can't find any meaning in these songs.	1	9.10%
	Due to lack of time	1	9.10%
	I am confused about whether it's allowed or not in Islam because of using instruments in these songs.	1	9.10%
	I don't hear any songs	1	9.10%
	I hardly listen to songs	2	18.20%
	I listen to the nat-e-rasul all the time.	1	9.10%
	Music listening is prohibited in Islam	1	9.10%
	The songs have no significance meaning, drums and tabla are used unnecessarily	1	9.10%
	There is no reason for that	2	18.20%
	Total	11	100.00%

Table 5: Q1-Q3: Attitudes of non-listeners to Maizbhandari music

As shown in Table 5, when questioned if they have a positive or negative attitude towards Maizbhandari music, the majority of non-listeners remained neutral. So then, we questioned them why they didn't listen to this music. The majority of people said that they hardly listen to music, and there is no reason for not hearing Maizbhandari music. However, some individuals had an unfavorable attitude toward it.

Conclusion

One of the most popular Sufi music in Chattogram, Bangladesh is Maizbhandari Sufi music. In this study, we have investigated the attitude of the people of Chattogram towards Maizbhandari Sufi music and their involvement in it.

The result showed that a large portion of the respondents liked to hear Maizbhandari songs. The listeners are mainly involved with Maizbhandari songs via *sama* and the Internet. The majority of the listeners claimed that they listened to Maizbhandari songs through YouTube and Facebook. We also found that the listeners of Maizbhandari music have a positive attitude towards it. They believe that Maizbhandari songs help develop a closer connection with the Almighty, strengthen spirituality, improve one's way of life, comfort people in distress, and inspire one to do good deeds. Many listeners said that using musical instruments is required in Maizbhandari music, and that these songs are also permitted in Islam. However, some respondents showed a negative attitude towards hearing Maizbhandari songs.

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3. Each submission should include two files: A ‘Title Page’ and an anonymous; Main file/Blind Copy’ file. The Title Page should include a Cover Letter to the editor, title of the manuscripts abstract and author information (including authors name, affiliation, address, phone number and email address). The name of the corresponding author should be clearly identified with an asterisk symbol (*) next to the relevant authors name.

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3. All manuscript must be in MS word format- double spaced with one inch (2.5 cm) margin throughout and 12 point Times New Roman font.
4. Quotations, notes, tables and figures should be prepared in accordance with the 8th edition of the publications manual of the MLA (Modern Language Association of America)

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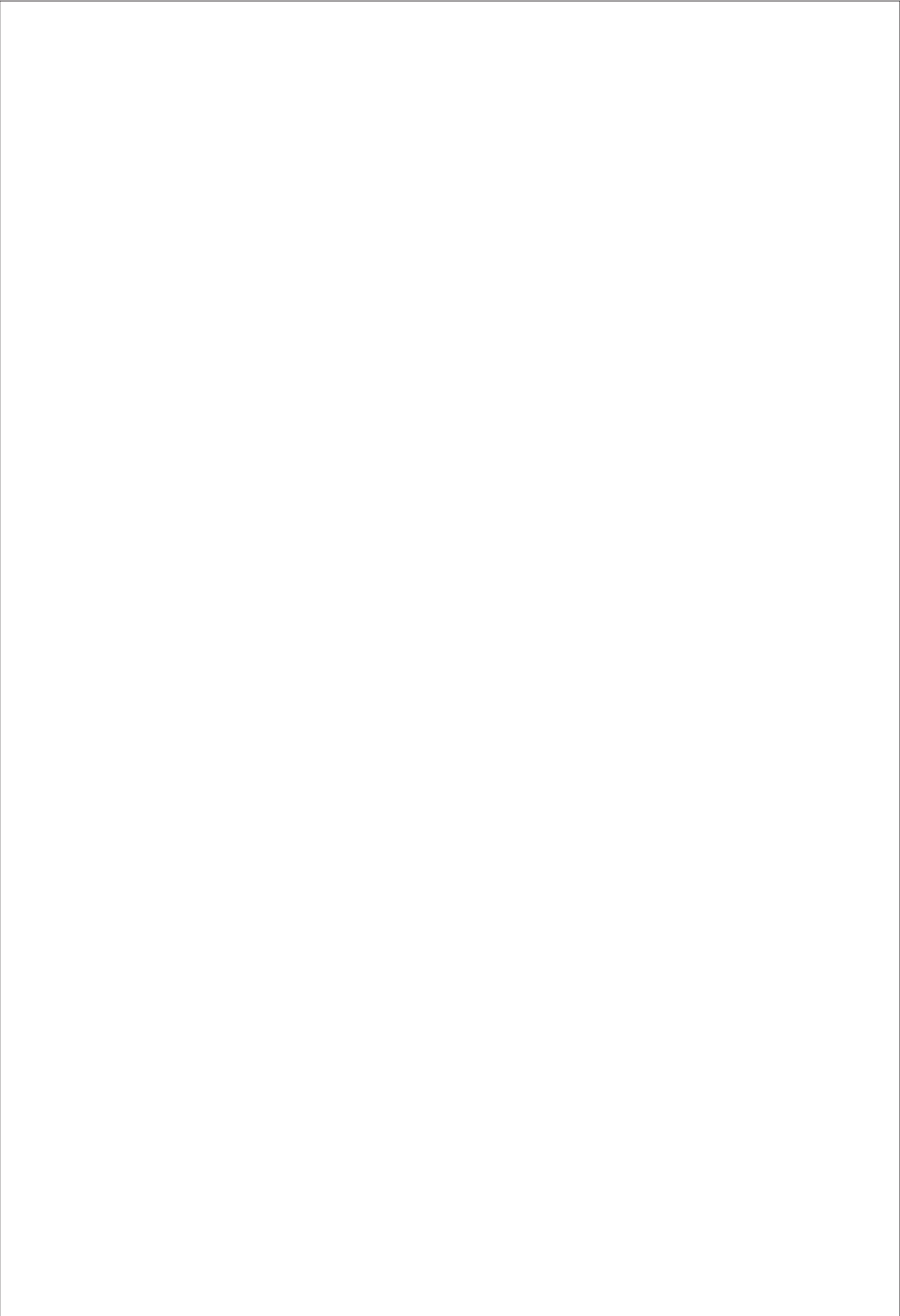
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