REGULA BURCKHARDT QURESHI

SUFI MUSIC OF

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

SOUND, CONTEXT AND MEANING IN QAWWALI

WITH A NEW PREFACE / COMPACT DISC INCLUDED

Sufi Music of India and Pakistan

For the Sufis of India and Pakistan, the Qawwali songs are 'food for the soul', a means for attaining union with God, the ecstatic culmination of mystical experience. Regula Burckhardt Qureshi's study carefully describes and documents the performance of this music in the traditional Sufi assembly, the ritual of *sama'*, first presenting the rich musical repertoire of Qawwali song, and then exploring everything else that is relevant to an understanding of the ritual: the profound belief system and its powerful articulation through mystical poetry in three languages (Farsi, Hindi, Urdu), the social and economic relationships between Sufi listeners and musicians, and, finally, all the specific rules governing the making of and listening to Qawwali in the Sufi assembly. All this leads up to a moment-by-moment account of actual Qawwali performances where the interplay between the musical sound and the diverse and often dramatic audience responses is described and analysed by the author.

The purpose of the book is to reach an understanding of how music speaks to its listeners, how they in turn affect the performance, and thus to discover the underlying meaning.

Sufi music of India and Pakistan

Sound, Context

and meaning in Qawwali

Regula Burckhardt Qureshi

This edition includes a compact disc
containing sixty minutes of Qawwali music

The University of Chicago Press
Chicago and London

To Saleem,
For Sabina and Adil
and for my parents, Lukas and Agathe Burckhardt

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The Chosen Repertoire

The choice and order of presentation of the following repertoire is based on a consensus of significance by Sufis at the Nizamuddin shrine. The songs are presented in notational outline, translated and annotated in chapter 1. The accompanying compact disc contains one or more Performances or Performance excerpts of each item. The repertoire also provides exemplification for the analysis and interpretation throughout the book, including the videograph and videochart transcriptions in chapter 6 (Performances 1 and 2).

Preface to the 1995 Edition

Two decades have passed since the ethnographic present of 1975. A new generation has replaced the senior performers and listeners who live in this book. Their music, however, continues to be heard at Delhi's Nizamuddin and at shrines all over South Asia, if under diminishing patronage. In addition, Qawwali has today become a world music attraction, its rhythmic pulsation mixing with the beat of ethnopop. And in both India and Pakistan recordings have proliferated, adding to the diversification of the Qawwali soundscape. Qawwali has also gained in public stature, particularly in Pakistan, as an expression of national culture, through a blending of governmental and religious control over performances in shrines and concert halls and on television. In India, on the other hand, Qawwali is being coopted into the cosmopolitan, multireligious or "secular" realm of public culture, as can be seen from prestige recordings and concerts. But in the private sphere, among Sufis, the intimate sharing of the mystical quest remains the focus of Qawwali.

By giving voice to the tolerance and interiority of Sufism, Qawwali takes on renewed significance in the face of the increasingly polarized and radical Muslim response to Western hegemony. Yet the Islamic movement also threatens the relevance of Sufi practice. Both challenges are played out in the South Asian Muslim Diaspora, where Qawwali speaks both religion-based identity and Western cosmopolitanism. "Sound, context and meaning in Qawwali" is thus taking on new dimensions. At the same time, the mystical focus of the music has never been put in question. The intensely spiritual musical experience of Sufi devotees assembled around a *sheikh* may seen worlds away from MTV and the international stage; yet it continues to nourish the performance power of Qawwali and of its international stars, engaging ever wider circles of receptive listeners. The real question is whether Qawwali's hereditary performers will have the economic support to teach their children.

Today's multiple contexts offer expanded meaning to a study of traditional Qawwali. But how does the scholar know? Twenty years later questions of subjectivity and representation pervade the academy, problematizing authorial power, interpretation, and even "close readings" of music. Decentered paradigms diminish confidence in the scholarly process, and postcolonial consciousness challenges any certainty about the cross-cultural understanding on which this study is based. And yet, if the goal is to celebrate and also make connections across "difference," and if we are convinced that music profoundly and powerfully does both, then it continues to be meaningful to explore and "translate" highly particular musical practices in an open process of negotiation across cultural and individual differences. A salutary sense of the contingent can only help motivate new, respectful ways of representing Others.

What is crucial here, as Sufis teach it, is the commitment of being connected. I thank my friends, colleagues, and Sufi collaborators for our ongoing conversations about Qawwali, and for the chance to contribute reciprocally to an Urdu translation of this book in Pakistan. And my abiding gratitude goes to those who made this book possible, for all that they taught me by sharing themselves. This new publication is dedicated to them, but most of all to my wonderful teachers, Meraj Ahmad Nizami and the late Nasiruddin Khan Gore. Living up to these gifts has not been easy; I shall continue to search for better ways of sharing back. Finally, I am grateful to the University of Chicago Press for bringing the work back to life. For the Qawwali experience continues to have much to teach us about the power of music to connect.

Preface

Qawwali is a recognized musical genre in the Indian subcontinent. It shares general traits with the light classical music of North India and Pakistan, but has unique characteristics related to its religious function. The term Qawwali itself applies both to the musical genre and to the occasion of its performance, the devotional assembly of Islamic mysticism – or Sufism – in India and Pakistan. The practice of Qawwali extends throughout Muslim centres of the Indian subcontinent, but its roots are North Indian.

Qawwali considered as music is a group song performed by *qawwals*, professional musicians who perform in groups led by one or two solo singers. Qawwals present mystical poetry in Farsi, Hindi and Urdu in a fluid style of alternating solo and group passages characterized by repetition and improvisation. The vigorous drum accompaniment on the barrel-shaped *dholak* is reinforced by handclapping while the small portable harmonium, usually in the hands of the lead singer, underscores the song melody. A Qawwali song normally begins with an Instrumental Prelude on the harmonium; then an Introductory Verse is sung as a solo recitative without drums, leading directly into the song proper: a mystical poem set to a strophic tune and performed by the entire group of Qawwals.

Qawwali considered as an occasion is a gathering for the purpose of realizing ideals of Islamic mysticism through the ritual of 'listening to music', or *sama'*. By enhancing the message of mystical poetry, and by providing a powerful rhythm suggesting the ceaseless repetition of God's name (*zikr*), the music of Qawwali has a religious function: to arouse mystical love, even divine ecstasy, the core experience of Sufism. The Qawwali assembly is held under the guidance of a spiritual leader, and is attended by Sufi devotees though it is usually open to all comers. In listening to the songs, devotees respond individually and spontaneously, but in accordance with social and religious convention, expressing states of mystical love. The musicians, for their part, structure their performance to activate and reinforce these emotions, adapting it to the changing needs of their listeners.

To the Sufi participant, Qawwali is 'a method of worship' and 'a means of spiritual advancement'; it is also 'a feast for the soul'. To the performer it is mainly a musical genre 'with its distinct character for worship'. To the observer, finally, Qawwali is above all music performed very obviously with continual reference to its context; it is 'music in context' *par excellence*.

In this study I propose to apply to Qawwali an ethnomusicological approach which incorporates the dimension of context into the analysis of musical sound. The aim is to develop for Qawwali a musical grammar that includes programming Qawwali in performance, that is, a context-sensitive grammar that would enable a musically literate reader to understand how variation in the performance of Qawwali is generated, or how, abstractly, he could generate such variation himself.

In substance, this intention conforms to one of the major aims pursued by anthropologists,

namely to focus on systems of communication as cultural knowledge used and realized in behavioural application. Here, however, this anthropological aim is directed at music, a system of sound communication with very special properties which require equally special analytical procedures. Such procedures have been developed and applied to music by musicologists. Musicology, therefore, is the proper starting point for introducing an anthropological perspective to the analysis of musical sound.

The first step is to assess how far musicological analysis can take the investigator of Qawwali music toward the goal of developing a context-sensitive musical grammar. Using a Western musicological base sensitized to Indian music by Indian musicology, it is possible to analyse an Indian musical idiom such as Qawwali in terms of categories appropriate to the musical structure. Such an analysis will enable the reader to identify Qawwali music as to its musical framework, units and rules, and to distinguish it from other musical idioms on the basis of distinctive musical features.

What this musicological analysis will not do, however, is to account for the sequencing of the musical structure, that is, to generate or even explain the process of producing Qawwali music in performance. Yet variability in performance is one of the identifying features of this music and crucial to its very function.

The next step, then, is to expand the musicological approach so that it can account analytically for all the contextual features relevant to the performance process of Qawwali music. To do this requires tools which only anthropology can supply; indeed, the entire perspective of such an endeavour is, epistemologically speaking, an anthropological one. The result is an ethnomusicological model built to deal on the one hand with the musical sound structure and on the other with the structure of the performance occasion, so that the contextual input can be included in an analysis of the performance.

Within the purview of ethnomusicological writings, this study belongs with those which situate music within a holistic paradigm focussing on musical performance (for example, Frisbie, Seeger, Feld and Stone). It differs from them in that its primary focus is on the musical sound idiom, an approach that ethnomusicologists have so far tended to reserve for art music traditions (for example, Powers, Malm, Becker). In incorporating a musicological focus into an anthropological paradigm I hope to contribute to a major theoretical goal of ethnomusicology, namely to show in a testable way how the contextual dimension is indispensable to a full understanding of musical sound, and how it is precisely the extra-musical meanings inherent in musical sound that give music the power to affect its context in turn. Qawwali, a musical genre inseparable from its context of performance, the Qawwali assembly, is an ideal testing ground for such an endeavour. Indeed, nothing less would do justice to Qawwali than a performance approach to music analysis, which is what I propose to develop here.

In ethnomusicology, more than in disciplines with established conventions, the author must assume the onus of defining the terms for his study, both theoretically and procedurally. Formally speaking, this task belongs in the body of the study itself. But the thinking and observing of the analyst, no less than that of his or her informants, are conditioned by underlying assumptions specific to his or her cultural background and disciplinary training. To account for these is a first step toward making as clear as possible the premises on which this study is built; hence I shall sketch briefly what has gone into its making.

My training in Western art music – performance and musicology – led me to a similar study

of Hindustani art music, along with a special focus on Indo-Islamic and Pakistani musical idioms. My musicological thinking about Indian music owes much to Harold Powers, who, for the love of this music, has generously shared his insights, knowledge and conceptual rigour, and contributed to the present study in significant ways.

It was my training in anthropology at the University of Alberta that taught me to integrate musical and ethnographic knowledge and test them against a diversity of theoretical approaches. Most directly I owe an intellectual debt of gratitude to Michael Asch, whose commitment to theoretical rigour sharpened my thinking and shaped the course of this study. The writing of this book has benefited from the helpful criticism of Bonnie Wade and the thoughtful response of Alfred Fisher. The Department of Music at the University of Alberta, home of my first forays into ethnomusicology, has provided a stimulating and supportive environment for completing the work.

My field study of Qawwali started in 1968/69 as part of a survey of Islamic music in India and Pakistan. This enabled me to formulate the project and then plunge directly into intensive field research during 1975/76. Headquartered at the Nizamuddin Auliya Shrine in Delhi, I was soon part of the scene as a listener and recorder of every Qawwali event, a seeker of Sufi knowledge, a student of Qawwali performers; I was also the wife of a respected patron from abroad – a foreigner but also an insider. Once part of the Sufi 'network' that extends all over the subcontinent, I visited other shrines in accordance with the Qawwali calendar of saints' anniversaries, including an extended stay in Pakistan. Everywhere I attended and recorded innumerable Qawwali performances, lessons, interviews and conversations (all in Urdu).

Given the fact that Sufism is an all-male tradition, and Qawwali music the province of very low-status hereditary performers, I as a Western (for which read 'high-status') female should have been in a double bind. That the opposite was true is due principally to the kindness and eclecticism that characterizes the Sufi community. Sufis, performers, devotees, in addition to family and friends – so many of them contributed generously and meaningfully to my quest for Qawwali that their names alone would fill pages; I remember everyone with fondness and extend to all my sincere gratitude. Specific acknowledgement is due, first of all, to the hospitality of India and Pakistan's Sufi saints, extended to me most generously by their descendants and their affiliated performers. Nizamuddin Auliya, my 'home' shrine, stands at the centre, and will always remain my primary link (ta'alluq) with Sufism. Others are Ajmer Sharif, Gulbarga Sharif, Kakori Sharif, Shah Mina (Lucknow), Shaikh Salim Chishti (Fatehpur Sikri), Shah Khamosh (Hyderabad), Yusuf Shah (Karachi).

Those who taught me most about Qawwali are two performers of Nizamuddin Auliya: most of all Meraj Ahmad Nizami, who gave of his knowledge sincerely and without reservation, and Nasiruddin Khan Gore, who added a historical and personal dimension to that. I also learned from Inam Ahmad and Hayat Ahmad of the same shrine, from Musharraf Hussain of Kakori Sharif, and from Bahauddin Khan and Raziuddin Khan of Karachi. Their generosity in sharing their professional knowledge is much appreciated.

Outstanding among my Sufi teachers are the two leading pīrzāde of Nizamuddin Auliya: Khwaja Hasan Sani and Pir Zamin Nizami; two leading khuddām of Ajmer Sharif: Syed Fazlul Matin and Syed Haleem Chishty; and the late Baba Zahin Shah, leading Sheikh of Karachi. I gratefully acknowledge their manifold contribution to this study.

Of special value to my inquiry was the input from knowledgeable and open-minded lay

participants in Qawwali assemblies; I must single out and give special thanks to Iftekhar Ahmad Khan Adni of Karachi, Director, Academy of Public Administration; Ausaf Ali, Director of the Indian Institute of Islamic Research; Maṣud Husain Khan, Vice-Chancellor, and Zia-ul-Haq Faruqi, Principal, of Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi; and the late Saeed Ahmad Qureshi of Lucknow. Shabi Ahmad of the Indian Institute of Historical Research contributed both as an untiring mediator and as a devoted friend; I deeply value his contribution.

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Finally, there is one person without whom this study could literally not have been thinkable: my husband Saleem Qureshi. Not only did he make his constant and strategic support of my field research his contribution to the International Year of Women (1975) but his vast knowledge and insight into people and things Indo-Muslim have continued to shape my understanding of his culture. This book is my offering to his devotion and integrity.

Terminology, transliteration and translation

Since this study makes use of a variety of terminological idioms, I have attempted as far as possible to achieve semantic and orthographic consistency between them. In terms of usage, that consistency flows mainly from the fact that the Qawwali participant is always the primary source of terminology, unless specifically indicated otherwise. Terms denoting Sufi concepts are therefore presented in accordance with Indo-Pakistani Sufi usage and pronunciation; this includes standard Islamic terms and refers particularly to Persian forms of Arabic words. Likewise, Indian musical terminology derives from usage among Qawwali performers or, where otherwise indicated, accords with standard Indian usage in English. Consistency in transliteration is based on the use of a single comprehensive reference source which covers vocabulary of both Perso-Arabic and Hindi-Sanskrit derivation: Platts's Dictionary of Urdu and Classical Hindi (1970). The only phonetic addition is the symbol ǝ for the short vowel which is inserted, in singing, between consonants, after a long syllable.

The translations of Qawwali texts were made in collaboration with Dr Saleem Qureshi; however, I assume full responsibility for them. Urdu rather than Devanagari script is purposely used for the Hindi selections, because they are part of an entirely Urdu-speaking and -writing community which uses Persian rather than Devanagari script for Sufi poetry in Farsi, Urdu and Hindi (for example *Naghmat-e-Samaʿ*, n.d., Idris Khan 1973, K. Nizami 1973a and P. Nizami 1975). Musical notation, finally, follows standard Western usage; the few additional symbols are listed in the Legend and explained where they first occur.

Music notation: legend

Symbol	Explanation
Staff notation scheme	Pitch and durational units corresponding to Western notation
Middle c	System tonic
x	Handclaps
A, B,	Section of tune (*asthāyī/antarā*)
A1, A2	First/second half of section
A1i, A2i	Initial motive of half section
A1m, A2m	Medial motive of half section
A1f, A2f	Final motive of half section
Aalt, A1alt, A1ialt	Alternative version of section/half section/initial motif of half section
A↑, A1↑, A1i↑	Upward adjustment of ending of section/half section/initial motif
A↑↑, A↑↑↑	Alternative upward adjustments of ending, in order of increasing pitch level
↑A	Delayed upward adjustment of preceding section modifies beginning of present section
A^e	Extension of A
A^{e}1, A^{e}2	First/second part of extension
F	Final descending line of adjunct item, leading back to song
P	Penultimate line, leading up to final line (F) in adjunct item
I	Initial/intermittent section of adjunct item

Introduction:
The Qawwali experience
and ethnomusicological questions

A   What is Qawwali?

All over South Asia there is Qawwali, for all over South Asia there are Muslims; where there are Muslims, there are Sufis; and where there are Sufis, there is Qawwali – not the popular version of Qawwali adapted for entertainment in clubs and on the screen, but the authentic spiritual song that transports the mystic toward union with God. For centuries the Sufi communities of the Indian subcontinent have sustained this musical tradition in the *mahfil-e-sama'*, the 'Assembly for Listening', and it remains the central ritual of Sufism to this day.

Under the guidance of a spiritual leader or *sheikh*, groups of trained musicians present in song a vast treasure of poems which articulate and evoke the gamut of mystical experience for the spiritual benefit of their audience. Through the act of listening – *sama'* – the Sufi seeks to activate his link with his living spiritual guide, with saints departed, and ultimately with God. At the same time, in opening himself to the powerful message of Qawwali, he hopes for a spiritual experience of intensity and immediacy that transcends his conscious striving. The music serves to kindle the flame of his mystical love, to intensify his longing for mystical union, and even to transport him to a state of ecstasy and to sustain him there to the limit of his spiritual capacity.

To partake of the 'spiritual nourishment' of Qawwali, men – and, rarely, women – from all walks of life, and seekers of any spiritual station and persuasion, are drawn toward the *sama'* ritual where it is most splendidly and abundantly practised: at the shrines of the great Sufi saints of the past. For these shrines continue to be centres of mystical teaching and tradition. There is no Qawwali experience more vivid and profound than the *'urs* of such a saint, the commemoration of his own final union with God on the anniversary of his death. And there is no *'urs* more resplendent with Qawwali than that of the great Saint Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi and of his favourite disciple Amir Khusrau, the founding father of Qawwali whose verses and tunes form the core of the *sama'* ritual to this day.

Already on the eve of the anniversary the pulsing drum rhythm of Qawwali draws the pilgrim toward the white marble dome where a group of singers sit on the pavement, facing the entrance of the tomb (see Plates 1 and 2). The single voice of their leader rises from the chorus as he begins a new verse from a famous Khusrau song, raising his arm in an evocative gesture. As he sings, he continues to play the song melody on the small reed organ in front of him while behind him one accompanist incessantly beats out a stirring pattern on the double-headed drum in his lap. All the other singers keep punctuating the rhythm with forceful clapping. The entire group now repeats the verse a few times when once again the leader cuts in with a new phrase and another responsorial exchange begins. But the song is soon brought to an end as the singers must make way for another performing group. Their leader advances to the tomb threshold to pay his respect to the saint and also to pick up the monetary offerings several listeners have placed there during the singing. Others join in the

I

Plate 1   Tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, front view (entrance at centre, mosque to the left)

audience gathered informally on each side of the tomb, several Sufi sheikhs among them, and the musical homage to the saint continues until well into the night.

But the first formal sama' *assembly takes place on the day of the anniversary itself.[1] Early in the morning a select group of Sufis make their way to the nearby* chillā, *a small stone gallery high above the river Jumna hallowed as a spiritual retreat from the saint's lifetime. Against the white sheets covering the floor and the mostly white clothing, a coloured shawl, turban, or gown clearly designates the spiritual leaders who are seated facing the single group of performers at this gathering. Other listeners fill the space between them, leaving a central area. Now the first sound rises, but not from the performers; it is the presiding sheikh who begins the ritual with cantillation from the Koran, then the spiritual genealogy of the saint and a concluding prayer are recited.*

This signals the beginning of the Qawwali performance: immediately the lead musician intones the obligatory Arabic hymn that introduces every Qawwali at Nizamuddin Auliya. A great stirring begins among the audience. One by one, most of them stand up and seek the assembly leader, bowing low with extended hands, to present him with an offering of money. Some Sufi disciples kneel before him or even put their head to the ground; others enlist a more senior person to make their offering jointly; yet others offer instead to their own personal preceptor who then rises to present the offering to the leader. The leader himself accepts each offering by raising it to his forehead in deep respect. Then it is placed on the ground where it lies until one of the singers picks it up at suitable moments in the music. Indeed, this collection constitutes the musicians' monetary reward.

Throughout this intense offering activity the performers have been singing the opening line of the

Plate 2   Qawwali in the Nizamuddin shrine. Facing the tomb are performers Meraj Ahmad Nizami, leading on the harmonium, Mahtab Ahmad on the *dholak*, and Mahmud Nizami

song, over and over. Now they follow with the remainder of the brief hymn and immediately, without coming to an actual close, the lead singer introduces a second obligatory hymn which celebrates spiritual discipleship. This is the moment for an even greater surge of offerings. Suddenly the music changes, the drumming and clapping cease abruptly to let the leader's voice float high, sustained only by the reedy sound of the harmonium. As he shapes the first words of the new song in a slow recitative, every Sufi in the audience recognizes the cascading melody of the classical Persian masnavī *and its message of the Sufi seeker's infinite longing:*

Muflisānem amadā dar kūe to . . .   'The distraught supplicants of love, we have
                                                                  come to your threshold . . .'

A prominent Sheikh at the centre, draped in the orange colour of India's highest saintly lineage, bows in a gesture of deep humility and a hush has fallen over the assembly. Now the drum joins in a compelling pattern that perfectly articulates the verse rhythm, so that several Sufis begin to sway or tap. All eyes are drawn to the central Sheikh who is visibly moved to tears, his gestures bespeaking his intense emotion. When he suddenly falls on his knees to touch the feet of the assembly leader and then kisses the hallowed wall behind him, the gathering is suffused with a sense of fervour and devotion. Exclamations rise and one venerable old Sufi loudly repeats a phrase that has moved him greatly. Immersed in the message of the song, several listeners are swooning as if entranced.

A more effusive mood suddenly arises when, imperceptibly, the singers have moved on to a devotional Hindi song with a raga-like melody full of pathos. The words and the music of Khusrau, the saint's greatest disciple, is every devotee's call from the heart. Several Sufis are quick to rise and prostrate themselves before their Sheikh, as if unable to contain their emotion. Meanwhile the performers repeat over and over the salient phrase of the song, emphasizing and embellishing it. At once the lead singer breaks in with a recitative that profoundly expands the meaning of the repeated

phrase. With this, the focus shifts once again to the orange-draped Sheikh whose expression and gestures demand a restatement of the entire recitative. The lead singer responds, skilfully returning to the salient phrase which he embellishes with variations. Soon thereafter he ends the song, in answer to the assembly leader's discreet signal. After a moment of silent prayer, all rise; it is time to return to the shrine for the day's major commemorative ritual.

What awaits the Sufi there is in stark contrast to the intimate Qawwali experience just concluded. An immense crowd has gathered all around the tomb entrance. From the most exalted spiritual leader to the lowliest devotee, from the richest to the poorest, all are there to listen to the ritual hymns now being intoned by a large contingent of shrine performers. This time the number of devotees with offerings is staggering, and the exhilaration among the audience so great that several times the threshold into spiritual ecstasy is crossed and the better part of an hour has gone by before the same two obligatory hymns of the earlier gathering have come to a close.

It is at night, however, that the spirit of Qawwali really unfolds at Nizamuddin Auliya. The saint's leading descendants preside over celebrational assemblies in special halls consecrated only to Qawwali. Performing groups from far and near line up to be admitted and the large crowds of devotees are held in awe by the spiritual dignitaries from all over India who occupy the front rows – descendants of other great saints, powerful Sheikhs, as well as lay devotees of social and political prominence. One after another, performing groups choose and present songs from a vast repertoire and a wide range of performing styles, but with a standard format. An instrumental prelude draws the listener's mind into the orbit of the powerful Qawwali rhythm. Then a solo recitative evokes a thematic realm from which the song itself then emerges, be it a simple devotional hymn to a saint, an invocation of mystical symbolism, a song of deep spiritual experience or one of simple yearning for the Beloved. The singer's aim is always to move, to arouse, to draw the listener toward his Sheikh, the saint, to God, and into the ecstasy of mystical union. But while one singer lifts the Sufi's spirit with a stately classical tune in forceful rhythm, another one melts his heart with a lilting melody or captivates his mind with a new composition. Some songs easily touch even the uninitiated, whereas others demand the spiritual knowledge of an adept.

All performers share a core of specially favoured songs, however, which Sufis never tire of hearing. But each performance of the same song invariably takes its own shape, unique to the occasion. This becomes movingly evident later that night, during one of the last sama' gatherings of the 'urs at Nizamuddin Auliya.[2] In a small cell of the shrine a group of committed Sufis is listening to two performers intone a song of mystical devotion, a special song they had sung at the large assembly earlier on. There each verse had elicited a warm response from the Sufi élite in the audience. This had resulted in an evenly balanced song structure and yielded a steady stream of offerings. But here, in this intimate atmosphere already charged with powerful emotion, one significant phrase of the song so moves an elderly Sufi that he cannot contain himself; he rises and begins a dance of ecstasy. For the performers this signals a moment of extreme responsibility, for unless the ecstatic person continues to hear the phrase that so moved him, he may die. While all the listeners rise in awe, the singers comply, hoping that upon this spiritual blessing the material reward of offerings will follow. As the crucial phrase is repeated over and over, woven into the fabric of the song in ever varying ways, this one phrase becomes the vital centre of the entire performance, and indeed of the mystical experience itself.

The Qawwali experience overwhelms the observer with its many facets so intertwined with Sufi ritual. But what is most striking about Qawwali is the powerful impact the music appears

to have on those who listen to it and, at the same time, its remarkable variability in reaction to different performance situations: clearly, the music is at the core of all that happens in Qawwali. Experiencing Qawwali means above all hearing music, a never-ceasing sequence of songs, all unmistakably part of the same genre, yet differing widely in their individual musical traits. It means hearing the same song performed many times, but never shaped in the same way twice. What accounts for the unique musical character of the genre Qawwali and the flexibility of its structure? Is there a standard Qawwali performance, and what factors predicate the way each performance is shaped?

Experiencing Qawwali also means observing a ritual built around the core of Qawwali music. In an assembly where spiritual dignitaries are visibly dominant and everyone knows his place, the mystical quest is pursued in accordance with proper form and under a Sufi leader who controls both audience and musicians. But in pursuing his personal quest, each listener responds to the music in his own way, according to his inner needs and the mood of the moment. What accounts for both the rules of the Qawwali ritual and the obvious flexibility of their application? And what is the rôle of the music in fulfilling both purposes?

Finally, experiencing Qawwali means charting a process of interaction between musicians and listeners, between music and audience responses; in short, a performance. What is the nature of this interaction, what does the music 'say' to the audience, and how does the performance situation affect the music? If Qawwali is a musical tradition tied in with a religious ritual in the form of a performance, then what bearing does the music have on the ritual, on the performance, or, conversely, what is the impact of the ritual, the performance, upon the music?

Three kinds of questions, then, arise in response to the Qawwali experience: questions about sound, its structure and sequencing in the Qawwali musical idiom; questions about norms and behaviour in the Qawwali ritual; and questions about the relationship between musical and non-musical action in the performance of Qawwali. Underlying this diverse set of questions, addressed to diverse phenomena, is one fundamental question about the nature of music: How does Qawwali, the music, articulate with Qawwali, its context of performance? Or, in other words, how does Qawwali musical sound become meaningful outside itself?

To tackle this question for Qawwali is to pursue a larger theoretical goal central to ethnomusicological inquiry: establishing the meaning or significance of musical sound in terms of its social use and cultural function. Such an inquiry is predicated on the assumption that music is a system of sound communication with its own properties and logic which may convey meaning at the level of structure, that is, relational meaning. But that system is also semantically capable of being a referent to context, that is, music can convey extra-musical meaning. It is this level of meaning – referential meaning in the widest sense of the word – which in Qawwali appears so obviously real: when a singer spends two minutes on a song in one performance and in the next one extends it to an hour, when a change in a song coincides with sudden intense audience activity, or when a listener's ecstasy imposes a particular structure upon the music. However, it remains to be established in point of fact whether, and how, such referential meaning actually operates in Qawwali music. To do so will require an investigation of both the musical idiom and its use in performance, a total analysis of Qawwali geared to test the following hypothesis: Qawwali musical sound will vary with variation in its context of performance – or, put more simply: Qawwali music is context-sensitive.

B   Looking for tools

The task at hand is threefold: (a) to analyse the sound idiom of Qawwali as a self-contained rule system for generating music in performance; (b) to identify the context of performance, the total situation in which this music is produced, and to understand its social and cultural dynamics; so that (c) the performance context can be related to the music in a way that will identify the contextual input into the musical sound.

This is a standard ethnomusicological programme of action. Appropriate analytical procedures for carrying out such a programme, however, are still being negotiated, mainly around two key issues. One is the issue of how to analyse a musical sound idiom in terms appropriate to its properties and structure. The second issue is how to relate context to sound system from an overall analytical perspective which is compatible with both domains. Each of these needs to be resolved in order to make a contextual analysis work.

To deal first with musical sound analysis: notwithstanding theoretical debates about the appropriateness of a Western, or indeed of any representational system for music (C. Seeger 1957, 1958), ethnomusicologists generally base their musical analyses on a Western musicological framework, using its notational and terminological system as a descriptive metalanguage. Beginning with Schenker, recent expansions of this framework in response to new analytical needs (Schenker 1954, 1956, Yeston 1977, Narmour 1977, Beach 1983) and to new music (Cogan and Escott 1976) have opened new opportunities for ethnomusicologists to deal with diverse musical phenomena, although the potential is as yet largely unused. Linguistic models, while over-rated initially, add a useful dimension to this metalanguage, especially for the structuring of musical utterances, and also for the process of eliciting musical concepts (see below). Though its formidable descriptive apparatus has found only limited use, concepts of linguistics, both structural and generative, have enhanced the analytical arsenal for non-Western music. Relevant examples are Blacking (1971), Becker and Becker (1979), and Vetter (1981), who provide applications of a *langue–parole* or generative model, while Powers presents a 'grammar' of raga music, giving rules for generating all sounds, from 'minimal units' established on the basis of phonetic–phonemic distinctions (1958) to syntactic processes (1977, n.d.).

A metalanguage, however appropriate, needs to be applied according to valid analytical criteria. Of the two theoretical positions that have generated such criteria, the universalist stance, based on structuralism and elucidated extensively by Nattiez (1975), has yet to lead to convincing applications to music outside the Western musical tradition. The second position arose directly from the experience of 'practising' ethnomusicologists – including indigenous scholars with Western training – who studied non-Western music intensively and discovered what anthropologists (Sturtevant 1964) and linguists (Pike 1972) had postulated earlier: namely that music is based on culture-specific principles and must be analysed according to the culture's own criteria. Hence a culture's own conceptualizations about music can best serve to build a framework for the analysis of specific musical genres or idioms within that culture area. Predictably, applications of this premise exist mainly in the realm of art music, where musical parameters are conceptualized and verbalized, and accessible to the analyst in the form of an indigenous music theory. Applying this premise beyond art music, however, Zemp (1978, 1979), Feld (1982) and others (for example, Ames 1971 and Stone 1982) show that musical conceptions can be elicited even in the absence of a formalized music theory, by

extending to the study of music an anthropological approach to verbally articulated categories, derived ultimately from linguistic models (for example, Frake 1961), and thereby adding rigour as well as breadth to the ethnography of music. What is still necessary is to build from such culture-specific musical concepts and categories a coherent analytical framework for dealing with the musical sound idiom as a whole.

Students of Indic music, fortuitously, already have such a framework available to them. Indian musical theory, as codified from the fifth century onward, has its own, long-established, principles for describing and analysing musical sound. In accordance with Indian Brahminical scholarly tradition, successive reinterpretations of such sources have resulted in a theoretical edifice covering dimensions of melody (pitch and pitch relationships), rhythm (pulse and duration), and form (structure of compositions). Given the primacy of vocal music and of the melodic line in Indian art music, and given the separated articulation of the rhythmic dimension through drumming, it follows that Indian music theory has primarily focussed on the analysis of pitch. Basic concepts cover pitch classes as constituents of an acoustically movable framework of pitch relationships, with special emphasis on the classification and articulation of these pitch relationships. Duration is dealt with in parallel terms, though with less elaboration. Concepts of formal structure are derived from the units of song text structure and include principles of combining such units. Both melodic outlines and rhythmic structures are preserved in the form of a rudimentary system of notation using letter symbols, but a body of music in notation is largely lacking.

The discovery of Sanskrit treatises by British Indologists, around 1800 (Jones 1962, Powers 1965, 1980a), led to Western attempts to interpret them and also to describe their subject, Indian art music. In response, Indian scholars too began to focus on rendering their musical tradition into an English-language framework. The resulting effort by both Western and Indian authors writing in English led to the development of what is appropriately called Indic musicology. Predictably, much of this work has been carried on within the Indian scholastic tradition by drawing heavily on the body of classical writings and often addressing related problems such as the classification of melody types (for example, Bose 1960, Jairazbhoy 1971), or the measurement of pitch relationships (for example, Deval 1918, Clements 1913, Sastri 1954). With few exceptions (Day 1974, Fox-Strangways 1965, Van Der Meer 1979), a strongly theoretical orientation has also characterized the many general works on Indian music (for example, Gangoly 1935, Prajnananda 1960, Danielou 1949–54).

The extension of scholarly analysis to Indian musical practice was hampered initially by the traditional separation of the learned music scholar from the unlettered performing musician. However, the present-day Western concern with performance study on one hand, and the Indian promotion of institutionalized music on the other, have led to an increasing emphasis on musical practice, resulting in collections of music in notation – both Indian (Bhatkhande 1953–5, Patwardhan 1972, Nawab Ali Kan 1925) and Western (Powers 1958, Kuckertz 1970, Wade 1971) – and, more important, in the description or analysis of actual music in terms of an appropriate theoretical framework – both in English (Gosvami 1957, Sambamoorthy 1960–69, Joshi 1963, Kaufmann 1968) and in vernacular languages (Bhatkhande 1953–5, Thakur 1954–62). As a result of all this, the broad outlines of such an analytical framework have now largely been worked out for Indian classical music on the basis of the musicians' own verbalized theory, and amplified, as well as standardized, with reference to classical Indian scholarship. Still, certain problems remain to be dealt with regarding the

relationship between ancient and modern theory as well as between theory and practice, where both are derived from socio-culturally divergent musical representatives.

The input of Western musicology, apart from early comparisons with Western scale theories, has in the main been confined to providing equivalents or amplifications to Indian musical concepts. Since Indian musical parameters are highly compatible with those of Western art music, Western-trained musicologists – both Western and Indian – have been quite successful at integrating both into a flexible descriptive framework which is based on Indian music theory and, at the same time, amenable to Western analytical approaches. With this framework, Indian musicology has been tackling specific musical problems (for example, Athavale *et al.* 1976, Deshpande and Ratanjankar 1970, Row 1977) and specific performance traditions (for example, Tewari 1977, Stewart 1974, Manuel 1983), and expanding into innovative theoretical approaches (for example Deva 1967, Chandola, 1977, 1979).[3]

It is this theoretical framework of Indic musicology which I consider an appropriate tool for analysing Qawwali. For Qawwali, like the music of numerous other South Asian performance traditions, forms part of what may be called the Indic Music Area, and shares with art music, as well as with folk music idioms, a common musical frame of reference. That frame of reference is most appropriately articulated in terms of Indic music theory. At the same time, Qawwali must be analysed as a distinct musical idiom which cannot be subsumed within Indian art music. The only way to avoid imposing even the appropriate musical categories of Indian art music in an inappropriate way is to follow the careful elicitation and verification procedures based on intensive musical study and participation. Such elicitation is enormously facilitated by the fact that Qawwali musicians are hereditary performers with a tradition of teaching and talking about their music in terms compatible with art music; Qawwali musical conceptions are thus available literally for the asking.

The second key issue, how to relate context with sound system from a mutually compatible analytical perspective, arises from a problematic which has been inherent in ethnomusicological studies of context since their inception: their inability to deal satisfactorily with musical sound. Informed by anthropological theory and method, such studies initially centred on the uses and function of music, without however incorporating the music itself into the analytical scheme, either not dealing with musical sound analytically (McAllester 1954), or analysing it according to strictly Western criteria unrelated to the contextual analysis (Merriam 1967). A growing concern with cultural appropriateness and ethnographic rigour, influenced by developments in cognitive anthropology, sociolinguistics and folklore, led to the analytical separation of conceptual and behavioural levels of musical context (Asch 1975a). Thus music is being investigated as a cognitive system of conceptions rendered meaningful by their linkage with other socio-cultural norms and institutions (Frisbie 1967, 1980, Blum 1975, Blacking 1971, 1973, 1979). More important, such culture-specific knowledge about music is serving as a necessary tool for a culturally appropriate interpretation of the behavioural domain of music: the performance context (McLeod 1971, Herndon 1971, Asch 1975b). In this 'ethnography of communication' approach to music, the focus is on the concept of the musical occasion as 'a cultural and social entity that includes music but also the totality of associated behaviors and underlying concepts' (Herndon 1971:339). Studies of specific performance traditions demonstrate the potential of 'emic' analysis, that is, the application of an indigenous conceptual framework to the interpretation of behaviour. Furthermore, such analyses are being extended to deal with behavioural choices in the decision-making process

of participants in the musical occasion, thus contributing to an understanding of the dynamic of context (Herndon and Brunyate 1976).

The Qawwali assembly certainly fits the ethnographic model of the performance occasion as a well-defined and bounded context of performance in which the rôle of music can be clearly identified. Like other musical assemblies of the Indian subcontinent, Qawwali in fact constitutes what Indic anthropology identifies as a 'cultural performance' (Singer 1972: 148f.), that characteristic institution central to Indian society because it presents 'encapsulated expressions' of its forms and values. The fact that this very cultural performance concept contributed seminally to the formation of the ethnography-of-performance approach in ethnomusicology, makes Qawwali appear particularly suitable for such an analysis, although, curiously, the approach has rarely been applied to musical performance traditions of India.

The music itself, however, finds no more than partial inclusion in most anthropologically oriented studies. A few significant exceptions (A. Seeger 1979, 1980, Asch 1975a) show that there are musical rules which are derivable from features of the performance setting, both in an immediate and a wide cultural sense, thus providing concrete evidence that music and context are indeed related. However, such as they are, these rules are shown to govern but a limited number of musical distinctions, often at a low level of specificity. Hence they can hardly account for all the musical sounds being generated in a performance, and without that, our understanding of the musical idiom must remain incomplete. Clearly, an analysis of musical performance based on context alone leaves a gap in the analysis of musical sound, a gap which can only be filled by means of a compatible framework for music analysis. In other words, what is needed is a synthesis between the approaches inspired by musicology and anthropology, between sound-oriented and context-oriented ethnomusicologists. Such a synthesis presupposes a single conceptual framework so that both music and context can be approached in ways which are compatible with one another. If ethnomusicology appears as yet to lack such a framework, it is due to its dual disciplinary underpinnings, but it is also because systematic musical ethnography, which is just emerging, is only beginning to call for theoretical refinement.

Taking stock, what ethnomusicology can provide for an analysis of Qawwali are two kinds of tools that have been found useful in musical and contextual analysis respectively. First, there are tools for understanding the rule system of Qawwali music, using systematic elicitation for musicians on the basis of Indic musicological concepts as adapted to a Western musicological frame of reference. Second, there are tools for analysing the Qawwali context, in terms of both concepts and behaviour, structure and process, using anthropological theory and methods of elicitation and observation. In order to use these tools together, what is required is a single analytical scheme, so that both music and context can be analysed in mutually compatible ways. Such an analytical framework can be generated from anthropological theory, but it needs to be extended, and endowed with a concrete methodology that is compatible with the special needs of music analysis. In short, the approach has to be truly ethnomusicological.

C   An abstract model and a concrete procedure

An essential condition for building an analytical model that should provide testable proce-
dures and replicable results is conceptual clarity. This is especially important for the study of
musical performance where two different sets of assumptions have traditionally governed the
different elements to be analysed together. To begin with, then, the analysis of musical sound
must be subjected to the same assumptions as the analysis of its context. The following
assumptions, derived from anthropological theory, constitute a starting base for an ethno-
musicological analysis of musical performance:

1. The analysis should focus on what can be tested, the observable. Observable music is
the complex of sound a musician makes, and its observable context is the performance
situation in which he makes them. Hence analysing the relationship of the two requires
dealing with behaviour in very specific terms, musical as well as non-musical.

2. The conceptual domain is analytically distinct from the domain of behaviour, with a
dialectical relationship obtaining between them. The implication which is significant for
analysing the behavioural realm is that concepts or norms inform behaviour and can therefore
serve as a key to such analysis, but a norm is not a practice.

3. Music, too, has a conceptual and a behavioural dimension; access to the conceptions
underlying a musical idiom can be used to analyse its behavioural unfolding in performance.
A native music theory provides direct access to appropriate musical parameters for such an
analysis. But functional conceptions underlie all music making; they only need to be
discovered and the metalanguage for musical analysis expanded accordingly.

On the basis of these three assumptions an analytical approach may be delineated which
includes the dimensions of both context and music, dealing with each at the conceptual level
of structure and then at the level of process where structure is realized behaviourally. What
remains to be clarified is the question of how to deal analytically with the dynamic that
underlies any process *per se*, including the process of music-making. This requires stating a
final assumption regarding process and its analysis:

4. Process means making structure operational. It constitutes the behavioural realization
of concepts. But process, no matter how culturally and socially complex, originates in
individual human action which is based upon individual strategy or motivation, and depen-
dent on the individual's vantage point in the situation. From this perspective the process of a
musical performance results from the interplay of such action (that is, interaction) by two
kinds of participants: those who operationalize music, and those who operationalize context –
that is, performer and audience. The key to understanding musical sound in its process of
performance is to analyse it from the vantage point of the performer, since it is the perfor-
mer's action that takes the form of musical sound production, and it is through the perfor-
mer's perceptions that the actions of the audience affect the music.

The framework or blueprint which I propose for the analysis of Qawwali arises directly out
of all four assumptions. As schematized in Table 1, it also accounts for the fact that musical
and contextual structures are informed by socio-cultural background dimensions, while the
musical–contextual interaction process, based on participants' strategies, is informed by
their own vantage point or self-interest.

It now remains to make this analytical framework operational, in other words to translate
the blueprint into a concrete analytical procedure for Qawwali. Substantively, this procedure

Table 1 *Analytical Model*

Background dimensions	Dimensions to be analysed	
	Context of performance	Medium of performance
Ideological system	OCCASION STRUCTURE (according to participant's shared knowledge)	MUSIC STRUCTURE (according to performer's knowledge)
Symbolic system		
Socio-economic setting	.... Structure operationalized = process	
Performer's identity	EVENT PROCESS	SONG PROCESS
Performer's vantage point (self-interest)	Audience (according to performer's perceptions) ←——— analysed as: interaction ———→	Performer (according to performer's actions)

comprises two stages: the first addresses structure, the second process. But the actual analysis must proceed in three steps.

The first step is to consider the musical idiom of Qawwali. Using a musicological approach, Qawwali music will be analysed in terms of its musical framework and its distinctive musical features, resulting in a model of Qawwali musical structure. This is contained in Part I.

The second step – logically parallel to the first one – is to examine the performance context of Qawwali, that is, the structure of the Qawwali occasion. In terms of the analytical goal this step provides information prerequisite to the third step – the analysis of the performance process – and is therefore organized accordingly, focussing on concepts, setting, and procedure. First, however, it is necessary to introduce the relevant background dimensions that give sense to the immediate context of performance. These are the Sufi ideology which provides the *rationale* and function of Qawwali, the symbolic system of mystical poetry used as Qawwali texts, the socio-economic setting of Sufism within which Qawwali is practised, and the social and professional identity of the performer who knows and produces Qawwali music. An overview of the Qawwali occasion links the performance context to this background, setting the stage for the analysis of the occasion structure. All this is contained in Part II.

The third step constitutes the actual analysis of the performance process. This requires switching to the vantage point of the performer, who converts the musical structure into a process of sound performance, informed by the performer's own apprehension of all the factors relevant to the performance context. First the context and idiom of performance are outlined in concert, as they constitute a particular performance event, their interplay resulting from the strategies of the participants. Once charted, this context–music interaction is then reduced to its underlying principles, so as to identify the contextual constraints operat-

ing on the music during the performance. The ultimate goal is to incorporate these constraints into what should amount to a context-sensitive grammar of Qawwali music. This is contained in Part III. Such a grammar should account for the total process of musical production in Qawwali and make possible the testing of the initial hypothesis: Qawwali sound will vary with variation in the context of Qawwali performance.

Four types of discovery procedures were required to carry out this analysis of Qawwali. To acquire two very different kinds of knowledge, musical and contextual, called for different strategies but a single appropriate approach toward the discovery of other people's conceptualizations: participation and open-ended elicitation while striving to maintain a conceptual separation between informants' and analysts' categories. Needless to say, this approach can be as time-consuming as is real life, as puzzling to all concerned for its apparent lack of direction, and its results as difficult to categorize. But it did heighten my awareness of contextual complexities operating in the realms of music, language, and action – including the impact of my own presence.

My knowledge of Qawwali music was acquired within the traditional setting for learning from a professional specialist in India and Pakistan: as a student (shāgird) who is formally taught by a master (ustad) in return for allegiance, made manifest through remuneration and personal service. For me, the anomaly of being a foreign female of obvious prosperity (evidenced by my having time and money for this research, modest outward appearance notwithstanding) made it quite acceptable to convert the requirement for service into generous financial reward, and also to deviate from my allegiance to one teacher by taking lessons from others. (Ultimately it all boiled down to the fact that traditional Qawwali performers are in dire need of patrons today.)

The teaching process included learning musical concepts and performance rules, acquiring performing competence and an actual, though limited repertoire of Qawwali songs which I used to test the musical rules in application. To avoid imposing my suggestions required adopting the stance of a musical novice. Even then, my position as a patron resulted at times in my 'client' not wishing to answer my question in the negative; only gradually did I learn to distinguish such an accommodation from a true confirmation (for example 'yes, this is done' – yeh hotā hai –, meaning standard practice, versus 'yes, this is done as well' – yeh bhī hotā hai – meaning that it is not done but conceivably could be, since I had raised the question).

While formal musical learning was to be the first step in the field research, large areas of knowledge turned out to be inaccessible in the initial course of lessons. Then I discovered that Qawwals believe in learning by ear and use formal teaching mainly to help out their unmusical youngsters. This meant that I had to acquire a working knowledge of the standard Qawwali repertoire by memory, to serve as a frame of reference for exploring musical conceptualizations.

My knowledge of the Qawwali context was acquired in the natural course of interaction with participants in Qawwali, from the standard vantage point of a spiritual junior. Sufis are well-versed teachers of their own ideology, but its experiential aspects only became accessible with reference to concrete experience. This in turn presupposed a thorough familiarity with Qawwali events.

To acquire a detailed knowledge of the Qawwali performance process required the aid of videotaped recordings so as actually to capture both detail and dynamic of the interplay between music and audience behaviour. Eschewing the interference of technical enhance-

ments, I videotaped Qawwali performances singlehandedly, toward the end of my field research, by which time I had become a competent observer and part of the scene, and this intrusive procedure was generally accepted by all concerned.

Finally, verifying my observations was attempted at two levels. Consulting and checking my conclusions with Qawwali participants was crucial, especially with reference to video recordings of performances, through what Stone and Stone (1981) term the feedback interview. Thanks to the large number of recorded performances it was also possible to test conclusions against data not included in the analysis. These procedures enhanced, but did not replace, the rôle of creative interpretation in integrating multifarious musical and ethnographic insights into a unified epistemological perspective.

D   The ethnographic domain of Qawwali

The analytical goal of this study necessitated selecting an ethnographic domain for Qawwali in which the music can be apperceived in the totality of its context. A major Sufi shrine is such a domain, for it is the *locus* of Qawwali performances of every kind, of a stable group of performers with a standard core repertoire and a predictable audience complex – in short, a local universe of Qawwali. But Qawwali, like Sufism, is also very much a supra-local tradition, part of the cosmopolitan culture and ideology of Indic Islam. Both spiritual ties and actual encounters through pilgrimage and travel link shrines and urban centres across the entire subcontinent into one extended Sufi community. Indeed, many particular features of Qawwali derive their significance from their place in this larger scheme of Sufism, though mediated by local practice.

To do justice to both dimensions, I chose a single shrine, Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi, as the primary domain for studying Qawwali, expanding my focus to include the extensive network of shrines linked to this important Sufi centre, notably Qutab Sahib, Chiragh-e-Delhi, and Abdus Salam in Delhi, in addition to Dargah Khwaja Sahib in Ajmer, Sabir Pak in Kaliar Sharif and Khwaja Bandanawaz in Gulbarga (see Table 19). But I also branched out into other shrines with their own local networks: Sheikh Yusuf Shah in Karachi, Kakori near Lucknow, Fatehpur Sikri in Agra and Shah Khamosh in Hyderabad.

Seen from the perspective of this broader experience, Nizamuddin Auliya is representative as a major shrine of high spiritual pedigree, with its own heritage of Sufi teachings and poetry, its own ritual tradition centred around Qawwali, and with a long established, thriving shrine community of Sufis and Qawwali performers who maintain tradition and articulate this heritage in catering to the present-day spiritual and ritual needs of a large and diverse community of devotees. But most of all, Nizamuddin Auliya has always been a centre of Qawwali, for here it represents the personal legacy of the great poet, musician and statesman Amir Khusrau who was also the saint Nizamuddin's favourite disciple and, in fact, is buried next to him. Indeed, he is generally considered the founding father of Qawwali and of Qawwali performers. Khusrau's beloved mystical verses and musical settings constitute the core repertoire of the shrine's hereditary performers, the Qawwal Bachche. They are favourite songs in Qawwali assemblies all over the subcontinent, but especially in two important urban centres of Sufism – Karachi, Pakistan and Hyderabad, India, where members of the same Qawwal Bachche lineage actively maintain their special Qawwali heritage.

The music of Qawwali reflects its ethnographic setting. An extensive oral repertoire (I recorded 433 performances of 261 songs with 179 different tunes) is performed and transmitted by hundreds of Qawwals at different local Sufi centres (I recorded 83 performing groups at fifteen centres). A good number of songs are common to all Qawwals and known to Sufis all over the Indic subcontinent; they are Sufi 'classics'. In addition, networks of related shrines share repertoires oriented to particular saintly lineages, repertoires which also reflect regional musical styles, especially where rural audiences abound. Within shrine networks, each shrine of some import has its own special songs, and then there are a Qawwali performer's personal songs. Finally, this repertoire is performed in different settings in many different ways (I recorded over 20 versions of the two best known Qawwali songs).

My analysis of Qawwali music arises from a careful consideration of this entire musical map, and its various constellations, which together constitute the repertoire structure of the Qawwali genre. The performance dimension of this music, however, can only be understood through the concrete music-making of the individual performer, whose competence encompasses particular categories and facets of Qawwali music, and who combines in his repertoire both unique and shared components of the music, articulating their respective significance in specific performance settings. For this purpose, the specific emphasis of this study is on the repertoire of the Qawwal Bachche at Nizamuddin Auliya and on its use in performance. Among them I have singled out an individual performer, Meraj Ahmad Nizami, senior member of his lineage and direct descendant of the famous nineteenth-century singer Tan Ras Khan, a performer rich in repertoire and performing experience.

It is the performing life of this core performer, in the surrounding of his home shrine and his fellow lineage members at that shrine, which provides the concrete context for my musical ethnography of Qawwali and for its central focus, the individual Qawwali performance. Only a thorough familiarity with this total context – as well as with the musical repertoire – can enable an observer to analyse the making of Qawwali music systematically and in all its essential nuances. By examining numerous performances within the same contextual setting it becomes possible to juxtapose systematically the core performer's rendition of different songs, of the same song with different settings and audiences, and then to compare performances of the same song in the same setting by different performers – all this so as to account for variables of musical and contextual variation.

The musical exemplification of Qawwali has been chosen to reflect this focus on a coherent repertoire and its total contextual setting, while also representing general facets of Qawwali music and performance practice. To this end, an integrated example structure is presented throughout the text that centres on the core performer Meraj Ahmad, his musical and text repertoire, his performances as well as his background and his relationships within the setting of the Nizamuddin Auliya shrine. At the same time, this structure aims to convey a coherent and representative ethnographic picture of Qawwali as it lives today in both India and Pakistan. Thus the music examples consist of a cross section of Meraj Ahmad's core repertoire, containing at the same time famous Sufi songs representative of the major categories of Qawwali music, and including versions representative of different performance styles. As for the exemplification of the Qawwali context, it emanates, wherever possible, from the Nizamuddin Auliya shrine, its assemblies, and its larger network, including social and ideological perspectives and situating the performers within their Sufi community – all this so that a picture of the total context for Meraj Ahmad's music may emerge. The two kinds

of information thus presented, musical and contextual, come together in the examples of performance events. This enables the reader to decode the process of musical and contextual interaction, in details of both fact and implication, thereby illustrating ethnographically the amazing dynamic of Qawwali music-making. If the edifice of exemplification appears enormously complex it is so only when considered in terms of its components; taken together, they constitute a living whole, organic and compelling.

Part I
The performance idiom: Qawwali music

خُشَکَ تَار و خُشَکَ چوب و خُشَکَ پوست

از کُجا ی آید این آوازِ دوست

نَہ زِ تار و نَہ زِ چوب و نَہ زِ پوست

خود خود ی آید این آوازِ دوست

Khushk tār o khushk chob o khushk posh,
    az kujā mī āyad iṅ āwāz-e-dost
Nai ze tār o nai ze chob o nai ze posh,
    khud bakhud mī āyad iṅ āwāz-e-dost

Singing strings, vibrant wood, throbbing drums
    whence comes the voice of the Beloved?
Not from strings, not from wood, nor from a
    drum, of Himself comes the voice of the
    Beloved.

The Qawwali is over. Their task done, the musicians carry away their instruments; the assembly disperses, each listener carrying within the fullness of a world of sound that still lingers over the marble tomb now silent. What is the power of this sound, how does this music speak, welcoming all ears with a familiar message while revealing to the seeker realms beyond his knowledge, leading each on to his own path yet joining all in the fervour of a shared musical experience?

The Sufi listener can describe his experience, even the music he hears, but it is the musician who has mastered the idiom so as to create it; only the musician can help unlock the essence of its structure. To analyse this musical idiom I sought guidance from the musical knowledge of the performer, and applied it in my study of the Qawwali repertoire. The result is an analytical framework consistent with the concepts of Hindustani classical music, and also capable of encompassing those features which are outside the Qawwal's own musical theory, but which are nevertheless essential to the music. A set of tables summarizes my analysis of Qawwali musical parameters, together with the corresponding indigenous terms and concepts. An explanation of these terms and concepts can be found in the 'Qawwali musical vocabulary' appended to the text.

But before it can be understood, the music must be heard. My chosen repertoire of Qawwali therefore precedes the musical analysis in the form of fully annotated transcriptions. Together with the recording on the accompanying cassette, these transcription vignettes introduce the reader to the sound of Qawwali. They also provide a complete musical context for the structural details in the analysis, since all musical examples are drawn from this chosen repertoire.

I   *The Qawwali repertoire*

A   The songs

Qawwali music consists essentially of songs, musical settings of poems. The 'tunes' (*dhun*, *bandish*, *tarz*) of these musical settings are the repertoire of Qawwali music. Identified normally by their text, Qawwali tunes nevertheless have a recognized musical identity. Indeed, most Qawwali tunes are movable and therefore fall into their own categories, independent or overlapping with textual ones. For Qawwali generally, and for the performers of this particular repertoire, the Qawwal Bachche of Nizamuddin Auliya, there is first of all a stock of standard tunes, most of which are associated with standard poems. This tune repertoire encompasses what Qawwals call 'old' tunes (*purānī dhunen*, *purānī bandishen*). Within that general category the 'special' (*makhsūs*, *khās*) settings of particular poems are identified by their texts, but many are movable and adapted to different poems. Not movable are musical settings of ritual songs or of songs with a special shrine association. Also included in this general category of what Nizamuddin Auliya Qawwals call 'typical Qawwal tunes' (*Qawwālī kī ṭhet dhunen*) are tunes for common use (*ʿām dhunen*) that can suit any poem within a given range of structural features.

In addition to the old stock repertoire there is an expanding repertoire of what are called 'tunes of nowadays' (*ājkal kī dhunen*). Some of them, too, are settings of particular poems, mostly modern ones; often these are also known by their composers, usually well-known Qawwals. Recordings of such newly composed songs have helped generate a new musical repertoire, of songs mostly popular in style, which also constitutes a source of new tunes for adapting to suitable poems. Nizamuddin Auliya Qawwals are always on the lookout for new tunes, 'picking them up' (*uṛānā* – to snatch) from listening to performances, or, more rarely, making them up. All make sure of learning what is currently popular, but differences in personal preference and training result in a more popular orientation in some, while a strictly classical Sufi orientation is represented by their principal singer, Meraj Ahmad, whose repertoire of classical Sufi poems as well as of authentic old tunes is the most extensive.

In concrete terms, the repertoire which is actually heard in performance at Nizamuddin Auliya is a collection of songs covering all the above categories of poems and tunes and representing both family heritage and individual acquisition. This means that any one individual within the group knows four types of song:

(a)   Songs specifically associated with Nizamuddin Auliya, including ritual songs and Amir Khusrau compositions. These constitute the essence of the Qawwal Bachche tradition (represented in Nos. 2 and 3 of the chosen repertoire).

(b)   Sufi classics known to Sufis and Qawwals all over India (Repertoire Nos. 1 and 4).

(c)   Songs that form part of the performer's personal repertoire, either handed down in his immediate family or acquired on his own, including his own compositions. Such songs may be

picked up by his colleagues, but they remain associated with his name, and they most clearly reflect his performing personality (Repertoire Nos. 5 and 6).

(d)   Songs with popular success, added to the repertoire to keep up with the trend of the day (Repertoire No. 7).

The proportion between these types of songs varies from one Nizamuddin performer to the next: Meraj, being oriented to classical Sufism and having a particularly rich backgound, is extremely well-versed in types (a) and (b) – the latter also because of his extensive exposure to shrines all over India. He excels in type (c), particularly with his knowledge of old songs, but has kept type (d) to a minimum.

The transcriptions convey each song as the performer presents it, with its tune outline and text as well as the alternative endings and tune sections that are used in performance. The aim is to represent Qawwali as a normative musical structure rather than an acoustic event (the cassette provides that dimension). Since the instrumental accompaniment on *ḍholak* and harmonium is not considered integral to the song, the transcription does not include it, but the rôle of this accompaniment is dealt with in the analysis.

Added to each song transcription is the complete text, along with a transliteration and translation. Also appended are basic features of musical and poetic structure. Finally, each song is annotated with a thumbnail sketch of relevant musical, ethnographic and background information.

1   ***Qaul: Man kunto Maulā*** (CD item: 1)

Alternative endings

Arabic–Farsi text

هِمْ تْوم تَنَانَا نَانَا تَنَانَا نَارى

بِلالى بِلالى بِلا يَالار ى

مَنْ كُنْ تُ مولا

فَعَلىً مولا

دَر دِل دَر دِل دَر دَانى

Transliteration	*Translation*
Arabic	
Man kunto Maulā	Whoever accepts me as master
Fā Alī-un-Maulā	Ali is his master too
Farsi	
Dar dil'dar dil dar dānī	(For interpretation of the remaining text, see
Ham tum tānānā nānā tānānānā rī	Annotation below)
Yālalī yālalī yālā yālā rī	
Yālalalī yālalalī yālā yālā rī	

Text–music structure

(a)   Form: irregular 6-line strophe, fitted into *asthāyī-antarā* scheme.
verse line 1 = A   *asthāyī*
              2 = A^{e}1 *asthāyī* extension
              3 = A^{e}2 *asthāyī* extension
              4 = B   *antarā*
              5 = B^{e}1 *antarā* extension
              6 = B^{e}2 *antarā* extension

(b)   Metre and rhythmic realization: irregular – set to 8/8 *kaharvā*

Annotation

This is the basic ritual song of Sufism in India; indeed one can call it the Opening – or Closing – Hymn of Qawwali. At Nizamuddin Auliya no Qawwali event can start any other way, while elsewhere in India and Pakistan the Qaul serves as a conclusion. The hymn expresses a basic Sufi tenet, that the principle of spiritual succession in Sufism was instituted by the Prophet himself, as recorded in one of his sayings (*hadīs*). It is this saying which constitutes the main text of this brief hymn, which is therefore called *qaul* ('saying' in Arabic; see p. 83 below).

According to all Sufis in India, it is Amir Khusrau who set this *hadīs* to music, extending it with *zikr*-like phrases (see p. 82 below) in Farsi which today are only partly intelligible.[4]

Musically, the Qaul is set to a version of raga *shudh kalyān* which the Qawwal Bachche consider authentic, since the raga is likely to have changed over time while the Qawwali hymn tune has been carefully preserved and passed on in an unbroken succession of hereditary shrine performers.

The song consists of six lines and a complete tune, with *asthāyī* and *antarā* and their extensions. However, in this song the entire textual meaning is contained in the first two lines, so that the remainder is rarely repeated more than cursorily. In fact, the entire emphasis in performance falls on the core opening statement set to the *asthāyī* and expressed through every kind of repetition. A good number of alternative tune versions allow the performer to create variety, and structure the repetition of very short units into somewhat larger musical phrases. Most important, they enable him to raise the intensity level by raising the pitch level of this low-register *asthāyī* tune.

Amplifying insertions (*girahs*) are much used in the performance of the Qaul. Since the message of the song is so basic and its implication so profound for Sufism, extension through insertions is normally expected, so that every performer at Nizamuddin Auliya has in his memory a stock of appropriate *girahs*, many of which are Sufi classics in their own right. Another aspect of the extended repetition standard for this hymn is the use of musical improvisation. Nizamuddin performers prefer melodic improvisation, while performers elsewhere also use rhythmic improvisation to the Farsi syllables.

The version presented here is identical for all Qawwal Bachche and recognized throughout India and Pakistan as the one that most authentically represents the original by Amir Khusrau.

Twenty-one performances of the Qaul by the Qawwal Bachche were recorded – varying in duration from a few minutes to almost one hour – among them the brief rendition of Performance No. 1 (see below, pp. 148–52).

2   ***Chashm-e maste-ᶜajabe*** (CD item: 3)

Alternative endings

Farsi text (5 verses out of a possible 8)

Transliteration	Translation
Chashm-e-maste ʿajabe zulf tarāze ʿajabe	O wondrous ecstatic eyes, o wondrous long locks,
Maiparaste ʿajabe fitna tarāze ʿajabe	O wondrous wine worshipper, o wondrous mischievous sweetheart.
Bahr-e-qatlam chu kashad tegh neham sar basujūd	As he draws the sword, I bow my head in prostration so as to be killed,
Ū banāze ʿajabe man banyāze ʿajabe	O wondrous is his beneficence, o wondrous my submission.
Waqt-e-bismil shudanam chashm barūyash bāz ast	In the spasm of being killed my eyes beheld your face:
Mehrbāne ʿajabe bandanawāze ʿajabe	O wondrous benevolence, o wondrous guidance

Turk tāze ʿajabe shoba babāze ʿajabe	O wondrous amorous teasing, o wondrous beguiling,
Kajkulāhe ʿajabe ʿarbada sāze ʿajabe	O wondrous tilted cap (symbol of beauty), o wondrous tormentor.
Haq mago kalma-e-kufr ast dar īṅ jā Khusrau	Do not reveal the Truth; in this world blasphemy prevails, Khusrau:
Rāzdāne ʿajabe sāhib-e-rāz-e-ʿajabe	O wondrous Source of mystery, o wondrous Knower of secrets.

Text–music structure

(a)   Form: *ghazal and asthāyī-antarā scheme*

verse 1 line 1	a (rhyming)	= A	(*asthāyī*) + B (*antarā*)
line 2	a (rhyming)	= A	(*asthāyī*)
verse 2 line 1	b (non-rhyming)	= B	(*antarā*)
(etc.) line 2	a (rhyming)	= A	(*asthāyī*)

(b)   Rhythm: verse metre *raml* and musical metre 8/8 (*qawwālī kā thēkā*)

verse metre   ᴜ ᴜ — — | ᴜ ᴜ — — | ᴜ ᴜ — —| ᴜ ᴜ —

musical metre

Annotation

This is one of the most famous and stirring Qawwali classics in the repertoire of the Qawwal Bachche. The poem, a *ghazal* by Amir Khusrau, conveys ecstasy and mystical love through the rich imagery of traditional Persian love poetry, enhanced by a euphonious rhyme scheme and the pervasive use of the monorhyme ʿ*ajabe* (strangely wonderful), a term which so aptly characterizes the mystical experience.

The musical setting is characterized by a strongly motivic melody typical of many 'special' or 'old' Qawwali tunes. It is highly structured in parallel phrases and sequential rhythmic patterns, both traits being favoured by a long verse line and a regular metric pattern. Of the two tune portions, the *asthāyī* is clearly the dominant one, melodically and motivically, while the *antarā* simply introduces the contrasting upper octave register and then joins into the concluding phrase of the *asthāyī* tune.

A particularity which this musical setting shares with many other Qawwali tunes, especially those associated with Farsi *ghazals*, is a musical realization of the poetic metre which renders the final long syllables of every rhythmic phrase into extended durational values. This extra duration permits the lead performer to insert word calls or even a fast repetition of the preceding text phrase (see transcription) at the end of that phrase, thus rendering the musical setting particularly suited to varied *takrār* repetition.

The version presented is Aziz Ahmad Khan Warsi's (see p. 102 below). The tune outline and alternative endings are identical with those of Meraj Ahmad's version, since both performers received their training from the same illustrious family tradition. Deviating versions can be heard by performers outside Nizamuddin Auliya, but the Qawwal Bachche version is recognized as standard. Elaborations are often heard in renditions of this song by Qawwal Bachche; among them Aziz Warsi excels in his melodic improvisations outlining raga phrases that match the song setting.

In addition to Aziz Warsi's version, five other performances of *Chashm-e-maste* were recorded, four sung by Meraj Ahmad and one by a hereditary performer from outside, singing at Nizamuddin Auliya.

3   *Torī sūrat ke balhārī* (CD item: 5)

Torī sū-ra-to ke bala hā-ri   Sab sakhian chundar mori mai-li

dekha hansīn nara-nā-ri   Ab ke bahār chun-dar mori rang do

Rakh le lā-jə ha-mā-rī Nijām, Torī sū-rato ke ba-lə hā-rī

Alternative endings

To-ri sū-rato ke balə hā-ri   GO ON TO: B (or conclude)

ri, Nijām,   GO BACK TO: ↑A ↑A↑A↑ ↑A↑A↑ A alt ↑A alt

ba-lə hā-ri, Nijām,   (same as A↑)

ba-lə-hā-ri, Nijām,   (same as A↑)

↑A (↑A↑, ↑A↑, ↑A↑)   delayed upward adjustment

To-ri

A alt   GO BACK TO: A alt ↑A alt ↑A ↑A↑A ↑A↑A ↑A↑A

↑A alt   (same as A alt)

Hindi text

نوری صورت کے بلہاری بجام

سب سکھین چندری موری میلی

دیکھہ ہنسیں نر ناری

اب کے بہار چندر موری رنگ دو

رکھہ لے لاج ہماری بجام پیا

صدقہ بابا گنج شکر کا

رکھہ لے لاج ہماری بجام پیا

كوہو سا س كوہو نند سے جھگڑے   قلب مريد مل آے براتى

ميكا تو آس تيہارى   خسرو راج دلارى نجام پيا

بيرى تيہارى سب كوہو جانے

لاج ميرى ہے يا تيہارى

Transliteration	Translation
Refrain:	*Refrain:*
Torī sūrat ke balhārī (Nijām)	Beholding your countenance I offer myself in sacrifice (Nijām).
1.	*1.*
Sab sakhian chundar morī mailī	All the other girls saw my soiled *chundar*,[5]
Dekh hansīṅ narnārī	And together they laughed at me.
Ab ke bahār chundar morī rang do	This springtime, dye my *chundar* for me
Rakh le lāj hamārī (Nijām Pīyā)	O protect my honour (Nijām, Beloved)!
2.	*2.*
Sadqā Bābā Ganj-e-Shakar kā	In the name of Ganj-e-Shakar[6]
Rakh le lāj hamārī (Nijām Pīyā)	Protect our honour (Nijām, Beloved).
3.	*3.*
Koh sās koh nand se jhagṛe	Who can win against mother-in-law or sister-in-law?[7]
Maikā to ās tihārī	I pine for your support.
Merī tihārī sab kahū jāne	Everyone knows how you and I are linked:
Lāj merī hai yā tihārī	Is my honour different from yours (Nijām, Beloved)?
4.	*4.*
Qutab Farid mil āe barātī	Qutab and Farid have both joined in the wedding procession;[8]
Khusrau rāj dulārī (Nijām Pīyā)	Khusrau is the darling bride (Nijām, Beloved).

Text–music structure

(a)   Form: refrain with stanzas and *asthāyī-antarā* scheme

refrain (*mukhṛā*)	a (rhyming)	= A	(*asthāyī*)
verse 1 line 1	b (non-rhyming)	= B	(*antarā*)
(etc.)	2 a (rhyming)	= B^{e1}	(*antarā* extension 1)
	3 b	= B	(*antarā*)
	4 a	= B^{e2}	(*antarā* extension 2)
verse 2 line 1	b (non-rhyming)	= B	(*antarā*)
	2 a (rhyming)	= B^{e}	(*antarā* extension 2)

(b)   Rhythm: verse metre Hindi and musical metre 7/8 (*pashto*)

asthāyī

antarā

Annotation

Perhaps the most dearly beloved Amir Khusrau Qawwali in Hindi, this song most directly conveys the mystical love experience through the Hindi devotional idiom in which the devotee speaks as a bride giving up the self to merge with the beloved saint Nizamuddin, and it also touches on the supplication and invocation of spiritual seniors.

The form is typical for many Hindi songs: here, as often, the opening line stands by itself, is used as a refrain, and epitomizes the entire song. It is therefore highlighted by a distinctive *asthāyī* tune, setting it apart from the remaining musical setting, all of which is *antarā* material with extensions.

Melodically, this is a typical 'raga-like' tune or, as Meraj Ahmad puts it, the tune is raga-related (*yeh dhun rāg se wabastā hai*). The motivic pattern of the opening is unmistakably raga *kāfī*, and later phrases suggest *bahār*, but no consistency obtains throughout.

The rhythmic setting of the tune is simple, and in its long-short arrangement typical of Hindi poetry – anapaestic for the refrain and dactylic for the stanzas. But the musical metre governing this setting is the asymmetrical *pashto* (7/8) of classical or 'old' Qawwali songs, so that the long-short relationship becomes 3:2, rather than the 2:1 more common in Hindi songs.

This song, both text and music, is part of the Qawwal Bachche's special heritage. It is widely sung within the entire Chishti *silsilā*, however, and can therefore be heard in a number of variants. The present version of Meraj Ahmad is standard for all Nizamuddin Auliya performers and may be considered the most authentic extant today. A performance of this song by Meraj is included in Performance No. 1 (see pp. 164–74 below); the first portion of that performance is transcribed in Example 17a (see pp. 73–4 below).

Torī sūrat was recorded in seven performances, four sung by Meraj Ahmad, and the rest by three hereditary Qawwals outside Nizamuddin Auliya.

4   *Masnavī: Muflisānem* (CD item: 6)

Alternative endings

Muflisā-nem ā-madā dar kū-e-to   shaiʾ ul-lah az jmāl-e-rū-e-to

to, āhe

āhe, kū-e-to, āhe

to, āhe

āhe

e - rū-e-to (āhe)

Farsi text

شے اَل الٰہ اَز جمال روۓ تو   تغفلنایم آمدہ در کوۓ تو

سجدہ گاہ عاشقاں ابروۓ تو   کعبهٔ دل قبلهٔ مَن روۓ تو

انبساطِ عمید دیدم کوۓ تو   عیدگاہ ما غریباں کوۓ تو

اے ہلال ما خم ابروۓ تو   قمد ہلال عید قربانت کنم

جملہ محبوباں فدا برروۓ تو   یا نظام الدین محبوب الٰہ

Transliteration

Muflisānem āmadā dar kūe to

Shaiʾ ullah az jamāl-e-rūe to

Kaʿba-e-dil qibla-e-man rūe to

Sajdagāh-e-ʿāshiqān abrūe to

Amir Khusrau verses:
Idgah-e-ma– gharībāṅ kūe to

Imbisāt-e-īd dīdam kūe to

Translation

The distraught supplicants of love, we have come
    to your threshold,
To perceive God's substance from the beauty of
    your face.
The *kaʿba* of my heart, and the direction of my
    prayers is your face:
For lovers the place of adoration is your
    presence.

Amir Khusrau verses:
We, the humble and poor, pray at the *īd*[9]
    assembly of your threshold
All the joy of *īd*, I see it at your threshold

Sad hilāl-e-ī'd qurbānat kunam

Ai hilāl-e-mā kham-e-abrūe to

Yā Nizāmuddīn Mahbūb-e-Ilāh

Jumla mahbūbān fidā bar rūe to

I offer up a thousand crescent moons of *ī'd*

For us the crescent moon is the curve of your eyebrow

O Nizamuddin, Beloved of God

All the beloveds in the world are nothing as compared to your face.

Text–music structure

(a)   Form: *ghazal* and *asthāyī-antarā* scheme

verse 1 line 1   a (rhyming)   = B (*antarā*, not *asthāyī*)

        line 2   a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*)

verse 2 line 1   b (non-rhyming) = B (*antarā*)

etc.)   line 2   a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*)

(b)   Rhythm: verse metre *raml 2* and musical metre 7/8 (*pashto*)

verse metre   — ∪ — — | — ∪ — — | — ∪ —

musical metre   ♩ ♪ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♪ ♩ ♩ | ♪ ♪ ♩ |

Annotation

A classic throughout the history of Sufism, this song is derived from the *Masnavī* of Maulana Rum, that is Jalaluddin Rumi, mystic of mystics and founder of the Mevlevi order in Konya, Turkey. At Nizamuddin Auliya the tradition is to sing only two verses based on a *Masnavī* opening line and then to continue with a short and equally favourite poem, attributed to Amir Khusrau, which is composed on the *Masnavī* model, using the same poetic metre and rhyme scheme. Together, the five verses form a sort of 'mystic's self-statement', expressing his stance toward the spiritual Beloved and, in conclusion, invoking the Saint Nizamuddin Auliya as the perfect manifestation of both Lover and Beloved.

What is important about this song is that here, more than in any other Qawwali song, the musical setting itself has a very specific association with classical Sufism. Performers even consider this tune as being of non-Indian or Persian origin, if not the original setting of Rumi's *Masnavī* itself. The tune does indeed have a distinctive melodic contour in which a final rise to the fourth allows an initial fall. There is parallelism, but a raga-like motivic structure is missing. Furthermore, the structural balance between the two tune sections runs counter to the standard *asthāyī–antarā* format (see pp. 55–6 below), for the high-register section is here clearly the primary tune portion while the *asthāyī* section is rather a low-register extension. Indeed, the *Masnavī* always starts directly with the *antarā* tune sung to the opening line, not with the *asthāyī*, as is the norm.

The song exemplifies a rhythmic setting and pace which are true and proper for an authentic Qawwali: the poetic metre is realized literally, to a 7/8 metre. The presentation is at a slow and measured pace, so that in the execution of this 7/8 metre every single beat is articulated on the drum, in contrast to faster-paced songs like *Torī sūrat* where the drum only provides principal beats.

Because of its 'high stature' (ūnchā maqām, in Meraj's words) the *Masnavī* tune is favoured as a setting for other Farsi poems with the same metre to lend them its enhancing power. In addition, the same tune is also used when a Farsi poem of this structure serves as Introductory Verse or Insert; in that case the tune is recited in free rhythm (as shown in *Man turā*, p. 43 below).[10]

Meraj's version presented here is considered standard; other recordings made of the *Masnavī* include a demonstration by Meraj, as well as a performance by a hereditary Qawwal from Hyderabad, and four performances using the *Masnavī* tune in recitative form.

5   *Kachh jagmag* (CD item: 7)

A (Asthāyī)

Kachh jagmagə jagmagə ho-watə hai, woh to ohrə chundariyā   so-watə hai

B (Antarā)

Kachh jagmagə jagmagə ho-watə hai woh to ohrə chundariyā   so-watə hai

A (Asthāyī)

Ganj-e-Sha-karə ke rū-pə meñ Mahə bū-bə piyā-rā   so-watə hai

Alternative endings

SECTION A (ASTHĀYĪ)

A1   GO ON TO: ⟶ A2   GO ON TO: next complete unit

Kachh jagmagə jagmagə ho-watə hai   woh to ohrə chundariyā— so-watə hai

A1↑   GO BACK TO: ↑A1 / ↑A1↑   A2↑   GO BACK TO: ↑A2 / ↑A2↑

magə howatə hai   so-watə hai

↑A1 (↑A1↑)   delayed upward adjustment   ↑A2 (↑A2↑)   delayed upward adjustment

Kachh   woh to

SECTION B (ANTARĀ)

B1   GO ON TO: ⟶ B2   GO ON TO: next complete unit

Sukh nində se akhiyāñ kholə zarā   kho ghaflatə Rabə se   dhyānə lagā

B1↑   GO BACK TO: B1, B1↑   B2↑   GO BACK TO: B2 / B2↑

dhyānə lagā

Hindi text

كچھ جگمگ جگمگ ہووت ہے   وہ تو اوڑھ چندریا سووت ہے

گنجِ شكر کے روپ میں   محبوب پیارا سووت ہے

سكھ نیند سے انكھیاں كھول ذرا   كھو غفلت رب سے دھیان لگا

یہ پریت كرن كی ریت نہیں   رب جاگت ہے تو سووت ہے

جو كل كرے تو آج ہی كر   جو آج كرے سو اب كر لے

جب چڑیاں كھیت جگت ڈاری   پھر پچھتائے كا ہووت ہے

Transliteration

Kachh jagmag jagmag howat hai, woh to orh
  chundariā sowat hai

Ganj-e-Shakar ke rūp men, Mahbūb piyārā sowat
  hai

Sukh nīnd se akhiyān khol zarā, kho ghaflat Rab
  se dhyān lagā

Yeh prīt karan kī rīt nahīn, Rab jāgat hai tū
  sowat hai

Translation

How glittering is the *chundariā*,[11] it covers one
  who is asleep.

In the likeness of Ganj-e-Shakar [see note 6
  above], the dear Beloved is asleep.

From a sound sleep open your eyes; become
  conscious and focus on God:

This is not the way of loving; God is awake, yet
  you are asleep.

Jo kāl kare to āj hī kar, jo āj kare so ab karle	Whatever you would do tomorrow, do it today; what you would do today, do it now;
Jab chirian khet chugat dārī, phir pachhtāe kā howat hai	Once the birds have picked the field clean, what will repenting achieve?

Text–music structure

(a)   Form: *ghazal* and *asthāyī-antarā* scheme

verse 1 line 1 a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*) + B (*antarā*)
        line 2 a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*)
verse 2 line 1 b (non-rhyming) = B (*antarā*)
  (etc.) line 2 a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*)

(b)   Rhythm: verse metre *mutadārik* and musical metre 8/8 (*kaharvā*)

verse metre   ◡◡ — ◡◡ — ◡◡ — ◡◡ — (2x)

musical metre   [musical notation]

Annotation

This song is part of Meraj's personal repertoire. Considered an 'old' song, it is currently little heard, but Meraj likes to revive it for 'special' listeners.
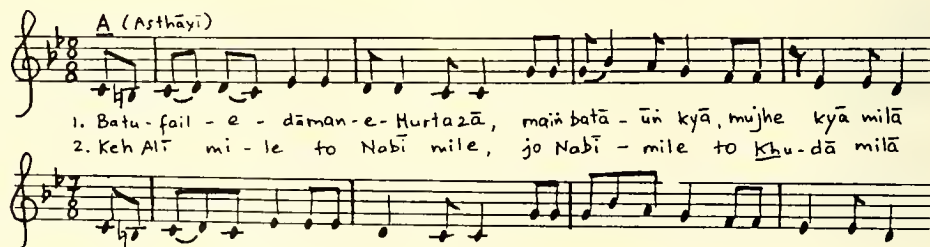
The poem is folksong-like, drawing from Hindi devotional as well as folk idioms to address the beloved *Mahbūb*, or *Mahbūb-e-Ilāhī* (Beloved of God, the title of Nizamuddin Auliya), expressing qualities of mystical love. In form, it follows the *ghazal* scheme; accordingly, the musical setting falls into standard *asthāyī* and *antarā* portions.

The melodic frame of the tune is traditional, that is, common to other Qawwali songs[12] and to folk and light classical song tunes with mixed raga elements. Because of the long verse line, alternative endings clearly indicate repeat units, each one half line long. Rhythmically the musical setting corresponds entirely to a syllabic representation of the poetic metre. Its anapaestic character fits flexibly into a musical metre of 8/8.

Two versions of this song were recorded at Nizamuddin Auliya, both sung by Meraj Ahmad.

6   *Batufail-e-dāman-e-Murtazā* (CD item: 8)

1. Batu-fail - e - dāman-e-Hurtazā, main batā - ūn kyā, mujhe kyā milā
2. Keh Alī mi - le to Nabī mile, jo Nabī - mile to Khu-dā milā

B (Antara)

Batu fail - e - dā - man - e - Murta - zā maiṅ batā - ūṅ kyā mujhe kyā milā

Alternative endings

SECTION A (ASTHĀYĪ)

A1   GO ON TO: → A2   GO ON TO: next complete unit

Batu - fail - e dā - man - e - Murtazā   Maiṅ batā - ūṅ kyā, mujhe kyā milā

A1↑   GO BACK TO: A1 A1↑ A1↑↑ A1↑↑↑   A2↑   GO BACK TO: A2 A2↑

tazā   mujhe kyā milā

A1↑↑   GO BACK TO: A1 A1↑ A1↑↑ A1↑↑↑

- man e Murtazā

A1↑↑↑   GO BACK TO: ↑A1 ↑A1↑ ↑A1↑↑ ↑A1↑↑↑

dāman - e - Murtazā

↑A1 (↑A1↑, ↑A1↑↑, ↑A1↑↑↑)

Batu-

SECTION B (ANTARĀ)

B1 B   GO ON TO: → B2   GO ON TO: next complete unit

Batu fail - e - dā - man - e - Murtazā   maiṅ batā - ūṅ kyā mujhe kyā milā

B1↑   GO BACK TO: B1 B1↑   B2↑   GO BACK TO: B2 B2↑ B2↑↑

man - e - Murta - zā   maiṅ batā - ūṅ kyā mujhe kyā milā

↑B1   GO BACK TO: B1 B1↑ ↑B1   B2↑↑   GO BACK TO: B2 B2↑ B2↑↑

Batu - fail - e - dā - man e - Murtazā   , me - re Maulā,

↑B1 alt   GO ON TO B2 alt →   B2 alt   GO ON TO: next complet unit

Batu - fail - e - dā - man - e - Murtazā   maiṅ ba - tā - ūṅ kyā mujhe kyā milā

B2 alt↑   GO BACK TO: B2 alt B2 alt↑

mujhe kyā milā

Urdu text (out of 7 verses)

بہ طفیلِ دامَنِ مُرتضٰی میں بتاؤں کیا مجھے کیا ملا

کہ علی ملے تو نبی ملے جو نبی ملے تو خُدا ملا

تیرے نقشِ پا سے قدم قدم وہ مَقامِ صبرُ و رَضا ملا

کہیں خاکِ اہلِ جُنوں ملی کہیں خونِ رَنگِ وَفا ملا

تو امیر ابنِ امیر ہے ترا فیض فیضِ عظیم ہے

تیرے دَر سے جو بھی ملا مجھے مرے حوصلے سے سِوا ملا

تو شریکِ حالِ بتُول ہے تو رفیقِ آلِ رَسُول ہے

یہ مَعرفت کس غاشِتی یہ تو جام کس کو ملا ملا

Transliteration	Translation
Batufail-e-dāman-e-Murtazā, maiṅ batāūṅ kyā mujhe kyā milā	Through my attachment to Murtaza (title of Ali), how can I say what I have attained!
Keh Alī mile to Nabī mile, jo Nabī mile to Khudā milā	Since I reached Ali, I reached the Prophet; when I reached the Prophet, I reached God.
Tere naqsh-e-pā se qadam qadam, woh maqām-e-sabr-o-razā milā	Following your example, step by step I have attained perseverance and submission.[13]
Kahīṅ khāk-e-ahl-e-junūṅ milī, kahīṅ khūn-e-rang-e-wafā milā	Somewhere I encountered the traces of the ecstatic, somewhere the blood of the colour of faithfulness.
Tu amīr ibn-e-amīr hai, terā faiz faiz-e-'azīm hai	You are a lord of lords, your beneficence is greatest of all.
Tere dar se jo bhī milā mujhe, mere hausle se siwā milā	Whatever the blessings I have received from your bounty, they have been beyond my aspirations.
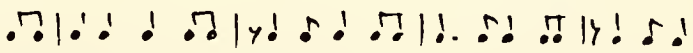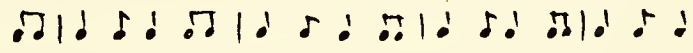
Tu sharīk-e-hāl e butūl hai, tu rafīq-e-āl-e-Rasūl   You are joined with the daughter of the Prophet,
   hai   you are close to the Prophet's kin.
Mai-e-mārifat kas-e-ʿāshiqī, yeh to jām kis ko   You are the wine of cognition, the object of love;
   milā milā.   oh to receive this goblet!

Text–music structure

(a)   Form: *ghazal* and *asthāyī-antarā* scheme
verse 1 line 1 a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*) + B (*antarā*)
        line 2 a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*)
verse 2 line 1 b (non-rhyming) = B (*antarā*)
  (etc.) line 2 a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*)

(b)   Rhythm: verse metre *kāmil* (same as *nom de plume* of poet!) and musical metre either 7/8
        (*pashto*) or 8/8 (*kaharvā*)

verse metre

musical metre in 8/8
(*'easy' version*)

musical metre in 7/8
(*traditional version*)

Annotation

This song is known to all Nizamuddin Qawwals, but it is definitely Meraj's song, and he
always leads its performances at the shrine. The poem in Urdu is by one of the few good
contemporary Sufi poets who have literary as well as spiritual standing. Kamil Shatari was
himself the successor of a saintly lineage in Hyderabad where Meraj learned his poem
expressing the Sufi's devotion to Hazrat Ali.

The tune shares its frame and tonal arrangement with several other Qawwali tunes as well
as tunes used in Urdu poetic recitation, where a clear pitch distinction between *asthāyī* and
antarā is of semantic significance. The rhythmic setting is originally in a metre of 7/8,
resulting naturally from a literal realization of the poetic metre. But Meraj reserves the option
to convert the setting to an 'easy' or 'light' 8/8 metre as illustrated above, depending on the
type of listener before him.

Because this song is exclusively oriented toward one spiritual personage, it particularly well
exemplifies the use of *takrār* repetition in which appellations of Ali are sung in responsorial
alternation with text phrases, in the classical *takrār* style which Meraj masters well.

Batufail-e-dāman-e-Murtazā was recorded in two performances at Nizamuddin Auliya, as
well as one demonstration, all by Meraj Ahmad.

7   *Kisī ko kuchh nahīn miltā* (CD item: 9)

1. Kisī - ko kuchh nahīn mil - tā terī a - tā ke baghair ———
2. Khudā bhī kuchh nahīn de - tā terī ra - zā ke baghair ———

1. Kisī ko kuchh nahīn miltā terī a - tā ke baghair

Urdu text

کسی کو کچھ نہیں ملتا تری عطا کے لغیر

خدا بھی کچھ نہیں دیتا تری رضا کے لغیر

کہو گدا سے نہ دست طلب دراز کرے

کہ ان کے در سے تو ملتا ہے التجا کے لغیر

اگر نماز میں شامل نہیں سرور حضور

تو جان لو کہ یہ کشتی ہے نا خدا کے لغیر

Transliteration	*Translation*
Kisī ko kuchh nahīṅ miltā terī ʿatā atā ke baghair	No-one gets anything without your benefaction;
Khudā bhī kuchh nahīṅ detā terī razā ke baghair	Even God gives nothing without your pleasure.
Kaho gadā se nā dast-e-talab darāz kare	Tell the humble seeker that he need not stretch out his hand in need,
Keh in ke dar se to miltā hai iltejā baghair	For His court grants benefice without supplication.
Agar namāz meṅ shāmil nahīn surūr-e-Huzūr	He who in his prayers is not ecstatic with Muhammad,
To jān lo keh yeh kashtī hai nākhudā ke baghair	Consider him like a boat without a helmsman!

Text–music structure

(a)   Form: *ghazal* and *asthāyī-antarā* scheme

verse I line I   a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*) + B (*antarā*)
         line 2   a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*)
verse 2 line I   b (non-rhyming) = B (*antarā*)
 (etc.) line 2   a (rhyming)   = A (*asthāyī*)

(b)   Rhythm: verse metre *mujtass* and musical metre 4/4 (qawwālī)

verse metre   ∪ — ∪ — / ∪ ∪ — — / ∪ — ∪ — / ∪ ∪ — |

musical metre   ♪ ♩ ♪ | ♩ ♩♫ ♪ ♩ | ♩ ♪ ♩ ♪ | ♩ ♫ ♩ ♩ | ♩

Annotation

The only *naʿt* – or Qawwali addressing the Prophet – among these examples is a song recently composed by a Panjabi Qawwal, Rahmat Khan. The poem belongs to the more popular type of religious praise song, straightforward in meaning as well as in expression, or, as one Nizamuddin Auliya performer puts it, 'totally obvious' (*ek dam khulā*).

The musical setting is one of those 'composed' tunes with a distinctive melodic progression in both tune sections. Like many 'modern' or Western-influenced tunes, this setting is

characterized by disjunct melodic motion, although it also alludes to a traditional raga scale (*bhairavī*; see Table 3). Rhythmically the song exemplifies the 'Panjabi style' (see below, pp. 53–4).

This song is extremely popular, appreciated by 'common' listeners. But its simple appeal can cut across all audience levels; hence Meraj has learned it, along with several other such songs. A melodious tune and the absence of text phrases with strong spiritual impact make this song a favourite solo for young boy Qawwals who can thus display a nice voice without having to be prepared for extensive *takrār* repetition which they would not have the experience to provide. Hence, among Nizamuddin Auliya performers, I most often heard this song sung by a young boy, Chand (brother of Meraj's wife). It is also favoured by amateur performers.

Probably because of its less than traditional melody, the tune of this song is heard in a variety of versions, as presented above. One of these is by the young amateur performer, Iftekhar Amrohvi (see below, p. 102), who simplified the original tune considerably – due to his limited musical ability and training rather than compositional originality (such modifications are typical for songs with some ambiguity as to tonality, of which *Kisī ko kuchh* is an example).

A total of nine performances of this song were recorded: one each of versions 1 and 3, three each of versions 2 and 4, and one more performance by a Nizamuddin Auliya Qawwal.

B   The adjunct items

An integral part of the Qawwali musical repertoire is a secondary repertoire of musical items adjunct to the song themselves: the Introductory Verse (*rubaʿi*) introduces a song and then the Inserted Verse (*girah*) elaborates portions within a song, while the Prelude (*naghmā*) serves to introduce the entire performance. All three are characterized by an improvisational quality: a basic outline structure is realized musically in a variety of ways in accordance with a performer's personal style. Preludes are open-ended series of melodic and rhythmic patterns; whereas Introductory and Inserted Verses are essentially recitatives, they are not identified in terms of particular musical settings. The transcriptions, therefore, present individual versions in such a way as to make clear the general pattern that underlies them.

8   *Rubaʿi* (Introductory Verse): *Shud dilam shefta* (CD item: 11)

(a)   *Minimal version*

2. Kardə bīmā-rə marā   nargis-e-shah-lā —— e kase

3. Ai khushā tā-la-e-man   gird-e-sarash mī gardam

SONG (Repertoire No. 4 Performance No. 2)

4. Khūn-e-man rang-e-hinā   shud bakafe' pā —— e kase: Kachh jagmagə jagmagə

(b)   *Extended version*

1. Shud dilam shefə-ta-e   zulfə cha-lī pā-e ka-se ——

1. Ah ——   shud dilam shefta-e ——   zulf-e   chalī pā-e-kase

2. Kardə bī-mārə ma-rā   nargis-e shah-lā ——   e ka-se

2. Kardə bīmār marā ——   nar-gis-e —— shahə lā — e ka-se

3. Ai khushā tā-la-e-man   gird-e-sarash mī gar-dam ——

3. Ai ——   khushā tā- la-e — man   gird-e-sarash mī ——   gardam

4. Khūn-e-man rang-e-hinā   shud bakafe pā-e-kase ——

4. Khūn-e-man rang-e-hinā —— shud bakafe

3. Ai khushā tāla-e-man   gird-e-sarash mī —— gardam

4. Khūn-e-man rang-e-hinā ——   shud bakafe pā — e ka-se.

Farsi text

شُد دلم شیفتهٔ زُلفِ چلیپا ئے کَسے

کَردِ بیمار مَرا نَرگسِ شہلا ئے کَسے

اَےخوشا طالعُ مَن گِردِ سَرَشْ می گَردم

خُونِ مَن رنگِ حنا شُد بِکَفِ پائے کَسے

Transliteration	*Translation*
Shud dilam shefta-e-zulf-e-chalīpāe kase	My heart became ensnared in the curved locks of Someone
Kard bīmār marā nargis-e-shahlāe kase	They have made me lovesick, the mesmerizing narcissus eyes of Someone
Ai khushā tāla-e-man gird-e-sarash mī gardam	O happy is my fortune; my being revolves around You
Khūn-e-man rang-e-hinā shud bakaf-e-pāe kase	My blood became the colour of henna to decorate the soles of Someone

Text–music structure

(a)   Form: *ruba'i* and recitative scheme
Line 1   a = Section I (initial) or intermittent
         a =
         b =   P (penultimate ascent) or I
         a =   F (final descent)

(b)   Rhythm: verse metre *raml 3* and non-metric rendering

Annotation

This is one of the many verses that serve to introduce Qawwali songs dealing with mystical love and its ecstasy, as for example in *Chashm-e-maste* or *Kachh jagmag* above; indeed Meraj Ahmad uses it to preface the latter song in Performance No. 2. In the strict technical sense this verse – like many others of its type – is not a *ruba'i*, since it follows a standard metric pattern used in other poetic forms, rather than one of the distinct and somewhat more irregular metres assigned to the *ruba'i* form (see Browne, 1956–59). However, the structure of its message is standard for a four-line introductory verse of Qawwali songs. The author is not identified.

The musical setting corresponds to the basic pattern outlined in Chapter 3 (pp. 69 ff. and Table 11). Two versions are presented; one is a minimal statement in which only the first line is repeated, the second an extended rendition where every line is recited twice and then the last two lines are restated, setting up the musical conclusion and lead-in into the song which

immediately follows. Included in this second version is a modification option (Fm) restating the last line at an intermittent pitch level in order to avoid suggesting a conclusion, in the event of a second *ruba'i* being added.

The two versions differ in the musical treatment of the two final verse lines. In the extended version (see (b) above) the penultimate line ascends to the upper tonic, setting up the high register from which the final line is to descend; the minimal version (see (a) above) does not single out the penultimate line musically, so that the last line alone starts on a higher pitch in order to make its concluding descent. All versions are performed in alternation between leader and accompanist, but the beginning and the end of the *ruba'i* are always intoned by the leader.

Shud dilam shefta was recorded in a total of four performances, all by Meraj.

9   *Girah* (Inserted Verse): *Sansār har ko puje* (CD item: 13)

SONG

INSERT (Recitative)

KAJ-KULĀ — HE...   1. Sansāra har ko puje   Kul ko jagat sarā-he

1. Sansā-ra har ko puje   Kul ko jagat sarā-he

2. Makke menkoi dhūndhe, Kāshi ko koi čāhe

3. Dunya men apre pī ke payyān parūn nā kahe

4. Har qauma-millat-e-rāh dine wa qiblagā-he

FINAL DESCENT: 5. Man qibla rās-ta kardam bar simta kaj-kulā-he :   KAJKU-LĀ - HE

SONG

Hindi–Farsi text

Transliteration	*Translation*
Song (Farsi):	*Song:*
kajkulāhe 'ajabe!	*O wondrous tilted cap –*
Girah (Hindi):	*Girah:*
Sansār har ho pūje kul ko jagat sarāhe	Let all the world worship God, let humanity praise the Divine.
Makke meṅ koī ḍhūṇḍhe Kāshī ko koī chāhe	One may seek Him in Mekka, one may search Him in Kashi (Benares).
Duniyā meṅ apne pī ke payyāṅ paṛūṅ na kāhe	I have found my Beloved, should I not prostrate before Him?
(Farsi):	
Har qaum rāst rāhe dīne wa qiblagāhe	Every people has its right path, its faith and its focus of worship;
Man qibla rāst kardam bar simt-e-kajkulāhe:	I, however, focus my worship on the tilted cap of my Beloved:
Song (Farsi):	*Song:*
kajkulāhe 'ajabe!	*O wondrous tilted cap*

Text–music structure

(a)   Form: *khamsā* verse and recitative scheme
Line 1 a (rhyming throughout) = I   (initial and intermittent)
    2 a   = I   stationary levels)
    3 a   = I
    4 a   = P   (penultimate ascent)
    5 a   = F   (final descent)

(b)   Rhythm: verse metre *muzāril*, non-metric rendering (for *takrār* musical metre 6/4 superimposed on 4/4 of song, see p. 24)

Annotation

This *girah* presents one of many famous classical Farsi verses which have inspired later Sufi poets to elucidate them with additional verse lines, often in Urdu or Hindi, to clarify their meaning to unlettered devotees (*tāzmīn*). This particular *girah* consists of three verse lines in Hindi and culminates in the Farsi couplet whose metre and rhyme scheme prevail throughout. Its first line was composed by Nizamuddin Auliya himself, while observing from the Chilla (see p. 104 and Plate 23 below) how Hindu worshippers bathed in river Jumna:

> Every people has its right path, its faith, and its focus of worship

Amir Khusrau, who was with him, at once completed the couplet with a verse line which has come to represent a poetic statement of the Sufi creed:

> I focus my worship on the tilted cap of my Beloved.

This final line, known to every Sufi in India, has a great potential impact as an Insert, suddenly adding its own depth of meaning to a related word or phrase in the main song.

    In the version presented above, the Insert is linked in a literal way to a word phrase containing the very word that symbolizes the focus of the entire Insert: *kajkulāhe*, the tilted

cap symbolizing the Beloved and His attraction. The song is *Chashm-e-maste* (Repertoire No. 2, p. 24, verse 4). Both Meraj Ahmad and Aziz Warsi (singer of *Chashm-e-maste*, above) like to insert this *girah* at this point in the song; presented here is the version of Aziz Warsi.

Musically the Insert is sung in a recitative style at a somewhat brisker pace than an Introductory Verse. Here the penultimate line is marked by a slight ascent, so that the high pitch register of the final line makes its textual message stand out musically: the effect is that of a 'punch line'. The actual descent is limited naturally by the starting pitch of the main song that is being picked up anew.

The five recorded performances of this *girah* include two by Aziz Warsi and three by Meraj Ahmad.

10   **Girah (Inserted Verse):** *Man turā* (CD item: 14)

Farsi text

Transliteration	*Translation*
Song (Hindi):	*Song:*
Torī sūrat ke balhārī –	*On your countenance I offer myself in devotion* –
Girah (Farsi):	*Girah:*
(first three verses omitted)	(first three verses related in content)
Man turā dīdam wale nā dīda am	I see you, yet I see you not;
Ai sarāpā rāz qurbānat shawam:	O you who are totally secret, I sacrifice myself on you:
Song (Hindi):	*Song:*
Torī sūrat ke balhārī!	*On your countenance I offer myself in devotion!*

Text–music structure

(a)   Form: *ghazal* and *asthāyī-antarā* scheme turned into recitative
Verse 1 line 1   a = Section B *antarā* (all in recitative verse)
          2   a =   A *asthāyī*
Verse 2 line 1   b =   B *antarā*
          2   a =   A *asthāyī*
Verse 3 line 1   b =   B *antarā*
          2   a =   A *asthāyī*
Verse 4 line 1   b =   B *antarā*
          2   a =   A *asthāyī*, plus F (final descent)

(b)   Rhythm: verse metre *raml 2* and non-metric rendering

Annotation

This is an example of a longer Insert taken from a Farsi poem by Amir Khusrau. The four couplets express facets of that basic emotion in Sufism: giving up the self as an offering of love. As an Insert, the set of verses can serve the elaboration of this emotion in any Sufi song; here it is applied to the opening line of *Torī sūrat* (Repertoire No. 3, p. 25, and Performance No. 1, pp. 170 ff.), a particularly fortuitous choice because the message of the Insert's final verse – seeing and yet not seeing the Beloved – directly and profoundly expands the meaning implied in the core concept of the song line – the Beloved's countenance.

The poetic metre of this poem is that of the *Masnavī* (Repertoire No. 4, p. 29). The preferred musical setting for such poems is the *Masnavī* tune, even when the poem is an Introductory Verse or Insert. Accordingly, it is the *Masnavī* tune which serves as a tonal frame for the recitative presentation of these verses, replacing the standard tonal pattern for such recitatives. Only in the final line of the *girah* the *Masnavī* tune, which is characterized by a final ascent, needs to be modified so that the necessary descent back to the main song can be achieved. How Meraj Ahmad deals musically with this Insert in the process of performance is shown in Performance No. 1 (pp. 164 ff.).

11   *Naghmā* (Instrumental Prelude) (CD item: 15)

(a)   *Standard Naghmā*

Aba-Lū   Allā-hu   Allah, Al-lah, Allā-hu] etc.

FINAL
DESCENT

F

(b)   *Original Naghmā-e-Quddūsī*

A

[Allāhū, Allā-hū, Allā-hu, Allah, Allah, Allā-hū, Allā-hū, Allah, Allah, Allā-hū

B   D.C.

Allā-hū, Allāhu hū, Allā-hū, Allā-hū, Allāh, Allah, Allā-hū]   etc

Annotation

Instrumental Preludes are a relatively recent addition to Qawwali. Conceived as a musical articulation of the anapaestic *zikr* phrase 'Allāhū', the *naghmā* is said to have originated at the *sama*ʿ assemblies of the saint Abdul Quddus Gangohi. This original *Naghmā-e-Quddūsī* consisted entirely of such anapaestic motives, sequentially arranged and organized into repeatable patterns (see (b) above).

Today, a faster-paced 'modern' transformation of that traditional *naghmā* incorporates the Allāhū motif in rhythmically and melodically elaborated forms, but adds other sequential patterns which can be variously repeated and extended until a rapid descent to the tonic brings about a conclusion (see (a) above; also p. 68 and Table 13 below).

This *naghmā* version is by Meraj Ahmad as he begins his performance in a Qawwali assembly (Performance No. 2). Preludes recorded by him and other Qawwals are too numerous and too varied to be listed.

2 *The Qawwali Musical Structure*

A   Qawwali as North Indian music

Qawwali forms part of the musical language of Northern India and Pakistan[14] which is codified in the Hindustani classical musical tradition. As such it shares with other idioms of that language a common musical frame of reference, musical elements and principles of structuring which are familiar to members of that musical 'language area'. The following basic features of musical organization and presentation place Qawwali firmly within this North Indian frame of reference:

(1)   a tonal framework with a central octave of seven scale steps, marked by tonal centres and organized into a variety of modal scale arrangements that form the basis for monophonic pitch movement,

(2)   a rhythmic framework of musical metres organized in a variety of additive groupings marked by stress points,

(3)   a formal organization into performance units or 'compositions' with tonal and metric consistency and containing repeatable sections differentiated by register,

(4)   an ensemble structure centred upon one melodic line, with optional melodic and rhythmic support.

Within the North Indian musical language, the Qawwali idiom falls into the broad category of 'song', that is the musical setting of a text. As schematized in Table 2, this makes Qawwali distinct from classical or raga music, on one hand, and from chanted poetry or recitation on the other. Classical music, on one hand, is characterized by the primacy of music over text. Thus verbal delivery may be present, as is the case where texts are used for singing; but it may also be absent, as is the case in vocal improvisation and in all instrumental music. Furthermore, in classical music instrumental accompaniment is present to reinforce the musical dimension of rhythm as well as that of melody. Finally, extended cyclical forms allow for extensive musical development. Chant, on the other hand, is characterized by the primacy of the word over its musical delivery; indeed, spoken declamation may be substituted for recitation with the singing voice, but wordless music in the form of instrumental accompaniment is entirely absent. The formal structure closely follows the structure of the text, which normally consists of strophic poetry; accordingly, the formal structure of chant is strophic.

The central category of 'song' falls in between classical music and recitation, combining elements from both. All types of song, including Qawwali, thus show the following musical traits:

(1)   Music and text are interlinked and fused into one musical whole in which the text is the primary message – as opposed to both raga music, where the music is primary and its verbal delivery entirely subordinate, and recitation, where the text is primary and its musical delivery entirely subordinate,

(2)   the musical form may be strophic or cyclic, depending on the presence of a refrain, but it

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Table 2 *Musical Categories*

INDIC MUSIC				
NORTHERN (*Hindustani*)			SOUTHERN (*Karnataka*)	

RAGA MUSIC (*pakkā gānā bajānā*) **Music** primary Verbal delivery may or may not be present Instrumental accompaniment included Form extended cyclic		SONG (*gānā*) **Words** primary Verbal delivery always present Instrumental accompaniment included Form strophic or cyclic	CHANT (*paṛhnā*) **Words** primary Musical delivery may or may not be present Instrumental accompaniment excluded Form strophic	
	LIGHT			
	CLASSICAL (*halkā*)	POPULAR (*filmī bāzārī*)	FOLK (*lok gīt*)	SECULAR *tarannum*	RELIGIOUS *nātkhwānī*
dhurpad	*ghumrī*		*shādī kā gānā*		*sozkhwānī*
khayāl	*dādrā*	*filmī ghazal*	*lorī*		*marsiyā-*
tarānā	*ghazal*	*filmī qawwālī*	(etc.)		*khwānī*
asthāyī	*ṭappā*	*filmī gīt*			
	qawwālī				

always represents the formal structure of the text – as opposed to the extended cyclical forms of raga music,

(3)   the musical setting includes instrumental accompaniment – as opposed to recitation which is strictly unaccompanied.

Of the different types of North Indian song, Qawwali most closely fits the rubric of 'light classical', along with other supra-local song genres that are the preserve of specialist performers. This means that Qawwali shares with other light classical songs a certain musical flexibility that allows for musical enhancement by means of techniques of classical music, but also for adaptations from popular and folk song.

Pitch

The pitch framework of Qawwali is represented by Qawwali performers themselves in the terminology of Hindustani classical music, used selectively and with modifications to express the musical particularities of Qawwali. It should be mentioned that Qawwals rarely refer to this pitch framework in abstraction, except as a teaching tool, but they are cognizant of it; indeed, they consider pitch and its dimensions as the very basis of singing. Table 3 presents my analytical summary of Qawwali pitch, with reference to performers' concepts which are explained in the Musical Vocabulary for Qawwali.

The fundamental principle of pitch organization is octave equivalence, based on a system tonic and its upper octave. The tonal gamut comprises seven pitch classes or tones denoted by the same collective term used for pitch in general: *sur*. These tones or scale degrees are named as in classical music (that is, *sā*, *re*, *gā*, etc.; see Table 3), and represent a pitch arrangement that quite corresponds to that of the European tonic solfa system (that is, *do*, *re*, *mi*, etc.). The

Table 3 *Pitch Structure*
Musical frame of reference

a) *Basic concept*
   tone, pitch (*sur*)
   off pitch (*besur*)

b) *Pitch framework and units*

| | lower tetrachord | | upper tetrachord |

2 Registers

3 Tonal Centres — *Tonic* (*Sur*) — *Fifth* (*Pancham*) — *Upper T.* (*Ṭīp*)

Tonal Gamut of 7 Degrees
5 Alterable Degrees

Sur Sā	Rikhab Rē	Gandhār Gā	Madhyam Mā	Pancham Pā	Dhaivat Dhā	Nikhāt Nī	Ṭīp Sā
	lowered (utrā)	lowered (utrā)	raised (charhā)		lowered (utrā)	lowered (utrā)	

c) *Pitch movement*
   registrality   – moving in upper/lower register (*ūpar/nīche bolnā*)
   directionality   – moving to/from upper/lower register (no term)
   parallelism   – correspondence between registers, also sequential repetition (no term)
   tonal circumscription   – moving with reference to a tonal centre (*murkī, palṭī*)
   motivic structuring   – general patterning in the form of:
                                       'melodic expansion' (*phailāo*) or
                                       'moving around melodically' (*chalat phirat*)
                              – specific patterning in the form of:
                                       brief melodic passage (*tān*)
                                       introductory melodic outline (*ālāp*)
                                       solfā passage (*sargam*)
                                       rapid passage 'across' gamut (*sargam kī ār*)

d) *Pitch constructs* (Melody)
   scale arrangement and pitch movement – motifs (no term)
   combination of motifs   – melodic setting (*bandish*)
   types of melodic setting   – motivic consistency systematized (*rāg*)
                                               internal motivic consistency (*thāṭ*)
                                               traditional, old tune (*tarz*)
                                               contemporary, popular tune (*dhun*)

basic point of reference for the scale is the system tonic, significantly named 'tone' (*sur*) as well, that is, tone *par excellence*. Two more points of reference, related to the tonic and reinforcing it, complete the basic outline of the pitch framework: the upper tonic, named 'high pitch' (*ṭīp*), and the fifth above the lower tonic, simply named 'fifth' (*pancham*). All these three pitches together can serve as a drone. Each of the remaining five scale degrees can occur at either of two positions – lowered (*utrā*) and raised (*charhā*). The resulting gamut is thus the equivalent of the European gamut of twelve semitones. Their intonation is quite

adequately represented by the tempered gamut of the harmonium which is used constantly to reinforce the vocal line in Qawwali performance.

In their standard version, as used for instance in teaching beginners, the seven scale degrees correspond to the standard scale arrangement of present-day North Indian classical music (*bilāval ṭhāṭ*) which is equivalent to the Western major scale. But Qawwali music occurs in a variety of scalar combinations, very much like those of the 'light' or 'mixed' ragas of light classical music. A majority of scalar arrangements are diatonic and correspond to those of a European *c*, *d*, or *g* mode, but very often include both versions of a scale degree used alternately, depending on the direction of melodic movement.[15] Occasionally, certain ragas of classical music are also used in Qawwali; favoured ones are *kāfī*, *shāhānā*, *bahār*, *bāgeshrī* and *jaijaivantī* (see for example Ex. 6 below).

EX. 1. Qawwali tonal inventory

(a)   Most common scale arrangements

(b)   Altered scale degrees

Within this tonal framework, pitch movement in Qawwali is oriented around tonal centre and register, and is governed by principles of directionality, parallelism and tonal circumscription. The concepts of tonal centre and register have both been well established by the Indian classical theorists as organizing principles of melodic structure (Powers 1980a: 11, and 1970: 46), and Qawwali performers recognize them to a degree, though without abstracting them. The concept of tonal centre arises from the basic conception of a pitch framework with fixed points of reference which in Qawwali music are tonic, upper tonic and fifth. The concept of register for Qawwali is closely related to the concept of tonal centre, in that a register may be considered as a tonal space bounded by, or defined with reference to, one or

more tonal centres. This means that pitch movement within a register entails reference to a tonal centre as well. In Qawwali music, two basic registers are recognized within the basic pitch framework of the octave: the lower register – between tonic and fifth – and the higher register – between fifth and upper tonic. Qawwals simply term them 'low' (*nīche*) and 'high' (*ūpar*) respectively. The reference point for the lower register is the tonic; accordingly, pitch movement in this register may also extend to pitches below the tonic. The reference point for the higher register may be either the upper tonic or the fifth; accordingly, pitch movement for fifth reference may include pitches below the fifth, while pitch movement for upper tonic reference may extend into the octave above.

EX. 2. Qawwali pitch movement: tonal centre and register

(a)   Lower register, tonic reference (*Kachh jagmag*, Section A)

(b)   Higher register, fifth reference (*Kachh jagmag*, Section B)

(c)   Higher register, upper tonic reference (*Man kunto*, Section B)

In addition to this primary framework of tonal centre and register, a common secondary point of reference for pitch movement is the third above the tonic, functioning as tonal focus between tonic and fifth without changing the tetrachordal basis of the registers.

EX. 3. Qawwali pitch movement: secondary tonal focus

(a)   Third above tonic reference (*Man kunto*, Section A)

Among principles of pitch movement, directionality in Qawwali stands in direct reference to the concept of register and quite corresponds to classifications of directional movement found in Indian classical theory (summarized in Powers 1980a: II). This directional pitch movement, either rising or falling, principally serves the purpose of moving from one register to another. Parallelism, generally, also takes place within the frame of reference of register,

taking the form of tetrachordal correspondence. It can also occur as sequential repetition, especially in tunes derived from popular music.

EX. 4. Qawwali pitch movement: directionality and parallelism

(a)   Directional movement from higher to lower register (*Chashm-e-maste*, Section B)

(b)   Parallelism as tetrachordal correspondence, with directional movement back to lower register (*Batufail*, Section A)

(c)   Parallelism as sequential repetition (Instrumental Prelude)
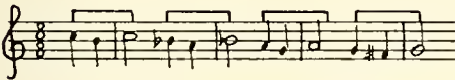
(d)   Sequential repetition in popular Qawwali tune (*Kisī ko kuchh*, Section A, Iftekhar Version)
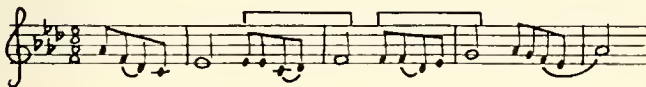
Tonal circumscription, finally, is a principle of pitch movement denoting melodic motion around a single tone by the use of neighbouring tones. It is closely related to the concept of tonal centre, for it generally represents pitch movement circumscribing a tonal centre. When it occurs in the telescoped form of a deliberate melodic ornamentation Qawwals identify it by one of the standard musical terms for a melodic 'turn' (*murkī* or *palṭī*).

EX. 5. Qawwali pitch movement: tonal circumscription

(a)   Tonal centre circumscribed (*Chashm-e-maste*, Section A)
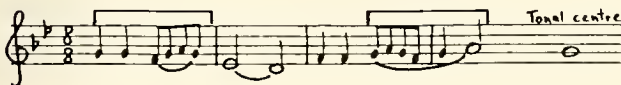
(b)   Melodic 'turn' in melodic improvisation (*Chashm-e-maste*)

The application of all these principles within the given pitch framework results in what could be called the building blocks or units of Qawwali melody: pitch sequences or motifs set within a definite tonal framework whose individual pitches are ordered in accordance with the above principles of pitch movement. Traditional Qawwali melody consists of combinations of such pitch sequences or motifs. Qawwali performers term such entities 'melodic setting' or 'tune' (*ṭhāṭ, bandish*). If there is complete consistency between the motifs of one such entity, and if melodic patterning is governing the use of the entire gamut, then the result is a raga-like melody. Qawwali boasts a number of such melodic settings, some identified with specific raga names, either of classical music (for example the famous *Bakhūbī* in raga *shāhānā*, or the *Basant* song *Phūl rahī sarson* in raga *bahār*) or of a specific Qawwali tradition (*Masnavī*), others recognizable as classical ragas but not identified (*Torī Sūrat*).

EX. 6.   Raga settings in Qawwali

(a)   *Bakhūbī*, in raga *shāhānā*

Ba khū-bi hamchu mahtā   bindabā-   shi,   Bamulk-e - dil-bari pa - indabā-shi — ....

(b)   *Phūl rahī sarson* in raga *bahār*

Sagala bana, Phū-la rahi sar - son sagala bana Ambua mo - re   ge - su phole....
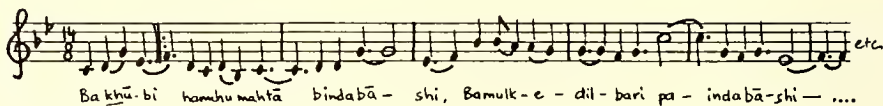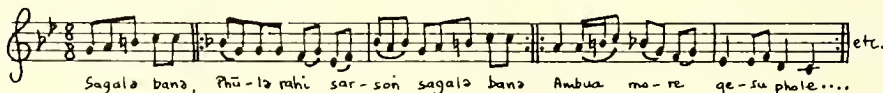
(c)   *Bekāram* in raga *bāgeshrī*

Be - kā - mm o bā - karam   chūn mad bahisāb an - dar....

In the majority of Qawwali tunes, however, motivic consistency obtains only to a limited degree, resulting in a wide variety of song-like tunes with an individual melodic contour but some basic motivic traits that identify the setting (*ṭhāṭ*) and delimit the scope for the melodic improvisation within the song (as shown for *Chashm-e-maste*). Most traditional Qawwali tunes fall into this broad category, as do tunes adapted from devotional folk song (*Kachh jagmag*), or from popular song.

It is important to note, as a final point, that motivic patterning, that is, patterning purely at

the dimension of pitch, is minimal in a great many Qawwali tunes, because very strong durational and formal patterning dominates Qawwali music, as the analysis of those parameters will show. In fact, special 'recitative' or declamatory passages may be inserted into Qawwali songs, where melodic structuring is limited to orientation around tonal centres and motivic patterning is largely absent, due to other structuring priorities (as shown in *Sansār*, p. 41).

Duration

As in the case of pitch, Qawwali performers represent duration in terms of concepts familiar from classical music, though sometimes using divergent terminology. As in classical usage, it is the durational framework and its articulation which are conceptualized most systematically – predictably so, since these concepts serve as teaching tools for drumming. The durational organization of melody is conceived of in less descriptive terms, or else is expressed through non-musical association. Table 4 summarizes the analytical presentation of Qawwali duration, and includes performers' concepts.
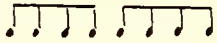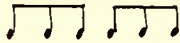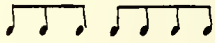
The framework of durational organization is founded on the concept of rhythm (*lai*). Rhythm is realized in terms of musical metres (*thekā*) which are composed of a set number of pulses (*mātrā*) organized additively into groupings with an equal or unequal number of pulses. Nearly all Qawwali metres consist of two such groupings, each of which is marked with an initial stress. Thus the most common Qawwali metres are 4+4 (*kaharvā, qawwālī kā thekā*; see Repertoire Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7), 3+3 (*dādrā*), and 3+4 (*pashto, rūpak*; see Repertoire Nos. 3, 4), as listed in Table 4. This rhythmic framework operates in Qawwali music at two levels; one as a purely rhythmic dimension articulated percussively by drumming[16] and clapping, the other as the organizing durational principle governing Qawwali melody, both as regards the duration of individual pitch units and their organization into larger pitch sequences. There are two standard units of pitch duration. Using terminology borrowed from European music theory, one may be called the 'short', equal to one pulse (*mātrā*) of the metre, the other the 'long', equal to two pulses in duration. Additional units are what may be called the 'extended long', most often with a duration of four pulses, and the 'divided short', nearly always one half of a pulse long.

The units of musical duration are combined with reference to the metric framework on the basis of a principle that includes both 'quantity' – that is, measured duration of the metre – and 'quality' – that is, stress points marking the groupings of the metre. The way in which this dual principle of durational movement is applied within the given durational framework is based, in Qawwali, on non-musical factors to be discussed in the following section. To a limited extent, however, it is also a function of purely musical factors, mainly indicating regional and genre style (*ang*). Thus tunes from the two principal regions of the Qawwali tradition, Uttar Pradesh and Panjab, can be distinguished mainly by their rhythmic setting or 'gait' (*chāl*). A predominantly quantitative emphasis characterizes tunes from Uttar Pradesh, while Panjabi tunes tend to be rhythmically organized according to 'quality' or stress. Along with this differentiation in the rhythmic setting of the tune goes also a difference in the rhythmic setting of the metre as articulated on the drum (*theke kī bandish*), which in Panjab is more strongly accentual than in Uttar Pradesh, corresponding with the respective drumming traditions of each region (as elaborated in Stewart 1974).

Table 4 *Durational Analysis*
Musical frame of reference

a) *Basic concept*
    measured rhythm (*lai*)
    beat, accent (*zarb*)

b) *Durational framework*
    musical metre (*ṭhekā*)
        arranged in drum patterns (*ṭheke kī bandish*)
            expressed in drum stroke syllables (*bol*)
                consisting of a set number of pulses (*mātrā*)
                    organized into groupings (no term)
                        marked by stress (*zarb*)
                            through both clapping (*tāl*)
                            and accented drum beat (*ṭhāp*)

c) *Metric patterns in standard use*

metre (*ṭhekā*)	8/8 *kaharvā/qawwāli*	6/8 *dadra*	7/8 *pashto/rupak*
drum pattern (*bol, ṭheke kī bandish*)	*dhāgenā gināgedhinа/ dhāgināge dhāgedhin*	*dhādhinnādhātinnā (dhātinnā tintinnā)*	*tin-taka dhin-dhādhā*
pulse groupings			
stresses (*zarb*)	> >	> >	> >
claps (*tālī*)	× (×)	× (×)	× (×)
drum accents (*ṭhāp*)	× (×)	× (×)	× (×)

Infrequently used metres:

10/8 *jhaptāl*

14/8 *chāchar*

16/8 *tīntāl*

12/8 *ektāl*

d) *Pitch duration*

primary units: 'short'   = one pulse long ♪

          'long'   = two pulses long ♩

subsidiary units: 'extended long'   = several pulses long, most often ♩

        'divided short'   = most often ½ pulse long ♪

        pause of one or more pulses duration (*waqfā*)

EX. 7. Regional style of rhythmic setting

(a)   Uttar Pradesh (*Kachh jagmag*)
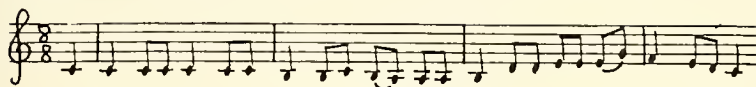
(b)   Panjab (*Kisī ko kuchh*)
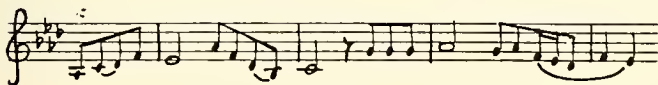
At special points there are durational arrangements in Qawwali melody which do not refer to a metric framework at all; during 'recitative' Inserts and Introductory Verses when the drummed metre is either absent, (as in *Shud dilam*, pp. 38–9) or reduced to a background pulsation, to be reimposed upon the melody at resumption of the regular song tune (as in *Sansār*, p. 41, and *Man turā*, p. 43).

Formal structure

The framework and units of formal organization correspond to the concepts of classical Indian music and are expressed by Qawwali performers in analogous, but somewhat simplified terminology, as summarized in Table 5.

Table 5 *Formal Structure Analysis*
Musical frame of reference

a) *Framework and units*
   Framework:
   Item of performance (*chīz*) = multiple of tune (*dhun, tarz*).
   Tune (*dhun, tarz*)   = minimal sequence of two complementary *sections*, in basic ABA arrangement.
   Units:
   Sections   = A section (*asthāyī*, also *mukhṛā*), with lower register and tonic emphasis.
                                  B section (*antarā*), with upper register and upper tonic or fifth emphasis.
                                  A^e section (no term), extension of A section.
                                  B^e section (no term or *antarā*), extension of B section.

b) *Principles of formal structuring*
   to repeat sections (*dohrānā, takrār*)
   to establish contrast of register (*ūpar bolnā, nīche bolnā*)
   to connect by directional movement (no term)

c) *Basic formal scheme*
   $\| :A(+A^e)\,(asthāyī) : \| :B(+B^e)\,(antarā) : \| :A(+A^e)\,asthāyī : \|$

Formal structure covers the larger dimension of Qawwali musical organization and relates to melody and rhythm at a higher level of inclusion. Indeed it is the constructs of pitch and duration which are the constituent elements of formal structure. In Qawwali music, as in North Indian classical music, units of formal structure are conceptualized in terms of melodic rather than rhythmic constructs. Accordingly, a formal unit may be defined as consisting musically of a number of melodic constructs, that is, motifs. At the same time, formal units are always subject to the durational constraint of rhythmic constructs, that is, a metre. Finally, while dealing here with formal structure in purely musical terms, it must be noted that Qawwali formal structure is dependent on textual structure in a more fundamental way than are either melody or rhythm, since its very framework, the Qawwali song, is defined by the textual unit of performance, the poem.

Musically, the formal organization is conceived of within the framework of what may be called the unit or item of performance bounded by silence, that is, the song or, as the performers call it, the 'piece' or 'item' (chīz, a term held in common with classical music). Identified by a consistent tonal organizational and durational pattern, the item of performance consists, musically, of a 'setting' or 'tune' (tarz, dhun). Melodically a setting is composed of several, usually different, motifs and corresponds to the 'melodic setting' discussed above (pp. 52 ff.). Rhythmically, it consists of several rounds of a metric pattern (see pp. 53–5 ff.). Within one item of performance the setting is stated at least once, but more usually it is repeated a number of times.

Within the framework of the musical setting there is a structuring into two complementary sections which, too, are repeatable. These basic units of formal organization are characterized by registral pitch emphasis. The first and principal section establishes tonic and tonality in the form of the main 'burden' of the item or song, by moving mainly in the lower part of the octave. The second, complementary section establishes a tonal centre above the tonic, usually the upper tonic or else the fifth, by moving mainly in the upper part of the octave. As in Indian classical music, the first part is called 'permanent' or 'staying' (asthāyī), the second 'intermittent' or 'intervening' (antarā). The two sections have a musical connotation of complementarity: the asthāyī represents the stability associated with the base portion of the tonal system and thus suggests recurrence or conclusion, while the antarā suggests an intermittent excursion into the upper reaches of the tonal gamut. In addition to these two essential units there may be sections which can be broadly classed as extensions of either asthāyī or antarā, moving in their respective registers and expanding or completing their respective melodic material. Performers do not name these extensions separately.

EX. 8. *Asthāyī* and *Antarā* sections with extensions (*Man kunto; see also Torī sūrat*)

The registral contrast between sections, in Qawwali as in other North Indian song forms, may be complemented by parallelism between sections. This takes the form of melodic and rhythmic equivalence and occurs most often in the final portion of two sections.

EX. 9. Parallelism between sections: melodic and rhythmic equivalence (*Batufail*)

The combination of these structural units or sections is governed by three musical principles of formal construction. The first one, fundamental to formal structuring, is generally repetition; it takes the form of simple reiteration (*dohrānā*), multiple repetition (*takrār*) and recurrence (no term). The second one is the establishment of registral contrast between higher and lower units (*ūpar, bolnā, nīche, bolnā*), based on the recognized musical connotation of higher register with initial or intervening statement (*antarā*), and of lower register with concluding statement (*asthāyī*). The third one is the connection of units by means of directional pitch movement. It is based on the connotation – derived directly from that of registrality – that descending pitch movement signals a low pitch register and pitch movement a high pitch register. Directional movement occurs as a melodic adjustment between one formal unit and the next one. Operative at endings as well as at beginnings of structural units of sections in a song, this principle most commonly takes the form of alternative endings used as a cue to indicate which unit is to follow, whether that be the next unit in a sequence of the same unit repeated.

EX. 10. Directional movement: register signalled through alternative endings (*Man kunto*)
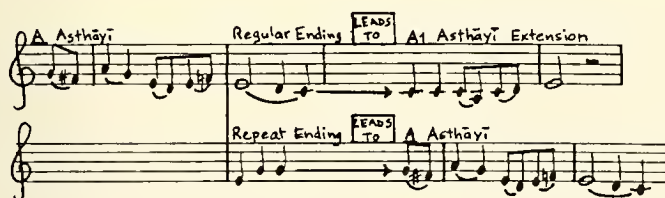
Formal structuring within the framework of a Qawwali item or song, then, works as follows: the units of formal structure, that is, the sections – principally *asthāyī* and *antarā* and their extensions – are characterized and distinguished by contrast of register, established and identified by repetition, and connected by directional melodic movement. All three are standard structuring principles of North Indian music, but unlike the first two, the principle of directional pitch movement is not generally identified in writings on Indian music. Nor indeed do Qawwali performers themselves abstract it verbally, even though it is clearly a prominent feature of formal structuring in Qawwali music.

The application of these principles, as well as the sequencing of the sections within one song setting in Qawwali, is largely determined by non-musical factors to be discussed in the following section. However, whatever the resulting formal structure, it invariably moves within the confines of a basic formal scheme common to North Indian musical genres: a registrally low section is established as a meaningful unit by its repeatability, and defines the song's musical identity. Then a registrally higher section is also established by repetition. It is prefigured by an initial rise in pitch, and it expands the melodic setting initiated by the first section, by adding a second contrasting portion in a new register. Descending pitch movement to the end of the second section leads back into the original or first section, which is the one that ultimately concludes the song. This basic scheme of low section, high section, and concluding return to low section (written out for *Kachh jagmag*, p. 30) may be called a loose A-B-A frame; it can be multiplied by repetition or expanded by means of additional sections, but the principle of structuring remains the same.

Acoustic articulation

The texture of Qawwali music, like that of North Indian song in general, has three components. The melodic line, principal channel of musical communication, is vocalized by one or more singers. The musical metre is articulated on the drum, traditionally and normally the double-barrelled *dholak*, though the *tabla*, standard drum of classical music, is used by some Qawwals today. The pitch outline of the melody is constantly reinforced on the portable harmonium which also serves for playing the Instrumental Prelude (*naghmā*). A relatively recent instrument in the Indian vocal ensemble, the harmonium is completely established in the Qawwali tradition, replacing less satisfactory predecessors like the sitar.[17] The entire ensemble is controlled by the lead singer who generally plays the harmonium himself.

More specific aspects of acoustic articulation arise from contextual factors to be discussed in the next section. These include the structuring of the choral ensemble, vocal delivery, drum articulation, and pacing.

B   The distinctive features of Qawwali

What has been outlined so far is the musical framework of Qawwali, that is, what is musically 'given' in the general run of the North Indian song tradition. But Qawwali music has special features which render it distinct from all other musical idioms of the region. These features are directly linked to the basic *raison d'être* of Qawwali music: its religious function and context of use. To isolate and understand the logic behind these features requires bringing into the music analysis the functional or contextual constraints that generate them at different levels. The basis for such a claim is that Qawwali participants themselves identify the musical features of Qawwali in terms of their association with its function; indeed, it is this very association which makes such features distinctive to them.

The first step in this stage of the musical analysis, then, is to define the function of Qawwali in terms of its components and then to isolate the functional constraints as they relate to their functional basis. Then it can be shown how these constraints operate on the musical framework, and how they are manifested in specific musical traits, the distinctive features of Qawwali.

The function of Qawwali music, in accordance with its place in the ideology of Sufism, is to serve the presentation of mystical poetry in order to arouse mystical emotion in an assembly of listeners with spiritual needs that are both diverse and changing. Three basic components characterize this function: (1) arousing (2) through texts (3) diverse listeners. For the purpose of a systematic presentation, the three functional components need to be isolated, so that each can be linked to the contextual constraints which it generates. It can then be shown how each of these constraints operates on the musical framework in specific musical terms. What follows is an outline of this relationship between function, contextual constraints and musical idiom; the entire pattern is schematized in Table 6.

Table 6 *Functional Constraints and Distinctive Features*

Functional Components and Requirements			Musical execution: distinctive features
1. *Spiritual arousal*	a)	Supply strong rhythmic framework	*Duration*: – metre with regular and frequent stress repeat
	b)	Supply strong stress pattern	*Acoustic presentation*: – stress intensified by handclaps and open-hand drumming
2. *Text priority*	a)	Clarify text acoustically (clarity of words)	*Acoustic presentation*: – high volume through voice quality – high volume through group reinforcement – sharp enunciation – continuous text presentation through group alternation
	b)	Clarify text structurally (clarity of syntax)	*Duration*: – poetic metre represented in durational arrangement of melody (rhythm of tune) – poetic metre reflected in musical metre *Formal structure*: – strophic form represented in musical structure – rhyme scheme represented in sectioning of tune *Pitch*: – units of strophe and poetic metre represented by melodic phrasing and contour
	c)	Clarify text semantically (clarity of content)	*Visual presentation*:* – content emphasis through gestures ('actions')
3. *Listeners' require- ments*	a)	Provide flexible structural framework for text manipulation	*Formal structure*: – all kinds of text units represented by musical units – manipulability of all musical units within overall structure through directional movement, manifested principally in alternative endings of musical units (alternative text options indicated by alternative endings of musical units)

* = controversial, non-standard feature

The three functional components of Qawwali may be isolated in the following form:

1.   Qawwali serves to generate spiritual arousal.
2.   Qawwali serves to convey a text message of mystical poetry.
3.   Qawwali serves to satisfy listeners' diverse and changing spiritual requirements.

From each of these three basic components of the Qawwali function emanate specific requirements for the music which result in a number of function-derived musical characteristics, as follows:

1.   Spiritual arousal

A strong rhythmic framework and an emphatic stress pattern or pulse (*zarb*) – often compared with the heartbeat (also called *zarb*) by Qawwals and Sufis alike – are considered essential for the soul to become moved (*qalb jārī hojānā*). In more concrete terms, the recurring beat is to suggest the continuous repetition of God's name (*zikr*), and to guide the Sufi's movement in ecstatic dancing (*raqs*).

Musically, this dual requirement of a strong rhythmic framework and an emphatic stress pattern affects both duration and acoustic presentation. Thus, Qawwali music favours a durational framework consisting of metres with simple and regular durational patterns, clearly articulated by vigorous and recurring stresses. This means that nearly all Qawwali metres are short and composed of two simple groupings, of equal or near-equal duration (for example, the 3 + 3 *dādrā* or the 4 + 4 *kaharvā*; see Table 4). It also means that all rhythmic groupings begin with a stressed beat, even in the event where more complicated metres are used which formally exempt some groupings from stress (for example 3 + 4 *rūpak*, 4 + 4 + 4 + 4 *tīntal* or 2 + 3 + 2 + 3 *jhaptāl*; see Table 4).

The acoustic presentation of the rhythmic framework is characterized by two accentual techniques emphasizing stressed beats. One is handclapping, the other a drumming technique that uses mainly open-hand or flat-hand strokes (*thāp, thapiyā*). This technique is compatible with the *dholak*, the standard Qawwali drum (see Stewart 1974: 31 ff.) and even when the *tabla* is used, Qawwali performers play it with flat hand strokes (*thāp se*), for the *tabla*'s standard fingered technique (*chuṭkī se*) is considered to have no effect on listeners. Qawwals agree that with the downbeat of the drum the listener's head moves in silent repetition of God's name (*zikr*), and the listener's foot moves in the dance of ecstasy (*raqs*). Even the recurring drum beat alone may cause ecstasy. This conception also underlies the Instrumental Prelude which is based on the reiteration of a *zikr* rhythm.

EX. 11. Arousal through emphatic stress pattern (Prelude, p. 45)

‖: ♪ ♪ 𝅗𝅥 :‖ implies *Allāhū*, that is, 'God Is'

One other durational device related to spiritual arousal is gradually increasing speed of delivery. This aspect of tempo is a characteristic feature for classical Hindustani music performance as well; in Qawwali it specifically serves the intensification of spiritual emotion and is used selectively for this purpose. Conversely, a decrease in speed implies the relaxation of intense emotion, especially at the very end of a song.

2. Text priority

The music must above all serve the clarification of the text, both acoustically, by making it clearly audible, and structurally, by placing emphasis on the salient formal features of the poem. Qawwals themselves usually refer to their singing as speaking (*bolnā*), and their major concern is to make the words understood (*bol samjhānā*), both individually and as poetic constructs. This dual constraint fundamentally affects the musical parameters of duration and formal structure, as well as that of acoustic presentation.

The acoustic clarification of the text is achieved through establishing clarity as well as volume. Thus all singing is carried out at a high dynamic level and with strong, even exaggerated enunciation of consonants. In accordance with this requirement, the ideal voice for a Qawwal is considered to be loud or full (*bharī hūī, moṭī*), a voice with life (*jān*) and strength (*zor*), rather than one that is very melodious (*surīlā*) or modulated (*klās kī*). Also important is the Qawwal's ability to project by pronouncing correctly and clearly. For additional volume, the solo voice is reinforced by group singing. Both clarity and volume are achieved in combination through the responsorial ensemble structure in which salient statements of any text unit are made by the soloist and repeated by the group. Finally, group alternation permits continuous singing, without instrumental interludes, thus preserving what is of primary importance in Qawwali: an uninterrupted verbal communication.

The structural clarification of the text takes place through two formal dimensions of Qawwali poetry, poetic metre and poetic form. Qawwals use the rhythmic pattern of the poem (*wazan*) as a guide for selecting a musical setting (*dhun, bandish, tarz*; see *Batufail*, p. 35). Conversely, they conceive of an existing tune as representing a particular poetic metre and call it a 'pattern tune' (*pattern dhun*, see *Masnavī*, pp. 29–30 ff.) for poems with the same metre. Thus the Qawwali performer is aware that the musical rhythm emanates from the poetic metre (*zamīn*), is set musically to a tune (*dhun*), and put within a rhythmic framework (*ṭhekā*) appropriate to that tune.

Musically the poetic metre is represented by the rhythm of the tune, both at the level of the durational units (long–short, etc.), and the durational framework (musical metre). At the level of the durational units this means that the long-short arrangement of the poetic metre (see p. 88 and Table 19 below) forms the basis for the long–short arrangement of Qawwali melody, whether in a literal 2:1 proportion (one long = two short), or in various asymmetrical arrangements (one long › short). That is to say, in the standard rhythmic representation of Qawwali verse patterns, the durational unit representing a short syllable is doubled in length to represent a long syllable (if $\cup$ = $♪$, then $-$ = $♩$). Asymmetrical arrangements are characterized by long syllable units of varying duration, always multiples of the short durational unit (if $\cup$ = $♪$, then $-$ = ›$♩$). Alternatively, stress is sometimes used to mark a long syllable musically, even though its duration may be short; this occurs mainly at the beginning of the verse line.

EX. 12. Poetic metre represented in tune rhythm

(a) Symmetrical representation of long–short values (*Muflisānem*)

(b)   Asymmetrical representation of long–short values (*Kisī ko kuchh*)
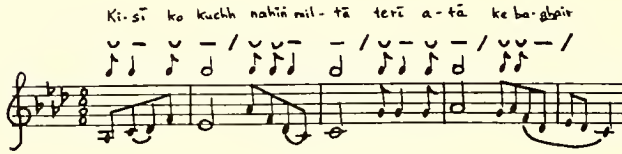
At the level of the durational framework the musical metre represents, or at least fits the structure of, the poetic metre. This means that the long–short pattern of the poetic metre is incorporated into the musical framework of a compatible musical metre (*ṭhekā*) in an arrangement that expresses the rhythmic structure of the verse, whether literally or in a modified form. How literally the poetic metre is realized depends mainly on the degree of regularity in the poetic long–short pattern, but considerations of musical style also enter.

As for poetic form, the strophic unit of the poem determines the overall formal structure of the musical setting, including the length, proportion and number of sections. The standard formal pattern of *asthāyī* and *antarā* sections is adapted to the formal rhyme scheme of the poem. Rhyming lines, which are normally in a concluding or refrain position, are set to the principal section of the tune, the lower-pitched *asthāyī*, which musically suggests stability and conclusiveness (see above, p. 56). Non-rhyming lines which normally carry the poetic statement initiating a verse are set to the intermittent section of the tune, the higher-pitched *antarā* which musically suggests an excursion into new territory. Verses with more than two lines are set to varying arrangements of these two sections or their extensions, but the final line of a verse is always an *asthāyī*, and the semantically most significant preceding line – initial or penultimate – is always an *antarā*. The very opening line of a Qawwali poem is always a rhyming or refrain line; at the same time, it is the opening statement of a verse requiring a conclusion. Musically, this duality is expressed by a dual setting, first to the *asthāyī* – in order to mark the line as a rhyming line or refrain – and then to the *antarā* – in order to mark the line as an opening statement which is to be followed by the concluding second line (also rhyming), set to the *asthāyī* tune again. Throughout, the musical contrast marking *asthāyī* and *antarā* sections serves to underscore the complementarity between rhyming and non-rhyming lines, or 'statement' and 'answer'.

As a final point it should be added that the form and metre of the poem also constrain pitch movement of Qawwali music, albeit in an indirect way, by means of their influence on musical form and duration. Thus the formal units of the strophe also determine the length of the corresponding musical unit, whether that be an *asthāyī*, an *antarā*, or their extensions. Overall melodic range and contour are affected; in particular, subdivisions resulting from a caesura within the verse line are often expressed melodically by complementary contouring. Furthermore, melodic movement throughout a section reflects rhythmic characteristics of the poetic line. The most obvious musical result of such recurring formal features is melodic and rhythmic parallelism occurring between sections and also between parts within one section. Most prominently, it serves to mark the points of structure between verse lines through what amounts to a musical end rhyme or 'cadence'.[18]

EX. 13. Poetic form and metre represented by melodic phrasing and contour

(a)   Complementary contouring for caesura (*Batufail*, Section A)
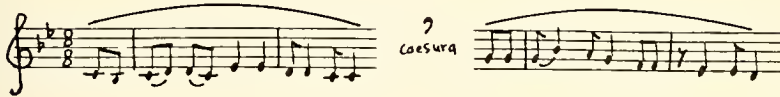
(b)   Musical end rhyme for verse lines (*Muflisānem*)

Performers express the structural dominance of the poem by their very vocabulary, identifying formal structure and elements of Qawwali music by poetic rather than musical terms, even where standard musical terms exist and are known to them. Thus the word commonly used for tune section is 'verse line' (*misra'*), and the refrain or last section of a strophe is called 'salient word phrase' (*bol*). When dealing with songs in couplet form, Qawwals prefer to call *antarā* and *asthāyī* sections 'first line' (*misra' 'ūlā*) and 'second line' (*sānī misra'*). They even refer to singing a verse line to one or the other tune sections as 'saying [it] as first' (*ūlā bolnā*) and 'saying [it] as second' (*sānī bolnā*).

The clarification of text content by means of visual presentation needs to be mentioned here, although it is marginal to the Qawwali idiom in every sense, consisting of occasional gestures by the lead singer – mainly raising the hand to point or wave to a salient text phrase (see Plate 13). Because its consistent execution is seen to interfere with the spiritual purpose of Qawwali (see pp. 114–15 below), its practice is not standard; rather it characterizes the popular, *filmī qawwālī* (see Table 2).

3.   Listeners' requirements

The Qawwali performer must be able to repeat, amplify, rearrange or even omit any part of the song text in immediate response to the changing requirements of his listeners. This presupposes total flexibility of the Qawwali musical structure, both as to the structural units and as to their manipulation. Accordingly, the established musical sections of Qawwali song structure – that is, *asthāyī* and *antarā* and their extensions – are further divisible into shorter musical units in order to accommodate even the shortest meaningful text unit that may require to be isolated and repeated. Furthermore, additional musical units are created as settings for text portions that may need to be inserted, as well as for Introductory Verses (see Ex. 15 below).

Within the overall framework of the formal musical scheme, and the durational pattern of the musical metre, all these structural units are repeatable – both by single reiteration

(*dohrānā*) and by the multiple repetition supporting intense arousal (*takrār*) – insertable, and recombinable. Such musical flexibility implies a comprehensive application of the structuring principle of repetition (see above, pp. 57–8). Musically, this application is achieved by means of the other structuring principles, registrality and directional melodic movement. As already stated, the recognized connotation of high pitch with initial statement and low pitch with conclusion underlies the musical setting of verse lines to *antarā* and *asthāyī* sections. This connotation is extended to directional melodic movement, for ascending pitch movement signals a high register and therefore the coming of an initial or intermittent statement, whereas descending pitch movement signals a low register and therefore the coming of a concluding statement. On the basis of this connotation directional melodic movement is used in Qawwali music not only to connect structural units, but also as a semantic signalling device for the sequencing of these units. It operates most prominently in the form of alternative unit endings which serve 'allomorphically' to indicate what type of text unit is to follow.

EX. 14. Manipulability of small units

Repeatable units and alternative endings (*Chashm-e-maste*, Section A)

Alternative endings, in essence, function much like the first and second endings in Western musical form, but there is no implication of conclusion for either ending. In its standard design a structural unit of Qawwali music ends melodically in such a way as to lead naturally to the unit next in sequence. If, instead, a repeat of the same unit is indicated, the melodic ending is then modified so as to lead back to the beginning of that unit, usually by means of a change in pitch direction. The same procedure applies if an insertion – structurally an intermittent unit – is to be added. Even where the unit to be repeated or inserted, and the one next in sequence, begin at similar pitch levels, the repeat or insertion will be indicated by an upward pitch movement, suggesting more intermittent text material, whereas a downward pitch movement suggests completion of the statement.

The application of this principle of directionality extends in Qawwali to the connection of larger units of text structure, particularly serving to integrate Inserts or Introductory Verses into the song proper. Musically rendered in a declamatory or recitative style, such units serve *in toto* as 'statements', to be 'answered' or concluded by the succeeding portion of the song.

This is always achieved by means of a descending final melody to signal the end of one structural unit and a lead-back into the song proper (*cf. Shud dilam*, pp. 41–3 f, *Sansār*, pp. 38–41, *Man turā*, pp. 43–4).

EX. 15. Manipulability of large units

Combining performance units (*Shud dilam* and *Kachh jagmag*; see also Performance No. 2)

In short, directional movement is the prime syntactical principle of the Qawwali idiom. Essentially, it is a function of the capacity for unit manipulation inherent in the basic Indian approach to music, allowing this kind of music to be flexibly adapted to immediate *ad hoc* events in the performance context – for Qawwali music these events consist of the expression of listeners' requirements.

Qawwali performers talk about the units and rules of this structural manipulation in terms of the text, as they do with other dimensions of musical structure. This includes structural units such as Inserted Verses, called 'knots' (*girah*), Introductory Verses, called 'quatrains' (*rubaʿi*) or – for Hindi verses – 'couplets' (*dohā*), verse lines (*misraʿ*), and short text phrases called 'something said' (*bol*). It also includes the manipulation of units, such as 'to repeat' (*dohrānā*), 'intensive repetition' (*takrār*), 'to amplify' (*baṛhānā*), and 'to leave out' (*chhoṛnā*) – all these terms being applicable primarily to text units. Of musical structuring devices, performers clearly conceptualize registrality (see Table 1), whereas for the melodic connection of units by the use of alternative endings or directional movement they really have no terminology beyond a general expression: 'to make the connection, to harmonize parts' (*mel karnā*). The fact is that performers recognize and can identify the procedure of connecting parts appropriately, but they take it for granted as an integral part of Qawwali singing – a potent reminder that musical reality extends beyond verbal categories.

C   A Qawwali song model

The analysis of Qawwali music is now complete, in terms of a systematic inventory of units and rules arrived at by putting together both musical frame of reference and distinctive features. The result is a musical grammar that can account for the structure of Qawwali. However, for this grammar to become operational, that is, potentially capable of generating Qawwali music, it must also provide the reader with a blueprint for constructing what constitutes the Qawwali item of performance, that is, a complete Qawwali song. For Qawwali music such a blueprint exists only in the abstract, since in performance Qawwali song is, by definition, structured to serve audience needs, as manifested musically in its features of structural flexibility. Nevertheless, there exists what may best be termed a 'roadmap' (to borrow a popular musicians' term) for the formal structuring of a Qawwali song, based on the sequential structure of the song text. It is therefore possible to map out, as an abstraction, a

minimal sequence of a Qawwali song by showing the music in its structural relationship with the text and listing all possible units along with all possible rules of combination. Schematic presentations in the form of Tables 7–17 are inserted to help articulate each level of structure; corresponding musicians' terminology is explained in the Qawwali Musical Vocabulary.

The song, item of performance

A Qawwali song comprises a text unit – a poem – and a musical unit – a tune. The poem consists of a number of verses, identical in structure, while the tune is a musical setting repeated to the words of each verse. Qawwali is thus a strophic song (see Table 7).

Table 7 *The Song: Item of Performance*

POEM (*ghazal*, *chīz*, *tazmīn*)	MUSICAL SETTING (*bandish*, *thāt*, *tarz*, *dhun*)
– sequence of *verses* differing in content, identical in form, with common end rhyme or refrain throughout	– sequence of identical *tunes*

The largest repeatable unit of a song is the verse set to one statement of the tune. The *verse* comprises from two to six verse lines – most often two, as in the *ghazal* (see below, pp. 86–7) – and is governed by a consistent rhyme scheme based on complementarity between non-rhyming lines with initial or intermediary statements and rhyming or refrain lines with concluding statements. A consistent poetic metre is based on a variety of long–short arrangements repeated with each verse line. The *tune* is a melodic setting constituted motivically within a fixed tonal framework. Its formal structure is adapted to the verse structure and consists of at least two sections that contrast in register and correspond with the non-rhyming and rhyming lines of the text. Its durational arrangement is derived from the poetic metre and is set within a musical metre articulated on the drum throughout the song (see Table 8).

Table 8 *The Song: Largest Repeat Unit*

VERSE (*she'r*, *band*)	TUNE (*bandish*, *thāt*, *tarz*, *dhun*)
– statement of one complete content unit, including 'statement' and 'answer'	– complete statement of musical setting of motivic melody within tonal framework
– consistent poetic metre	– consistent musical metre
– fixed verse structure is sequence of 2–6 *lines* (rhyming and non-rhyming)	– standard tune structure is sequence of 2–5 *sections* (differing in register)
– most prevalent form is couplet	– most prevalent form is binary adaptation of three-part frame

At the next level of structure the verse is divided into repeatable text lines set to tune sections. Rhyming lines are set to the principal tune section (*asthāyī*), which is characterized by a low pitch register and orientation to the lower tonic. Non-rhyming lines are sung to the

contrasting tune section (*antarā*), which is characterized by a high pitch register and orientation to the fifth or upper tonic, and which melodically requires to be completed by the principal section. Where a rhyming line is in an initial rather than a concluding position within the verse, as is the case with every opening line of a poem, it is set first to an *asthāyī*, then to an *antarā* tune, indicating the impending conclusion that is to follow in the form of another *asthāyī*. Verses with more than two lines may contain additional tune sections, extensions of the *asthāyī* and particularly of the *antarā* tune (see Table 9).

Table 9 *The Song: Standard Repeat Unit*

LINE (*misra*ᶜ)	SECTION (no collective term)
– distinguished by presence/absence of rhyme	– distinguished by low/high register and tonal centre
a (*sānī misra*ᶜ, i.e. second line) = rhyming line, normally represents concluding 'answer', except for opening line of poem which is also rhyming	*A* (*asthayi*) = low-register section with tonic reference, represents 'burden' of tune as well as its conclusion (also called *mukhra* when in refrain position)
b (*misra* ᶜ*ula*, i.e. first line) = non-rhyming line, normally represents initial or intermittent statement (i.e. precedes conclusion)	*B* (*antara*) = high-register section with fifth or upper tonic reference, represents initial or intermittent portion of tune
c (no term) = secondary rhyming line, in some verse forms	*A*ᵉ/*B*ᵉ (no term) = extensions of low/high register section
– in standard format *a* follows *b*, except for opening verse, as in couplet form *aa/ba/ba*/etc.	– in standard format *A* introduces song and then follows *B*, as in prototype form *ABA/BA/BA*, etc.

Within each verse line, any meaningful text phrase can be isolated and repeated, from a half line to a single word. Musically, this implies the isolation and repetition of any part or motif within a tune section (see Table 10).

Table 10 *The Song: Smallest Repeat Unit*

PHRASE (*bol*)	PHRASE/MOTIVE (no term)
– meaningful content unit from half line to single word	– isolable musical unit, from half section to single motive
a1/a2 = first/second half of line	*A1/A2* = first/second half of section
ai/am/af = word phrase/word in initial/medial/final position of line	*Ai/Am/Af* = motif in initial/medial/final position of section

Adjunct items: Introduction, Insert, Prelude

Two performance units may be added to the song. One is an Introduction (*rubaʿi*) preceding the song to indicate the type of poem that is to follow (Repertoire No. 8). The other is an Insert (*girah*) introduced during the course of a song to amplify the meaning of a verse line (see Repertoire Nos. 9, 10). Both are verse units ranging from one to four couplets. Musically, they are rendered as 'recitatives' in an unmetred declamatory vocal style, without motivic patterning or reference to a musical metre. In accordance with the text, these recitatives follow both the principle of registral contrast between non-rhyming and rhyming lines, and of durational differentation between long and short syllables. Being adjunct items prefaced to – or inserted in – a song, both Introduction and Insert may be repeated in their entirety or in units of two verse lines, if the item contains several lines (see Table 11).

Table 11 *Adjunct Items: Introductory Verse and Insert (Rubaʿi and Girah)*

VERSE UNIT (*sheʿr, rubaʿi, band, dohā*)	RECITATIVE (no term)
– statement congruent in context and consistent in rhyme scheme, consisting of 1 to 4 verses	– complete statement of musical setting of recitative oriented to tonal centres within tonal framework
– consistent poetic metre	– consistent but metrically free durational arrangement, no musical metre (though drum may play softly)
– fixed verse structure and rhyme scheme, 2–8 lines	– loosely structured recitative, 2–4 sections
– most prevalent form is single or double couplet	– most prevalent form is binary with extensions

The standard unit of repetition within these adjunct items is the verse line, set to recitative sections. Unlike the song, the recitative accords primary structural significance to the position of the line within the unit. Thus, while non-rhyming and rhyming lines may be differentiated by higher and lower tonal centres, the primary tonal distinction occurs between the final – and often also the penultimate – line and all the other lines, since it is the final line that anchors the adjunct item within the song. Musically, that anchoring is achieved through a downward directional movement. This of course implies that the final line must start from a higher register, normally the upper tonic (*ṭīp*). To prepare for this, the penultimate line may, but need not, ascend toward that pitch (*cf.* Repertoire No. 8 (a) and (b)); this usually happens where the item is at least four lines long (see Table 12).

Finally, an Instrumental Prelude (*naghmā*), played solo on the harmonium, may preface the sung performance (Repertoire No. 11). A loosely structured tune follows a registral progression from low to high, and back to low. A recurring rhythmic pattern suggesting *zikr* is strongly reinforced by the drummed musical metre (see Table 13).

Table 12 *Adjunct Items: Standard Repeat Unit*

LINE (*misra‘*)	SECTION (no term)
– distinguished by initial/intermittent/final position rather than presence/absence of rhyme	– distinguished by stationary/directional pitch movement
i = initial/intermittent line	*I* = stationary section oriented to 1–3 intermediate tonal centres
f = final line, connecting adjunct unit to song proper	*F* = final section, descending from high register
p = penultimate line	*P* = penultimate section establishing high register (optional in units four or more lines long)

Table 13 *Adjunct Item (Naghmā)*

UNDERLYING TEXT FORMULA (*zikr*)	MUSICAL SETTING (*naghmā*)
– 'Allahu' repeated (implied only)	– durational pattern of tune anapaestic
	– musical metre binary
	– melodic frame with sequential patterning within variable tonal framework
	– initial rise and final descent
	– gradual speed increase and final slowdown (optional)

Qawwali sequencing rules

The sequence of performance implied in the text structure goes from verse to verse, within each verse from line to line, and within each line from beginning to end. However, since all meaningful units are repeatable, the performer may repeat either a smaller or a larger unit at will: a word, a half line, an entire line, a whole verse. This flexibility is accommodated musically through a method of musical sequencing based on traditional pitch movement, using directional melodic movement 'allomorphically' as an indicator of what is to follow (see Table 14).

All those musical units that can be repeated or followed by more than one subsequent unit are subject to this principle. In its most prevalent application the end of one unit is melodically adjusted to what is to follow. In its standard version the ending suggests continuation on to the musical unit set to the text portion next in sequence. If the unit is to be repeated, the ending is melodically adjusted to lead back to the beginning of the same unit.

Table 14 *The Song: Sequencing Principles*

TEXT	MUSIC
– *complementarity* of *b* and *a* lines (i.e. *b* completed by *a*), on basis of content compatability	– *complementarity* between *B* and *A* sections (i.e. *B* completed by *A*) on basis of *contrast of register*
– *repeatability* of all meaningful text units	– *repeatability* of all corresponding musical units

* *integration* of repeatable song units into alternative sequences by means of *musical* principle of:

– (no textual correlate)	– *directional melodic adjustment* (based on registral connotation)
	↓ = downward movement, suggests low register, i.e. conclusion and advancement to next unit according to standard format
	↑ = upward movement, suggests high register, i.e. recurrence or repeat of unit already stated

* alternate and secondary integrative device:

ʷ– word call (saint, appellation), added to text line where possible, signals alert, suggesting recurrence or repeat	⁽ʷ⁾ – raised pitch to word call anticipates high register, i.e. recurrence or repeat

The adjustment follows the criterion that ascending pitch movement signals a high pitch and thus an intermediate statement or the continuation of a message, whereas descending pitch movement signals a low pitch and thus the conclusion of the statement and continuation to new material. The entire directional adjustment may also be delayed so as to govern the beginning of the following unit. Finally, a non-musical method of signalling a text phrase out of sequence consists of prefacing it with a short appellation of a saint's name, set to a raised pitch also anticipating repetition (see Table 15).

The standard application of these sequencing rules is based on the assumption that a message must be heard at least twice in order to be internalized, and it needs to be presented in segments corresponding in duration to one message-phrase. The text unit that comes closest to such a segment is the verse line, so that in Qawwali singing the standard unit of repetition is the line set to one tune section. Since verse lines vary widely in length, however, this principle may be modified in two ways. In the case of a very short verse line two complementary lines are sung in succession and then repeated, and single line repeats may follow once the complete message has been conveyed. A very long verse line, conversely, is usually divisible in half by a caesura, and each half line is repeated separately at first, so that each portion of the message is clearly conveyed before the entire line is repeated. The same principle of minimal repetition is applied to smaller units of performance.

For adjunct units the sequencing rules are modified somewhat to accommodate their special place within the song structure. Both Introductory Verses and Inserts are single statements added to the principal song message; accordingly they are not repeated beyond the

Table 15 *The Song: Application of Directional Melodic Adjustment*

Principal rule: Ending adjusted melodically (to connect with next unit)

B = standard ending, no adjustment
– signals A,
hence sequence: $B - A$

$B \uparrow$ = upward adjustment of ending
– signals B,
hence sequence: $B \uparrow - A$

Modified principal rule: Delayed directional adjustment

$B (\uparrow)$ = upward adjustment delayed
– connects with B,
hence sequence: $B - \uparrow A$

Secondary rule: Word call to raised pitch

B^w = word call along with raised pitch
– signals B,
hence sequence: $B^w - B$

Modified secondary rule: Delayed word call to raised pitch

$B^{(w)}$ = word call along with raised pitch delayed
– signals B,
hence sequence: $B^{(w)} - B$

Table 16 *Adjunct Items: Sequencing Principles*

TEXT	MUSIC
– *repeatability* of text units (except for final line)	– *repeatability* of corresponding musical units (final section excepted)
	– *variability* of repeatable sections, as to tonal orientation (in absence of registral contrast)
– *complementarity* of adjunct unit and song proper (i.e. Insert/Introduction completed by subsequent song text unit) on basis of content compatability	– *complementarity* of recitative and song tune (i.e. final recitative section completed by subsequent song tune section) by means of registral *contrast*

* integration of adjunct unit with song by means of musical principle of:

– *directional melodic movement* (based on registral connotation)

= downward movement suggests low register, i.e. conclusion and advancement to next unit, i.e. the song proper

need to make them comprehensible. For this purpose the only repeat unit is normally the entire verse line, regardless of length. However, an exception occurs with the very last line of the adjunct item (see Table 16).

Structurally, the entire thrust of an adjunct item is its integration into the song proper. The final line is so central to this process that it becomes exclusively a carrier of directional melodic movement so as to achieve this integration. Thus this line represents not so much the conclusion of the added message than the lead-back into the main portion of the song (see Repertoire Nos. 9 and 10); accordingly it is sung only once, always to a descending tune section which leads directly into the succeeding line of the song proper (see Table 17).

Table 17 *Adjunct Items: Application of Directional Melodic Movement*

Principal rule: Directional melodic movement from high register

   F = final section contains downward movement from register higher than preceding section – signals conclusion, hence sequence: F (of recitative) – A or B (of song tune)

Modified principal rule: Directional melodic movement from pre-established high register

   P = penultimate section establishes higher register than preceding sections – signals final section

   F = final section contains downward movement from high register – signals conclusion as above, hence modified sequence: P-F (of recitative) – A or B (of song)

Entire songs become subject to the same rules in a limited way. Thus when one song is meant to lead directly to the next one, the final *asthāyī* line may have its ending adjusted to the pitch level starting the new song. To indicate the conclusion of a song two devices are sometimes used: one is a melodic cadence leading to the lower tonic at the end of the final *asthāyī* line, and the other is a restatement of the *asthāyī* at a greatly reduced tempo.

EX. 16. Melodic cadence as conclusion (*Torī sūrat*, from Performance No. 1)
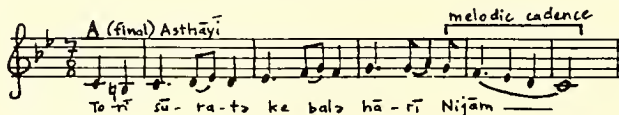
D   Variation in the choice of sequencing

The presentation of this model of Qawwali music in the abstract represents the furthest extent to which a musical analysis can go toward generating a Qawwali song. At the same time, the obvious shortcoming of the model – its inability to generate even one song in the concrete – suggests the need for a different level of inquiry. What has been achieved so far is a musical

analysis of Qawwali which provides the reader with the musical frame of reference by way of four musical parameters, and identifies distinctive features by means of their functional constraints. All this is put together into a grammar which can account for the structure of Qawwali music, by way of units and rules imposed on a model for sequencing the music which is broadly based on the textual structure.

But what motivates the application of these rules and thus the choice of musical units – the actual programming of Qawwali music – is not contained in this grammar. True, there are certain rules of structure that govern relationships between certain musical elements – for example, different endings must be followed by different sections, or even between musical and non-musical elements – for example, musical metre must represent poetic metre. But such rules only account for one structural element constraining another. This leaves unexplained those musical options or choices which are not governed by a structural constraint. In Qawwali music in particular, a repertoire of such musical choices is central to the musical idiom. Collectively designated 'flexibility of structure' along with 'manipulability of units' it is assigned special significance as a distinctive feature and tied explicitly to the functional constraint of satisfying the changing spiritual needs of the audience. It is in dealing with this feature that the present musical grammar reaches its limits. For this grammar can list the choices by which Qawwali musical structure is rendered flexible and its units manipulable, but it cannot provide a programme for using those choices. The fact is, that flexibility is no more than a set of options, and manipulability no more than the musical mechanics for generating flexibility. How to use this flexibility is not a matter of structure at all, but of process: the process of performance.

There is no better evidence for reinforcing this crucial point than the actual performance of a Qawwali song in transcription. Example 17 represents the beginning of two songs – *Tōri sūrat* and *Kachh jagmag* (Repertoire Nos. 3 and 5) – transcribed from two recorded performances, both by Meraj Ahmad (Performance Nos. 1 and 2). Both performances are valid renditions of a Qawwali song; and they both show the musical application of flexible structuring. The result: two irregularly patterned musical sequences based on structuring choices for which a purely musical *rationale* is apparently lacking – indeed no Qawwali performer would claim otherwise.

EX. 17. Song structure in performance

(a)   *Tōri sūrat*: Opening line (excerpt from Performance No. 1, pp. 164–74, CD item: 5)

(b)   *Kachh jagmag*: verse (excerpt from Performance No. 2, pp. 181–2, CD item: 7)

What makes each song version happen as it does? It is to performance that the analysis must now turn, in order to pursue what has been left out of it so far: how Qawwali music is programmed or put together into an actual musical sequence as a result of a series of choices (flexibility of structure), executed through the use of appropriate musical structuring (manipulability of units). In considering performance, the analysis must shift its focus first and foremost on to the dynamic behind this programming process, or, in plain language, find out what makes the music happen. In Qawwali, there is no doubt about what that dynamic consists of, since the flexible structuring process is very explicitly linked to serving audience needs, a primary function of Qawwali music. What underlies each performance of a Qawwali song is a process of interaction between the audience, with its needs, and the performer, with the task of satisfying them. To understand this process and its dynamic, however, is nothing less than to understand the Qawwali performance context in its entirety.

— great flexibility

Part II
The performance context: the Qawwali occasion

ادب محبت کا پہلا قرینہ ہے

Adab muhabbat kā pahlā qarīna hai	The first step in the quest for Love is proper Form

The quest toward an understanding of Qawwali ritual leads directly to the cell of the Sufi sheikh, source of spiritual guidance. Here the seeker finds instruction in the example and teachings of the great Sufi saints. More than that, he experiences the personal impact of the Sheikh's spiritual authority, and thereby becomes part of a living enactment of the centuries-old tradition of Sufism. That tradition is reiterated and reinforced in untold encounters among Sufis wherever they may be, through sharing verses and miracle stories, through the subtle ways of Sufi being and interacting, and, most of all, through partaking of the ritual of sama'. For the Sufi adept, steeped in the Sufi world of meaning, listening to Qawwali in the sama' becomes a synthesis, a fusion of Sufi teachings and Sufi experience, of Sufi outer form expressing inner meaning, of spontaneity within structure.

But living within this world of Sufism also brings to the seeker's awareness the social and material realities of a Sufi community centred around a saintly shrine: the authority of sheikhs and subordination of musicians, the competition among both for material survival and rewards, and the primacy of hierarchy and status both spiritual and worldly. For beneath the overarching ideology of Sufism and its impact of spiritual experience these realities, too, have a part in shaping the Qawwali ritual.

In the immediate sense, the context for programming Qawwali music is the occasion of its performance. Accordingly, a detailed consideration of the structure of the Qawwali assembly constitutes the core of Part II. In accordance with its manifestly spiritual function the Qawwali occasion is analysed as a religious ritual, with norms of setting and procedure which are informed by a set of relevant concepts. These norms constitute the structure of the Qawwali occasion, inasmuch as they are shared by the participants who actualize that structure according to individual knowledge and motivation, but always in terms of those common ritual norms.

An understanding of the structure of the Qawwali occasion also presupposes an awareness of the background dimensions which, for all Qawwali participants, underlies the Qawwali tradition. Because the performance of Qawwali is a religious ritual, the ideological framework of Sufism is of primary importance in defining the norms for the way a Qawwali occasion is structured, and indeed the very meaning of the ritual. Intimately linked to this dimension is the idiom of Sufi poetry which communicates mystical thought and expression of experience in Qawwali. On the other hand, there is the background dimension of social reality: at a level

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of general relevance to the Qawwali occasion it consists of the socio-historical setting of Sufism in India which has shaped Qawwali as a religious and cultural institution; at the level of specific relevance to the musical domain of Qawwali, it includes the socio-economic position of the Qawwali performer and also his social and professional identity.

3   *The Background*

A   The belief system behind Qawwali

This outline sketch of Sufi ideology aims to present what Indian and Pakistani Sufis consider the salient features of Sufism – whether they are part of classical Sufi doctrine or the result of local Indian tradition – and then to identify Qawwali ritual in terms of this ideological frame of reference. In its organization this outline of Indic Sufism also aims to convey the importance of the historical dynamic as a basic structuring principle of this ideology. The primary sources for this *exposé* are Sufi informants, and the secondary source is the literature that best formalizes their ideological frame of reference.

Throughout this chapter the principal text sets down what is generally applicable to Sufism and its institutions across India and Pakistan, according to the teachings of leading sheikhs and standard Sufi practice. The ethnographic examples are limited, once again, to the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya, in order to set up a coherent background context for the actual performance of Qawwali music. A set of tables presents the content in summary form, correlated with indigenous terminology which is explained in the Glossary.

Indo-Pakistani Sufism is rooted in the classical tradition of Islamic mysticism as it developed in the Arab and Persian culture area between the ninth and eleventh centuries, and was codified in the writings of the major Sufi masters by the twelfth century (Nicholson 1962, Arberry 1950, Milson 1975). It is through the great Sufi orders which were founded during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Trimingham 1971) that Sufi teachings and culture spread into India (Rizvi 1978, Schimmel 1975).

The salient ingredients of the Indo-Islamic mystical tradition thus established are: a common theory of the mystical Way (*tarīqa*), an elaborate verbal code to elucidate that theory, a basic list of eminent mystics who are recognized as the founders and authoritative masters of Sufism, and a large stock of hagiographic material. A further essential aspect of classical Sufism is the aesthetic element, for, rather than consisting of a common body or doctrine, 'the Sufi movement ... formed a complex association of imaginative and emotional attitudes' (Gibb 1962: 211) which found expression in the rich poetic traditions inspired by Sufism throughout the Islamic realm.

Sufi ideology is a response to orthodox Islam, at the same time emanating from its very tenets. Thus, while affirming the unity of God (*tauhīd*) and the absolute distinction between Creator and created, Sufism also assumes an inner kinship between God and man and strives to bridge the gulf between them through the dynamic force of love (*muhabbat*). Mystical love, the central concept of Sufism, has two complementary dimensions essential to the sphere of Sufi thought and experience. One comprises man's deliberate conscious striving toward God by following the Way (*tarīqa*), under the direction of a spiritual guide, to achieve 'stages' or 'situations' (*maqāmāt*, pl. of *maqām*) of nearness to God. The other dimension comprises

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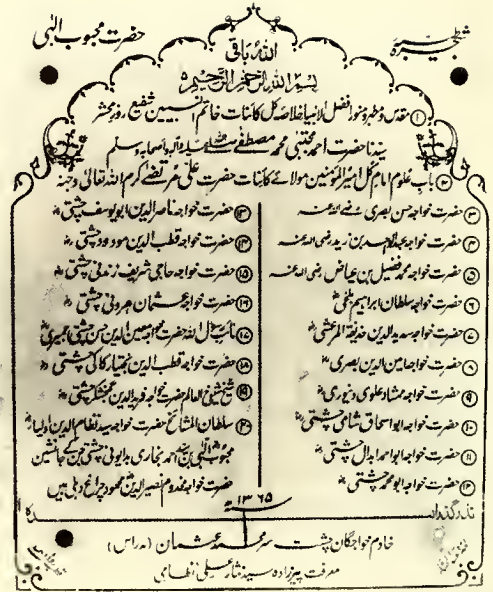
Plate 3 Engraved tablet in the Niza-muddin shrine listing the complete spiritual genealogy (*shijrā*) of the saint

ecstatic intuitive fulfilment through God's illumination of man, His gift of 'states' (*ahwāl*, pl. of *hāl*) of nearness, leading ultimately to union (*wisāl*) with God. 'The *maqām* is a stage of spiritual attainment which is the result of the mystic's personal effort and endeavour, whereas the *hāl* is a spiritual mood depending not upon the mystic but upon God' (Arberry 1950: 75).

Clearly distinct from each other, both dimensions are conceptually integrated into the scheme of the Sufi *silsilās*, the spiritual 'chains' or lineages of those who followed the Way and received illumination from God, which in turn empowered them to be guides (*sheikh*, *pīr*) to other seekers or disciples (*murīd*). Discipleship (*baiʿat*) links the devotee to this genealogy of spiritual power: through his *pīr* to the great saints of the past, to Hazrat Ali – the Prophet's son-in-law and disciple – then to Prophet Muhammad himself and ultimately to God. Table 18 is an outline of this spiritual hierarchy for Indic Sufism and the Chishti lineage (see below, pp. 91–2), while Plate 3 contains the spiritual genealogy (*shijrā*) of the saint Nizamuddin. It is this principle of spiritual linkage (*taʿalluq*) and transmission which underlies the structuring of Sufism through the establishment of the great mystical orders and their extensions throughout the Islamic region, wherever Sufism took root.

At the core of this structure is the teaching relationship of spiritual guide to disciple. Indeed, the attachment and submission to a *sheikh* or *pīr* is considered an essential prerequisite for attaining the goals of mysticism, through his guidance along the 'stations' of the 'path' or Way, and also for receiving the benefice emanating from one who has achieved spiritual superiority. Indic Sufism in particular conceptualizes divine power and man's relationship to it very much in hierarchical terms: there are degrees of nearness to that power which are reckoned according to the principle of spiritual descent from the great Sufi masters or saints (*auliyā*, pl. of *walī*) of the past, and manifested in a Sufi's spiritual genealogy, leading through his founder-saint to Ali, the Prophet, and thus to God (as shown in Table 18).

Another important aspect of the discipleship principle is the resulting relationship of

Table 18 *Hierarchy of Sufism: the Chishti Silsilā*

—— direct spiritual link
--- several spiritual generations

GOD

PROPHET MUHAMMAD

HAZRAT ALI

FOUNDER SAINTS OF MAJOR ORDERS:

| *CHISHTIYĀ* | *SUHRAWARDIYĀ* | *NAQSHBANDIYĀ* | *QĀDRIYĀ* |

Founder Saint in India:
Muīnuddīn Chishtī 'Khwājā Gharībnawāz'
  d. 1236, Ajmer

Qutbuddīn Bakhtiyār-e-Kākī 'Qutab Sāhib'
  d. 1237, Delhi

Farīduddīn Ganj-e-Shakar 'Bābā Farīd'
  d. 1266, Pākpattan

Alā'uddīn Sābir 'Sābir Pāk'   Nizāmuddīn Auliyā 'Mahbūb-e-Ilāhī'
  d. 1291, Pīrān-e-Kalyar   d. 1325, Delhi

                                     Nasīruddīn 'Chirāgh-e-Delhī'   Amīr Khusrau
                                       d. 1356, Delhi   d. 1325, Delhi

                                     Syed Muh. Gesūdarāz 'Khwājā Bandanawāz'
                                       d. 1422, Gulbargā

spiritual 'brotherhood' which links the disciples of one spiritual guide, as encapsulated in the expression *pīrbhāyī* or 'brother-in-*pīr*' – quite analogous in meaning to 'brother-in-Christ'. Indeed, this bond is considered fundamental to the concept of the Sufi community.

Later Sufism has also come to emphasize nearness to these saints and their power in spatial terms, at the abode of their final union with God, that is, their tomb. Accordingly, Sufism in India (Eaton 1978) as elsewhere (Geertz 1968, Crapanzano 1973) has in recent centuries shifted its focus of orientation to saintly shrines, their founder-saints and spiritual power. In this *taʿifa* phase of Sufism (Trimingham 1971), the devotional veneration of saints as spiritual intermediaries and mediators of divine benefice (*barkat*) becomes an integral and central part of Sufi practice, in addition to personal discipleship and lineage links.

The core of Sufi is, however, experiential, for, in the words of the great Sufi teacher al Ghazali, 'what is most essential to Sufism cannot be learned, but can only be reached by immediate experience and ecstasy and inward transformation' (quoted in Nicholson 1962: 29). Mystical love, to become the dynamic force of both *maqām* and *hāl*, must be cultivated

spiritually and aroused emotionally. This is achieved through ritual or devotional practice, in particular the reciting or 'recollection' of God's name (*zikr*), and the listening to spiritual music (*sama'*). *Zikr*, 'the constant recollection of God' (Schimmel 1975: 84), consists of the repetition – silent or voiced – of divine names or religious formulae. Its particular form and emphasis are part of the teaching tradition of the various Sufi orders, and it is often practised collectively in special gatherings led by a spiritual leader. Thus at shrines like Nizamuddin Auliya, leading Sheikhs may hold a weekly *halqā-e-zikr* (see also Haas 1917).

While *zikr* is sanctioned by the Koran (Sura 33:40 and 13:28), *sama'* has always remained a theologically controversial practice, because the mainstream of Islamic theological opinion has prohibited music as dangerous and unlawful, although no direct prohibition of music is contained in the Koran (Roychaudhry 1957; see also Nadvi 1959 and Phulvarvi 1968 on this issue). On the other hand, Islamic tradition recognizes and cultivates the chanting or cantillation of religious texts, principally the Koran itself. In spite of its musical features, particularly its pitch organization, such chanting is conceived of as non-music and termed 'recitation' or 'reading' in Arabic as well as in other Muslim languages.

In religious cantillation – as in all recitation (including chanted poetry: see Qureshi 1969) – musical features are subordinated to the religious text and function and thereby legitimized. Singing, on the other hand, is characterized by the presence of independent musical features which exist for their own sake, most of all the sound of musical instruments. Indeed, musical instruments are considered the hallmark of secular music – in Urdu, as in Hindi, the English term 'music' is in fact often used to denote 'instrumental accompaniment'.

It is against this dual background conception of music and recitation that the practice of *sama'* – listening to mystical music – takes on a controversial character, for the traditional music for *sama'* has normally included the use of instruments, particularly of percussion, to reinforce the element of *zikr* repetition which is considered to be inherent in it. Within the Sufi conceptual framework *sama'* is therefore not universally accepted. Orders with a more orthodox orientation, like the Naqshbandiya or the Suhrawardiya prohibit its use altogether or compromise by permitting mystical songs unaccompanied by instruments. Indeed, the saint Nizamuddin Auliya himself, as well as his spiritual descendant Syed Muhammad Gesudaraz (see Table 18), is known to have vacillated on the question of instrumental accompaniment for *sama'*. Accordingly, at both shrines a special *sama'* assembly called *band sama'* ('closed' *sama'*) continues to be held, where the usual instruments are silent (Hussaini 1970). However, the mainstream of Sufi tradition in India and Pakistan accords importance to *sama'* as the context for a Sufi's attaining *wajd*, the ecstasy of what means literally 'finding' God. *Sama'*, in fact, is 'no doubt the most widely known expression of mystical life in Islam' (Schimmel 1975: 179).

The concept of *sama'* in Sufism comprises first and foremost that which is heard, the 'divine message which stirs the heart to seek God' (Hujwiri 1970: 404). That message is normally assumed to consist of a poetic text which is set to music, that is, a mystical song. Indeed, Sufism considers poetry to be the principal vehicle for the expression of mystical thought and feeling; thus its musical rendering becomes the means for turning this expression into a spiritual and emotional experience for the Sufi listener. Ultimately, then, the *sama'* concept is focussed on the listener – in accord with its literal meaning ('listening' or 'audition') – and on his spiritual capacity for receiving what he hears, including all the implications of an ecstatic response. This means that, even where Sufism permits music for the purpose of

sama', it invariably places constraints on the listening process. Sufism achieves this primarily by placing the entire practice of *sama'* firmly within the hierarchical structure of spiritual authority (see, for example, Hujwiri 1970: Ch. 25). Accordingly, the prototype setting for *sama'* is an assembly of mystics under the guidance of a spiritual master.

Conspicuously absent from the *sama'* conception is the maker of that which is listened to – the performer. Yet it is implied that, starting from early Sufi treatises (for example, eleventh-century Ibn-e-Arabi and Al Hujwiri), singers with a special competence served mystical assemblies (Hujwiri 1970: 417). The main point is that a conceptual separation exists between the Sufi listener of the *sama'* message and the singer who is causing the message to be sounded. The one is termed Sufi or, collectively, *mashāikh* (pl. of *sheikh*), the other Qawwal, meaning literally 'the one who says', or 'the singer of a verbal message' – the message being Qawwali (derived from *qaul*, that is, 'saying' in Arabic). Qawwali is *sama'* realized in practice: mystical poetry is set to music and enhanced by a powerful rhythm as well as by repetition so as to suggest *zikr*. Instrumental accompaniment reinforcing both rhythm and melody are part of the conception, rendered acceptable by their context and function despite their proscription in orthodox Islam.

There is, in Indo-Pakistani Sufism, yet another contributing factor to the importance accorded to the *sama'* concept: the ubiquitous presence of religious music in Hinduism. Since music has been an integral element in the conception and practice of devotional Hinduism particularly, early Indian Sufis recognized that to spread Islamic mysticism in a Hindu environment justified giving special emphasis to *sama'* (Begg 1960). While there may be some element of apology in this justification, the general Sufi interpretation – of course excepting the orders that prohibit music – is to accord special significance to music as a means for giving a more universal reach to Islam.

B   The textual message of Qawwali

Sufi poetry, the source of Qawwali texts, constitutes a principal vehicle for expressing and communicating mystical thought and experience. Indeed, the music of *sama'* is not normally conceived of apart from this Sufi poetry that constitutes the song texts of Qawwali. Qawwali, then, is the musical performance of texts. These texts share a poetic idiom rich in image and metaphor, which generations of Sufi poets have invested with a wealth of highly elaborated symbolic content. As a result, much meaning can be conveyed in a few words drawn from this familiar and well-loved idiom of Sufi metaphor, with its great associational and connotational power. What is more, the impact of such a communication on a Sufi is both instant and universal. All facets of the poetry, including its language and structure, contribute to the articulation of Sufi meaning in the texts of Qawwali.

Historically, the vast range of this poetic expression derives primarily from the Persian mystical poetry of classical Sufism. Ever since its beginnings, and particularly since its expansion into the Persian culture area, Sufism generated poetic expression of both inspirational and didactic character. It became the vehicle for conveying mystical experience while at the same time representing the legacy of the great Sufi saints and teachers. Most of all, classical Persian poetry provided an unlimited range of aesthetic expression for mystical love through its idiom of stylized imagery centring on human love, thus giving a particularly metaphoric quality to the manifestation of spiritual passion (Schimmel 1975: 187 ff.).

This poetic idiom of classical Sufism has remained alive in the Indian subcontinent, long a principal region of Persian Sufi influence, through its use by Sufis in teaching and self-expression, but most of all through performance in the *sama* assembly. In addition, both India and Pakistan subsequently acquired repertoires of Sufi poetry composed in local languages. Reflecting these historical and regional roots, Qawwali assemblies have a multi-lingual poetic repertoire in three standard languages: Farsi, Hindi and Urdu, though Sufi poetry exists in other local languages as well (see Schimmel 1975: 383 ff.). While they are linguistically related, all three represent distinct socio-cultural contexts and styles; hence they serve both performers and Sufis as primary categories for the Qawwali repertoire of poetry.

Language

Farsi poetry represents Sufism *par excellence*, in its idiom of symbol and imagery as well as in its thought content. Because of this spiritual stature of Farsi – and because it was the court and élite language for centuries – Indian poets have composed in it expressly mystical as well as secular poetry until the late nineteenth century. Today little understood as a language, Farsi still enjoys a high spiritual and cultural prestige and is familiar to Sufis in the form of a standard repertoire by venerated poets, including Persian mystics like Rumi and above all the greatest Indo-Persian Sufi poet, Amir Khusrau.

EX. 18. Farsi poetic expression (*Chashm-e-maste*, Repertoire No. 2)

O wondrous amorous teasing (*turk*), o wondrous beguiling
O wondrous tilted cap (*kajkulāhe*), o wondrous tormentor
In the spasm of being killed (*bismil*) my eyes beheld your face:
O wondrous benevolence, o wondrous guidance (*banda nawāze*) and protection.

These lines by Amir Khusrau from *Chashm-e-maste* (Repertoire No. 2) afford but a glimpse into the world of meaning contained in the Farsi idiom of Qawwali and its subtle play on metaphor, 'as through a veil' (Schimmel 1982). Thus, *turk* is the perfect manifestation of the Beloved, fair, radiant and overpowering; *kajkulāhe*, his cap with a cocky tilt, becomes a beacon to the lover's eternal longing; and *bismil*, the lover being beheaded as in a sacrifice, invokes the moment of agony where the destruction of the self reveals the ecstasy of spiritual union. The recurring *ajabe* implies both strangeness and marvel, the 'otherness' of the mystical experience, from which flows *banda nawāze*, the divine benevolence inherent in powerful saints (one of whom, Khwaja Bandanawaz, is so entitled: see Table 18).

Hindi is the second 'classical' language of Indian Sufism. Representing early Indianized mysticism, Qawwali poetry in Hindi introduces symbols and imagery derived from Hindu devotional verse in the dialect particular to it, Braj Bhasha. This poetry is characterized by simple and direct expression in a folk-like idiom profound in its associational meaning, yet understood by the untutored devotee. Sufi poets have used Hindi since the thirteenth century, most famous among them once again Amir Khusrau; hence in this classical form it is close to Farsi in spiritual prestige. The Hindi repertoire of Qawwali texts is strongly localized, often being associated with specific shrines of saints. Furthermore, in India today some

ascendancy is given to Hindi by Sufis who wish to broaden the appeal of Sufism beyond the Muslim community.

EX. 19. Hindi poetic expression (*Torī sūrat*, Repertoire No. 3)

Beholding your countenance I offer myself in sacrifice (*balhārī*)
All the other girls saw my soiled *chundar*,
And together they laughed at me.
This springtime, dye my *chundar* for me (*rang do*)
O protect my honour (*lāj*)

These lines from *Torī sūrat*, also by Amir Khusrau (Repertoire No. 3), express mystical love through a young woman, longing to offer herself up (*balhārī*) in utter devotion, depending for her very existence, her honour (*lāj*), on the Beloved's protection. Her soiled garment, covering her head and chest (*chundar*), symbolizes the human soul yearning to be renewed and immersed in the Divine, through the central metaphor of dyeing the cloth (*rang do*) in the colour of the Beloved when spring comes.

Qawwali poetry in Urdu, finally, represents the idiom of contemporary Sufi experience, using the cultural lingua franca of Muslims all over the subcontinent. Based on Farsi models and using a heavily Persianized vocabulary, this poetry incorporates the time-honoured symbolic idiom of classical Sufism, but adds to it the appeal of familiar expression. Because Urdu Poetry is no more than two centuries old and has little direct association with Sufi saints, it has less spiritual prestige than either Farsi or Hindi. Qawwali poetry in Urdu is characterized on one hand by the works of serious contemporary Sufi poets, and on the other an extensive repertoire of popular poems composed especially for Qawwali singing. Because Urdu predominates in Pakistan as the national language, Qawwali there abounds in both types of Urdu poetry.

EX. 20. Urdu poetic expression

(a)   You are the wine of cognition (*mai-e-mārifat*), the object of love, oh to receive this goblet
        (*jām*)!

(b)   No-one gets anything without your benefaction.

These two lines, one from each type of poem (*Batufail*, Repertoire No. 6 and *Kisī ko kuchh*, Repertoire No. 7), juxtapose the flavour of Farsi metaphor through the well-loved image of goblet and wine, with the impact of plain speech.

In addition to these three language categories, Arabic is also represented in a set of three special Qawwali songs that contain sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, called *Qaul* 'saying': see *Man kunto*, Repertoire No. 1). They are thus set apart in both language and form and their content is mostly ritual. There is, furthermore, a recent trend in Pakistan toward incorporating more Arabic phraseology into Qawwali poetry.[19]

Content

The content of Qawwali poetry corresponds to the spiritual requirements of Sufism. Sufis and Qawwali performers identify specific content categories which run across all three

languages. They are distinguished according to their focus which in a general way corresponds to the dimensions of Sufism outlined above. This does not imply that content categories are mutually exclusive; rather they indicate the primary emphasis or impact of a poem's content and are used in this sense by both Sufis and Qawwals.

Poems with a focus on spiritual links address figures of the Sufi hierarchy in praise or devotion, including God in the *hamd*, the Prophet in the *na' t* (*Kisī ko kuchh*, Repertoire No. 7), and Hazrat Ali (*Batufail*, Repertoire No. 6), Sufi saints (*Torī sūrat*, *Muflisānem*, *Kachh jagmag*, Repertoire Nos. 3, 4, 5), even living sheikhs in the *manqabat*.

Poems with a focus on spiritual emotion express mystical love in all its states (*'ishq*: see *Kachh jagmag*, *Sansār*, *Man turā*, Repertoire Nos. 4, 9, 10), and also, specifically, separation (*firāq*), union (*wisāl*), and ecstatic experience (*rindānā*: see *Chashm-e-maste*, Repertoire No. 2). It is in this content category that a wide range of themes can serve to convey aspects of spiritual emotion by means of metaphoric association.

Poems with a focus on a local saint express a variety of associational links, most of all devotion to the particular saint and his shrine and reference to its ritual practice (*Kachh jagmag*, Repertoire No. 5). Such poems also include compositions by the saint himself (*Sansār*, Repertoire No. 9, by Nizamuddin Auliya), or by devotees (*Torī sūrat*, Repertoire No. 3, by Amir Khusrau). This is the most variable type of Qawwali text; its principal language is Hindi, the preferred idiom for addressing unlettered devotees. Altogether, the range and diversity of Qawwali poetry is so considerable that one can hardly consider it a poetic idiom collectively. Its origins range from great Sufi saints to folk anonymity, and available sources vary from published classics to the memory of old performers. But it is united by its content and by the basically metaphoric quality of all Sufi poetry. This means that even the simplest folk idiom is invested with profound spiritual meaning, and a single meaning can be carried across from one language to the other, while each language serves to enrich all types of content.

Poetic form

In its aspects of formal organization, Qawwali poetry, predictably, is dominated by the classical schemes of Persian poetry. Urdu poetry follows Persian models directly, and even Sufi poetry in Hindi shows its influence (for example *Kachh jagmag*, Repertoire No. 5). The prototype form in Sufi poetry is the *ghazal* which is found in the overwhelming majority of Qawwali songs.

The poetic form of all Qawwali poetry is strophic. Its structural units are verses organized on the basis of the contrast between rhyming and non-rhyming verse lines. Most rhyme schemes in Qawwali poetry are based on a consistent rhyme syllable (*qāfia*), which occurs throughout the poem and is often extended by a repeated monorhyme (*radīf*). This arrangement underlies the *ghazal* form in which thematically self-contained couplets identical in form are linked by a common rhyme scheme: the first couplet (*matla'*) establishes the formal pattern with a rhyming opening line, while in the remaining couplets a non-rhyming first line is complemented by a rhyming concluding line identical in structure throughout the poem (*aa, ba, xa*). The *ghazal* form has been considered an ideal vehicle for mystical experience (Schimmel 1975: 162): the repetitive monorhyme or *radīf* can serve to reiterate a central word phrase or concept, in the manner of the *zikr* principle (see above, pp. 81–2). At the same time

this built-in refrain principle so strongly links the verse units together by form, that it allows for free associational play on the central theme in each couplet, without requiring the structure of a thematic sequence. The only couplets with a distinct structural identity are the first one, the *matlaʿ*, which establishes the theme of the poem and its rhyme scheme, and, in a majority of poems, the last one, the *maqtaʿ*, which often introduces the signature of the poet (*takhallus*).

EX. 21. *Ghazal* format: verse structure and rhyme scheme (*Chashm-e-maste*)

matlaʿ	Chashm-e-maste ʿajabe zulf tar*āze* ʿajabe	= *a* (rhyming line)
(first verse)	Maiparaste ʿajabe fitna tar*āze* ʿajabe	= *a* (rhyming line)
maqtaʿ	Haq mago kalma-e-kufr ast dar īṅ jā Khusrau	= *b* (non-rhyming line)
(last verse)	Rāzdāne ʿajabe sāhib-e-*rāz-e-ʿajabe*	= *a* (rhyming line)

radīf (monorhyme):   -e ʿajabe
qāfia (rhyme syllable): -āz

This *ghazal* by Amir Khusrau (Repertoire No. 2) illustrates the opening verse or *matlaʿ* with two rhyming lines, the continuous rhyme scheme (of *radīf* and *qāfia*) between verses, and a closing verse or *maqtaʿ* with the poet's *takhallus*. The refrain *ʿajabe* (wondrous, strange) suffuses the entire poem with its mystical flavour.

Various other strophic arrangements may be found, mainly in Hindi poetry where refrain lines are a more prevalent feature. In the most common form a refrain line or *mukhṛā* alternates with strophes of two or four lines in which a non-rhyming line is followed by one that rhymes with the refrain. Less common in Qawwali are the extended strophic forms of Farsi and Urdu where each verse of four to six lines contains a different rhyme internally but is concluded by a continuing rhyme throughout the poem.

In addition to strophic poems, Qawwali poetry also includes short poetic forms of a single strophe, for these are used in performance as Introductory Verses and Inserts into the principal poem. The classical short form of Sufi poetry is the Persian *rubaʿi* or *qatā* of four lines, in which the rhyme scheme (*aaba*) highlights the dramatic structure of an epigram-like poetic statement (*Shud dilam*, Repertoire No. 8). This format is considered so standard that it has lent its name to all Introductory Verses in Qawwali; they are called *rubaʿi*, even when the actual verse has a different form or metre. Thus a single couplet or strophe from a longer poem may also serve as an independent verse unit for introduction or insertion (*Man turā*, Repertoire No. 10). The Hindi equivalent of the introductory couplet is the *dohā*, a two-line verse with a common rhyme containing a complete poetic statement. For the purposes of either introduction or insertion, it is also possible to join verses of different poems, even of different languages provided they constitute an appropriate unit of content.

EX. 22. *Girah* verse combination in two languages (*Sansār*, Repertoire No. 9)

Hindi:

Sansār har ko pūje kul ko jagat sarāhe	Let all the world worship God, let humanity praise the Divine.
Makke meṅ koī ḍhūṇḍhe Kāshī ko koī chāhe	One may seek Him in Mekka, one may search Him in Kashi (Benares).
Duniyā meṅ apne pī ke payyāṅ parūṅ nā kāhe	I have found my Beloved, should I not prostrate before Him?

Farsi:

Har qaum rāst rāhe dīne wa qiblagāhe   Every people has its right path, its faith and its focus of worship;

Man qibla rāst kardam bar simt-e-kajkulāhe   I, however, focus my worship on the tilted cap of my Beloved:

This most famous example of such a combination was composed in Hindi by none less than the saint Nizamuddin Auliya and amplified in Farsi by his disciple Amir Khusrau – remarkably to the same rhyme. Khusrau's climactic use of the colourful metaphor *kajkulāhe*, here meaning Khusrau's own Beloved, Nizamuddin Auliya, has made these verses a natural Insert wherever the term *kajkulāhe* occurs in a song, as for instance in verse two of *Chashm-e-maste*, also by Khusrau.

Poetic metre

Qawwali poetry is rich in diverse metric schemes derived mostly from Persian prosody (*'aruz*) which in turn originates in Arabic models. This prosodic system is based on the principle of syllabic quantity, hence its basic units are the short and long syllable which are grouped into a number of prosodical 'feet' from two to five syllables long. The system recognizes eight primary feet and numerous derivatives represented not by short–long symbols, but by different mnemonic words in Arabic which express their individual composition (for background see Weil 1960, Blochmann 1872, Rückert 1874). Table 19 lists the metres most used in Qawwali poetry, along with their mnemonic structure. As this table shows, all metres derived from this system are composed of a definite sequence, either of several different feet, or of the same foot repeated (compare *Batufail* and *Kisī ko*, Repertoire Nos. 6 and 7), and a metre normally remains the same throughout one poem. In length a metre can range from three to eight feet, hence between poems verse lines vary greatly in length (compare *Muflisānem* and *Batufail*, Repertoire Nos. 4 and 6).

Hindi poetic metres are based on a prosody derived from Sanskrit. Very much simpler in structure, they use two basic combinations – dactylic or anapaestic – of a metric grouping that consists of one long and two short syllables (*Torī Sūrat* and *Kachh jagmag*, Repertoire Nos. 3 and 5). Within the wide variety of metric patterns occurring in Qawwali poetry there is a general preference for metres organized symmetrically into two or four parts (in Table 19 see for example Nos. 5, 10 and 1, 7, 8 respectively).

Qawwali performers do not identify poetic metres in a formal way, and among Sufis only those with literary training are aware of their mnemonic base. Yet all those who use this poetry are conversant with its scansion; indeed for Qawwals that is a prerequisite for composing and performing correctly.

C   Sufi shrines and Qawwali

This section complements the discussion of the Sufi belief system and its poetic articulation; it also encompasses it, in the sense of providing a socio-economic frame of reference in terms of which that ideology becomes operational. By identifying the institutions and processes which characterize the Indo-Muslim polity it becomes possible to show the dynamic by which

Table 19 *Qawwali Poetic Metre*

a) *Farsi-Urdu metres most common in Qawwali poetry*
   (in order of decreasing frequency)

   1. *Hazaj 2*
      u – – – / u – – – / u – – – / u – – – / (long–short pattern)
      mafāʿīlun mafāʿīlun mafāʿīlun mafāʿīlun (mnemonic identification)

   2. *Raml 3* (*Chashm-e-maste*, *Shud dilam*, Repertoire No. 2, No. 8)
      – u – – / u u – – / u u – – / u u – /
      fāʿilātun fāʿilātun fāʿilātun fāʿilun

   3. *Muzārī*
      – – u / – u – u/ u – – u / – u – /
      mafʿūlu fāʿilātu mafāʿilu fāʿilun

   4. *Mutadārik 2*
      – u – / – u – / – u – / – u – /(2x)
      fāʿilun fāʿilun fāʿilun fāʿilun

   5. *Mutadārik 3*
      – u – / – u – / – u – / – / (2x)
      fāʿilun fāʿilun fāʿilun fā

   6. *Raml 1*
      – u – – / – u – – / – u – – / – u – /
      fāʿilātun fāʿilātun fāʿilātun fāʿilun

   7. *Kāmil 4* (*Batufail*, Repertoire No. 6)
      u u – u – / u u – u – / (2x)
      mutafāʿilun mutafāʿilun

   8. *Mutaqārib 1*
      u – – / u – – / u – – / u – – /
      fāʿūlun faʿūlun faʿūlun faʿūlun

   9. *Raml 2* (*Muflisānem*, *Man turā*, Repertoire No. 4, No. 11)
      – u – – / – u – – / – u – /
      fāʿilātun fāʿilātun fāʿilun

   10. *Mujtass* (*Kisī ko kuchh*, Repertoire No. 7)
       u – u – / u u – – / u – u – / u u – /
       mafāʿilun fāʿilātun mafāʿilun faʿilun

b) *Hindi metres most common in Qawwali poetry*

   1. (*Torī sūrat*, Repertoire No. 3)
      – u u / – u – u / (multiples, usually 4)

   2. (*Kachh jagmag*, Repertoire No. 5)
      u u – / u u – / (multiples, usually 4)

they are related to Sufi institutions and practice. Because of the historical roots of this relationship, it is necessary to introduce a historical perspective into this account, especially since the somewhat marginal place which Sufism and Qawwali occupy in today's Muslim

society – both in India and Pakistan – can in no way account for the power the Qawwali assembly still has as a socio-religious metaphor. The historical development of Sufism within Indo-Muslim society accounts for the social and economic base of all Sufi institutions, including that of Qawwali. While knowledge of the realities of this framework is essential for participants, especially performers, to operate within the Qawwali assembly, their awareness of the purely socio-economic and political implications rarely becomes manifest.

In the Indian subcontinent Sufism, and with it Qawwali, took root during the thirteenth century, within the socio-cultural framework instituted by Muslim rule, and under its patronage and protection (see Ahmed 1963, K. A. Nizami 1957, 1974, Rizvi 1978). Through a series of dynasties ruling from the eleventh to the eighteenth century Muslim rule imposed a centralized agrarian bureaucracy over an existing feudal economy, in which a rigid caste system had been operating to enforce both authority structure and the local division of labour. This resulted in a social organization dominated by a ruling hierarchy of Muslim nobles and functionaries who derived their power and status in relation to their proximity to the central ruler. Local rulers enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy – especially on the decline of Mughal power (seventeenth to eighteenth century) – and to a degree replicated the centralized élite structure (for background see Athar Ali 1966, Habib 1963, Spear 1970).

Within this élite, hierarchical relationships traditionally followed a courtier pattern of submission in return for benefice. These relationships were governed by formalized codes of behaviour (*adab*), and elaborate court ritual. At the core of both lay the articulation of submission and allegiance to a superior by means of a gift or offering (*nazr*), which, once accepted, entailed an obligation to confer benefice on the donor, thus reaffirming the link between inferior and superior members of the élite hierarchy (Ashraf 1970: 72 ff.). Members of the Muslim élite also validated their status and engaged in competition with one another by practising conspicuous consumption and by patronizing retainers (for background see K. A. Nizami 1974, Athar 1966, Ashraf 1970).

Essentially, two types of service were patronized by this élite, belonging to two distinctly different social strata. The 'lower' services, or *shāgīrd peshā* ('serving professions', menials), comprising specialized crafts, artisan skills and personal services, were provided by hereditary professional specialists belonging to Hindu occupational castes or, more often, to their equivalent Muslim convert groups. Characterized by an ascribed status and a position of economic dependence, these groups related to the élite as in the traditional patron–client or *jajmānī* system prevalent throughout traditional India (for background see Wiser 1936, Lewis 1956, Kolenda 1963). Though not strictly part of the caste system, Muslim occupational classes, too, were the hereditary clients serving feudal rural or urban patrons under fixed, inter-caste-like conventions of authority and submission (for sources dealing with Muslims see for example Eglar 1960, Madan 1976, Ahmad 1978).

The 'higher' services of administration, culture, religion and personal retainership were provided by groups drawn mainly from Muslims of foreign descent, who generally belonged to the élite category within the social structure. Their relationship with patrons followed courtly conventions, but contained a strongly personal and arbitrary element which accounts for the dimension of social mobility in Muslim society achieved by means of personal allegiance. What seems significant here is that access to the centre of power and resource, personified in the ruling élite, was related to the acceptance of personal allegiance, an arbitrary criterion, not just to the heredity of occupational class. During the height of Muslim

rule in the Mughal period (sixteenth to eighteenth century) this 'courtier' pattern came to dominate social relations among the élites and to a degree it persists to the present. Bribery, though universally condemned in recent times, can be seen as a natural concomitant of this pattern: it represents the material link of an offering between client and patron.

As a whole, traditional Muslim society in India is characterized by a basic division into two comprehensive social strata. One comprises the *ashrāf* (sing. *sharīf*), 'noble' or 'well-born' Muslims claiming foreign descent and holding political or economic power, especially land; it also includes those with some access to either. The other comprises the 'low-born' Muslims, considered to be of indigenous origin and grouped into occupational classes or 'castes' (*zāt*, a term roughly equivalent to the Hindi term for subcaste, *jātī*, but also denoting 'social class' generally). These are occupational groups hierarchically differentiated and separated by endogamy, much like their Hindu counterparts. Whereas among the 'well-born' there are four categories based on genealogical or geographic origin, these are but loosely ranked, nor are they separated by strict internal endogamy. What links the entire Muslim social structure together and distinguishes it from Hindu caste society is that power, both political and economic, constitutes the primary criterion of status differentiation. Religion can at most play a legitimizing rôle; in addition, religious stature can serve to enhance social status (for perspectives on Indo-Muslim social structure see Ansari 1960, Barth 1960, Dumont 1970, Ahmed 1963, Madan 1976).

Culturally, Muslim rule was oriented initially to the Persian and Central Asian realm of its origin, but gradually a blend of foreign, Islamic and indigenous Indian elements came about, with, however, clear superiority assigned to the former (for background see Ahmed 1964, 1969). Thus the court language and idiom of high culture was Farsi, with Hindi being used only as a *lingua franca* to address the unlettered. From this, Urdu developed as a synthesis of both languages, based on Hindi grammatical structure with a heavily Persianized vocabulary. By the eighteenth century Urdu became the Indo-Muslim élite language and *lingua franca*, and indigenous Indo-Muslim cultural traditions were well established in the arts, including music (for background see Bailey 1932, Saksena 1940, Ahmed 1964, Chs. 10, 11, and 1969 Chs. 8, 9).

Within this socio-cultural framework Sufism established itself in the Indian subcontinent along with Muslim political rule. Indeed, it came to represent and legitimize that rule, and in time Sufi practices and institutions came close to mirroring the social structural pattern of that rule.

From the beginning, Sufi leaders and their spiritual descendants played an important rôle in establishing centres of mystical life for Sufi adepts, which also served the teaching of Islam among the non-Muslim population (K. A. Nizami 1955, Eaton 1978). In turn, the imperial rulers were generous in granting property endowments to such Sufi establishments, particularly the shrines built around the graves of their founders. Four important Sufi orders were introduced into India during the thirteenth and up to the sixteenth century, along with other minor ones. The four are the Chishtiya and the Suhrawardiya, followed by the Naqshbandiya and the Qadriya (see Trimingham 1971 and Subhan 1960, also Rizvi 1978, for their origin and background).

The Chishtiya order is the earliest and the one spread most widely throughout India; in fact, it has in the main remained an Indian and Pakistani order with little presence outside the subcontinent. Established initially by Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer, and his immediate

spiritual successors (see Table 18), the Chishti order was initially in close contact with the imperial Muslim court, though some early Chishti saints, notably Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi, refused to accept land grants as rewards. But the general pattern of development was that the state supported shrine establishments both by landed endowments and by direct patronage through members of the élite. Hand in hand went the increasing popularity of such shrines as centres of saint veneration, attracting vast numbers of uninitiated devotees in addition to the Sufis attached to the saintly lineage.

Along with this localization of Sufi practice, and the concomitant need for the management of shrines and rituals, came an expansion in the reckoning of Sufi lineages from the principle of purely *spiritual* descent to the inclusion of *familial* descent from a founder saint. Sufism simply adopted the socio-structural principle of heredity by patrilineal descent prevalent throughout Indian Muslim society, thereby according to the physical descendants of saints the hereditary right to control and manage the endowments, both spiritual and material, of their ancestor (documented in Eaton 1974 for South Indian shrines). Thus a *dargah*, or Sufi shrine, whether endowed with property or not, came to be controlled by a legitimate representative of the saint buried there, whose right is based on familial rather than spiritual descent (documented for Nizamuddin Auliya in Dehlavi 1964).

Theoretically, there is one single successor to the leadership of the saint and his tomb, the *sajjādanashīn* or *gaḍḍīnashīn* ('the one sitting on the [saint's]' prayer mat or throne), but at most large shrines at least two if not more descendants often claim this right. At the major shrines of the Chishti *silsilā*, such as Ajmer or Nizamuddin Auliya, entire communities of such representatives have a hereditary share in managing the shrine's spiritual and material benefits. Here too, however, one or several individual leaders stand out as the equivalent of an official representative or *sajjādanashīn*, though often under different titles (for example the *dīwān* of Ajmer; see Performance No. 1, p. 144).

As a class, these 'descendants' constitute the nobility of the Sufi shrines. Individually or collectively, they receive the income or revenue from shrine endowments. Most of all, their familial and spiritual inheritance from the saint authorizes them to mediate between any non-related Sufi and the saint. On one hand the descendant represents the saint to his followers by means of traditional Sufi teaching, as well as by distributing its material tokens, especially in the form of amulets (*tāwīz*). On the other hand he acts as the agent (*wakīl*) of the Sufi devotees, especially referring their concerns to the saint in their absence. Most important of all, he is entitled to accept on behalf of the saint the propitiatory offerings of the devotees. The devotees, in turn, depend on the saint's representative to cater to their spiritual and ritual needs. This includes the opportunity to participate in all Sufi ritual practices.

To provide these opportunities and generally maintain the shrine, the saintly representatives rely on service professionals who are attached to their shrine by hereditary right but are also subject to the control of the shrine descendants. These normally include professionals providing menial services such as sweeping the shrine or cooking food which devotees wish to give away to the needy in the name of the saint. Most prominently, they also include the Qawwali performers who are indispensable to the performance of *samaʿ* assemblies as well as shrine rituals. Notwithstanding their superior professional skill and service, the Qawwals, along with all other service professionals, belong to the servants of the *dargah* and stand in a servile or 'client' relationship of dependence to the shrine descendants.

In sum, the central institution of Sufism in India, the *dargah*, clearly reflects the larger

socio-economic structure of traditional Indo-Muslim society. This can be seen at two levels. At the level of a self-contained institution the Sufi *dargah* is a quasi-feudal establishment in which a hereditary appropriating class of saintly representatives controls the resources, whether they be property revenue or offerings received from devotees. Service professionals, including Qawwali performers, are attached as clients to this controlling class in a traditional patron–client arrangement, by which the client has a hereditary right to perform the service, but under conditions controlled by the patron.

Viewed in relation to its larger socio-economic base, however, the *dargah* is ultimately an institution of patronage, which is received either directly or indirectly. Not only does the entire shrine establishment depend on worldly patronage economically; such patronage, especially from high representatives of the worldly hierarchy, also serves to reinforce its spiritual standing, validating the saint's spiritual power with tangible evidence. In return for this worldly support the Sufi *dargahs* have historically provided religious legitimization for the Muslim ruling élites, especially *vis à vis* the general subject population.

The institutional emphasis of Indian Sufism on the *dargah* does not, of course, mean that Sufism is confined to shrines; Sufis both teach and practise in all Muslim centres of India, and all over Pakistan. But since the spiritual orientation of Indic Sufism is directed to the Sufi hierarchy and its saintly leaders, Sufis everywhere practise Sufism with reference to the saints of at least their own order. And they recognize the manifestation of saintly power in shrine establishments, just as they recognize worldly power in the seat of government. Devotees and pilgrims are therefore the prime supporters of both the spiritual framework and the social sphere of saintly representation centred in the *dargah*.

The practice of Sufism, particularly in its ritual aspects, reflects both the Sufi ideology and its socio-economic realization in the shrine hierarchy. A highly formalized code of behaviour which is derived from early Muslim court traditions governs all formal interaction between members of the Sufi community and their servants, especially as it occurs in the *sama*ʿ assembly. Indeed, seen in the larger perspective of Sufi practice, the Qawwali assembly provides a prototype context for a formal 'acting out' of the structural and process-related features of Indian Sufism, since it is the one formal setting in which the entire Sufi community is represented. An analysis of the Qawwali assembly needs to take into account this background dimension; at the same time it will also serve to illustrate that dimension in concrete terms.

Lest this account give the impression that Sufism operates in a static social context, the impact of recent political and economic changes should be considered here. During British rule Sufi establishments continued to operate with relative stability (apart from some interruptions such as the 1856 Mutiny). In independent India, too, shrine establishments continue to exist and operate as before, including the practice of *sama*ʿ. But their traditional socio-economic support base has weakened considerably, due to the lack of Muslim political dominance, and, more generally, the recent decimation of the feudal-based Muslim establishment which was caused by land reforms on one side and migration to Pakistan on the other. This in turn has reduced the Sufi élite's own economic power. As a concomitant, individual patronage from among the larger public has assumed more importance for Sufi institutions, including patronage from the non-Muslim élite.

In Pakistan, on the other hand, a newly evolving élite structure with a strong immigrant component (including sheikhs and Qawwals who had themselves migrated from Sufi centres
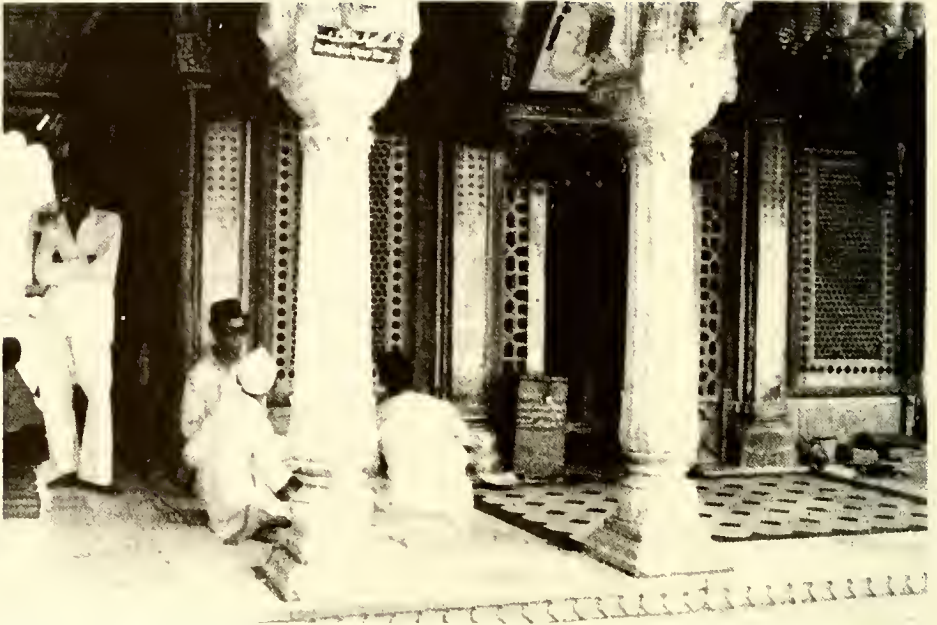
Plate 4   *Pīrzāde*, descendants of the saint Nizamuddin Auliya, take their turn (*bārī*) watching the tomb and accepting offerings from devotees

in India), has provided support for Sufism and its practice in the major cities. In addition, Pakistan's linguistic regions have their own traditions of Sufism and *sama*ʿ; these are rooted in local shrines and often linked to the local feudal establishment. Pakistan's search for an Islamic cultural identity has provided all kinds of *sama*ʿ music, but particularly Qawwali, with new opportunities for institutional patronage of a secular nature. At the same time, the generational and economic ties that united Sufis, Qawwals and devotees around a major shrine are weakening. The result is a potential transformation, both of Sufi practice and of Qawwali music.

The Nizamuddin Auliya shrine

The shrine (*dargah*) of Nizamuddin Auliya has been a major centre of Sufi tradition since the thirteenth century. It holds the tomb of one of the seven great Chishti founders of Sufism in the subcontinent (see Table 18) and its importance is further enhanced by a close proximity to the capital city of past empires. Also within the compound is the smaller tomb of his most famous disciple, Amir Khusrau, and numerous other tombs surround the shrine and the entire area. A large mosque and a bathing tank, and buildings or 'cells' (*hujrā*) of various sizes, date back to the time when the saint was himself living and teaching there. Situated in what was once the walled village (*bastī*) of Nizamuddin, the shrine is today surrounded by the suburbs of New Delhi and within easy access from the old city.

   The Nizamuddin Auliya shrine is managed and controlled collectively by a group of descendants or *pīrzāde* (sing. *pīrzādā*, offspring of a *pīr*); they live in the walled 'village' (*bastī*) outside the shrine. Tracing their descent from the saint's nephew or sister (he himself never

Plate 5   Qazi Safdar Ali, leading *pīrzādā* and *pīr*, receiving and ministering to disciples and devotees in his *hujrā* located within the Nizamuddin Auliya shrine

married), the *pīrzāde* are organized into three operative family groups which share the income of shrine offerings (see Plate 4) according to a complicated system of week-long 'turns' (*bārī*; the holder of a turn is called *bārīdār*; see Dehlavī 1964 for details, also Jeffries 1979). Individually, they act as agents or advocates (*wakīl*) to families of devotees on the basis of their regional affiliation, and receive their personal offerings at the shrine. In addition, a number of *pīrzāde* are themselves spiritual guides or *pīrs*, catering to seekers and Sufi devotees of various socio-economic levels. Most prominent among these are three leading figures, one of each family group, each of whom claims to be the sole legitimate successor of the saint (*sajjādānashīn*). Each has a personal following of disciples or devotees and uses one or more shrine cells to minister to them (see Plate 5). The leaders of two families have been the principal patrons of Qawwali occasions; they each own a hall situated just outside the shrine and built expressly for large public Qawwali performances during *'urs* celebrations. At the time of writing it was the well-known Pīr Zamin Nizami who controlled the Urs Mahal (*'urs* palace), while Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami was managing Qawwali Hall alongside the tomb of his own father, Khwaja Hasan Nizami, who was a famous Sufi sheikh.

Also attached to the shrine are a number of service professionals – sweepers, water carriers, and, of course, Qawwals. While they have a hereditary right to their work and its rewards, they also stand in a dependent client relationship to the *pīrzāde*, insofar as the *pīrzāde* control the shrine and all its activities and manage the devotees, who are the only source of income for all.

The primary formal activities of the shrine are the two anniversaries of Nizamuddin Auliya and Amir Khusrau which fall exactly six Islamic months apart on the seventeenth of the Islamic months of Rabi-us-Sani and Rajab respectively. Each is celebrated for over five days

with numerous Qawwali events, together with ritual offerings to the saint in the form of special food blessed and dedicated and distributed publicly (*tabarruk*). The 'urs celebrations, along with the adjacent fair (*melā*), attract hundreds from Delhi and outside, in addition to the steady number of poor people who live in and around the shrine, benefiting from food, offerings and charity. At that time, Sufis and devotees assemble from all over the region, including representatives from other important shrines or from smaller local tombs, and spiritual guides who will in turn be sought by their disciples. Disciples and devotees of high social standing, some visiting from distant centres, others representing local worldly author-ity, also come to the shrine and attend Qawwali assemblies. These, as well as the many ordinary devotees from the local town or nearby villages, are drawn here to link them-selves with the saint or with a spiritual guide. Finally, large numbers of local visitors attend a major 'urs much like a fair and take in Qawwali as well (see Census of India [1961], 1966).

Other annual events of local importance include *Basant*, actually the Hindu spring festival, when an event from the saint's life is celebrated with special songs by Khusrau (see p. 52 above). Then there are the anniversaries of Hazrat Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet and preceptor of Sufism, and of the Saint's own spiritual guide, Baba Farid, as well as the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husain, son of Hazrat Ali.

A special aspect of the Nizamuddin shrine is its total lack of any property endowments. The only income, therefore, even for the *pīrzāde*, comes from offerings and gifts. On the other hand, there is a great political potential to be utilized in this capital city of a nation state, professing a secularism which is, in part, expressed through the official patronage of minority religions. Officials and functionaries therefore constitute important sources of direct and indirect support, as do foreign Muslim visitors. In general, visiting devotees can also benefit Qawwali performers who may be singing in front of the tomb at the right time to receive their offerings, but it is the *pīrzāde* who have direct access to their donations.

D   The hereditary performers of Qawwali

Within the ideological and socio-economic setting of Sufism the performer of Sufi music occupies a totally insignificant position; this is so despite the obvious fact that he has a key function in the central ritual of Sufism. The ideological explanation of this apparent incon-gruity is that Sufism admits music into the *samā'* assembly only as a medium for spiritual advancement, to be achieved strictly through listening, while making music *per se* is con-sidered against Islamic tenets. But this ideological distinction between listening to music and performing it needs also to be seen in its socio-economic manifestation within Indic Sufism, so as to make the peculiar position of the Qawwali performer understandable.

As mentioned above, Indian Muslim society took over from Hindu caste society a hier-archical social structure in which highly developed professional skills are the preserve of endogamous groups of hereditary specialists of low caste standing (Ansari 1960). Underlying this structure is the more fundamental opposition between two general classes of society: those who control resources and those who produce either resources or services. The dependence relationship between these two classes is regulated in various highly structured arrangements which secure appropriation to the controller or patron while granting the producer a livelihood under conditions appropriate for his personal survival.

Plate 6   Meraj Ahmad offers a traditionally deferential greeting to his patron, leading *pīrzādā*
and Sheikh Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami, on his arrival at the Chilla (see Chapter 6)

Qawwals, like all musicians, fall into the category of producers in the wider sense of
producing a service. At the shrine of their affiliation they have a hereditary right to the
performance opportunities for Qawwali generated and controlled by their patron, but they
are in turn obligated to provide their performing services whenever needed, otherwise their
patrons can admit outside performers into the hereditary performer group (as may happen if
the group cannot fulfil its ritual singing obligations).

Qawwals are organized into *brādrīs* (literally, *brādrī* is a community of brothers), endoga-
mous patrilineal communities defined in accordance with a common local origin and subject
to a governing body of elders (*panch*). All male members call each other *bhāyī* (brother) and
women normally do not seclude themselves from male *brādrī* members, though otherwise
female seclusion is standard practice among Qawwals, in accordance with Islamic tradition.
Also linked with Islamic practice is a preference for marriage within the kin group, including
cross and parallel cousin marriage. Kinship ties are thus continually reinforced and extended
bilaterally, in the manner of a kindred (*cf.* Neuman 1979:98, for Muslim musicians in India;
and Murphy and Kasdan 1959, for Muslim practice generally).

Socially, Qawwali performers, like other service professionals, are deemed unworthy of
social interaction by the Sufis who are their patrons. On the other hand, like all performers,
they also stand out as providing a service of a public nature – namely to articulate a valued
cultural tradition. This service is identified with religious and cultural values and thus
associated directly with the enhancement or validation of a Sufi patron's position. For the
performer to play successfully such a rôle as a cultural 'mouthpiece' requires a relatively close
but deferential contact with the socio-cultural élite or 'culture bearers' who are his patrons
(see Plate 6; also, *cf.* Irvine 1973 for a fitting elucidation of this rôle in a feudal Muslim
society). Thus personal association or 'attendance' (*sohbat*) at the teaching circle of Sufi
patrons is indeed an essential means for a Qawwal to acquire a background knowledge of
Sufism and its cultural expression, especially the literary dimension of Sufi poetry, which
requires a literate tutor. More particularly, this association is the Qawwal's opportunity to
become a better exponent of the personal style and preference of the Sufis whom he serves in

performance. He may even cement the contact with a link of discipleship, but that is in no way a necessary concomitant of what both Qawwal and Sufi consider a professional rather than a personal or spiritual tie.

Qawwals, however, are also professional musicians and share with other musicians a professional identity based on the highly specialized skill of musical competence. Among the various kinds of hereditary performers Qawwals belong to the general category of musicians with a classical music background (see Neuman 1979 for an overview of this category) and they trace their musical identity through lineages parallel to, or even converging with, the *gharānā*s (artistic lineages) of classical music (*cf.* the following section below). Despite the fact that their professional specialization includes much non-musical knowledge, especially that of Sufi poetic texts, Qawwals concur with the professional evaluation generally accorded them on the basis of musical competence alone. Thus, in terms of the professional status hierarchy of musicians, Qawwals consider classical musicians superior and are always ready to validate their own musical knowledge in terms of classical music to anyone offering them the tools to do so. At the same time, they are aware of the special non-musical competence that sets them apart from other musicians, and indeed qualifies them as a sort of religious functionary, albeit one operating strictly within the socio-economic limitations of a service professional.

It is in this general setting that the Qawwal acquires his professional competence, which consists of two broad areas of knowledge: one comprises the performance idiom, including music and text repertoires; the other comprises the performance context in which this idiom is to be used.

The first of these, the performance idiom and repertoire, the Qawwal learns basically from his family. Boys are instructed by their male elders, for women have no part in Qawwali singing at any stage. They learn the fundamentals of music – tonal and rhythmic system, form, and rudimentary improvisation – and they must memorize text and tunes of a basic repertoire of Qawwali songs. Since Qawwali is a group song, the young performer has to be initiated into the process of group singing and assigned his place in the ensemble. Who becomes a lead singer, a group singer or an instrumental accompanist is determined by musical talent, memory and quick recall of texts, as well as that elusive quality, leadership. According to his skill each young performer learns to play his part in the ensemble. In particular, the future lead singer assimilates the method of performing through listening, observing, and through guided participation in the family's performing groups.

The second area of knowledge, the performance context, is given much importance by performers, for a Qawwal is not considered capable of performing on his own until he has gained an understanding of what he describes as 'the up and down of the gathering' (*mahfil ke nasheb-o-farāz*). To begin with, the Qawwal must know the purpose of his music. This requires some background knowledge of the Sufi ideology as well as an awareness of the social reality within which Sufism operates. More specifically, it requires experience of actual performing situations which every young Qawwal gains 'on the job' while supporting his elders' performing group. What this experience teaches in specific terms should become clear from the analysis that is to follow.
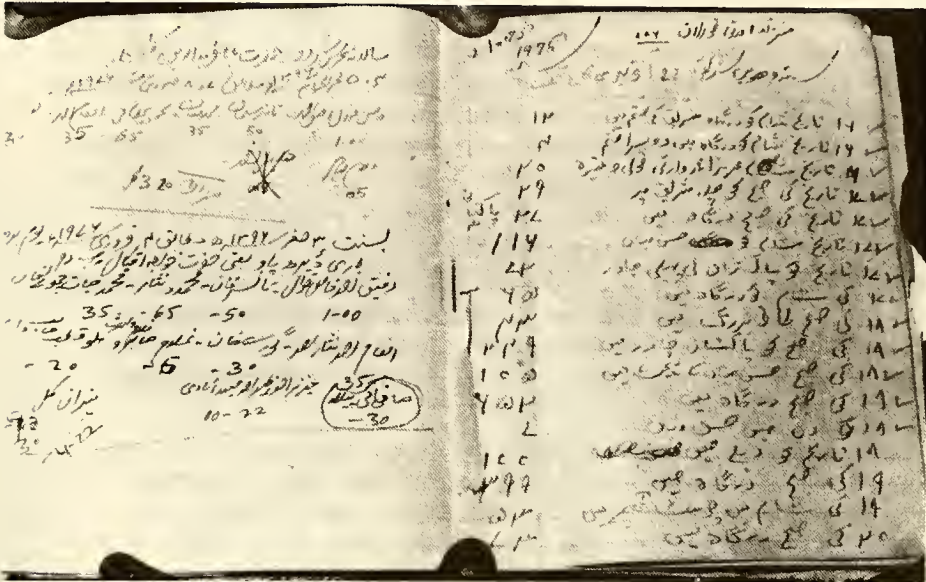
Plate 7   The Qawwal Bachche's record book of *mohtād*, token payments confirming their hereditary right to perform at the Nizamuddin Auliya shrine

The Qawwal Bachche performers

At Nizamuddin Auliya, the hereditary Qawwal community traces its descent to the original Qawwali singers who are said to have been trained by Amir Khusrau himself, and who are known as *Qawwal Bachche*, 'the (original) Qawwal Offspring'. Their affiliation with Nizamuddin Auliya is enshrined in an historical entitlement (*mohtād*) from the shrine's income, which they value most highly and record carefully, even though it amounts to no more than a few *paisa*s (see Plate 7). Numbering 23 adult male members at the time of writing, the Qawwal Bachche come from several family groups (*khāndān*), identified by their four towns of origin near Delhi (Ḍasna, Sikandarabad, Ḵẖurja, Hapuṛ), and collectively belong to the same *brādrī*. Professionally, their identity *vis à vis* the *dargah* is defined by a lead singer or a well-known forbear of their family performing groups. Most illustrious among these was the group led in the past by Tan Ras Khan, the famous nineteenth-century court singer, a *ḍāsnewālā* (from Dasna). He is head of the Delhi Gawayya lineage (Neuman 1979: 109), and his performing group has the traditional head position (*sar chaukī*) at performance events. Most senior among Tan Ras Khan's descendants is Meraj Ahmad Nizami, Bulbul-e-Chisht ('nightingale of Chisht', the town where the *Chishti silsilā* originated), normally known as Meraj. 'Nizami' indicates his attachment to the saint Nizamuddin Auliya, while Bulbul-e-Chisht is his honorific title conferred upon him by the late Khwaja Hasan Nizami (see p. 95 above).

While most Nizamuddin Qawwals live in Old Delhi, Meraj, along with a few of his close relatives, lives by the shrine where he and his wife and four young children share a small one-roomed house built on a plot owned by Khwaja Hasan Sani, his patron (see Plate 8). He is thus one of the few performers always present 'to offer his singing to the saint', to sing at

minor rituals, and also to benefit from a generous visiting devotee. Of the others, only those with no other engagements – mostly the old men – come to the shrine on ordinary days (*sādhe din*), but on days with scheduled performances the entire group attends, though in varying numbers, depending on earning prospects and personal need.

For Meraj, as for all *brādrīwāle* or members of the *brādrī*, as the Qawwal Bachche informally call themselves, there are two kinds of singing engagements, *mushtar̄ kā gānā* or *panchāyatī gānā* ('mixed' or 'communal' singing) and *bārī kā gānā* or *pārṭī kā gānā* ('singing by turn' or 'party singing'). The first covers all the singing which is done directly in front of the shrine sanctuary, that is, all ritual days, as well as Thursday and Friday singing (see Plate 9). In addition, there is ritual singing at the outset of all the Qawwali events held by individual saintly representatives at various other locations in and around the shrine. That ritual singing, too, is communal, but it is then followed by party singing for the bulk of the performance event.

The communal singing group is fluid; leading members, or a shrine representative present, assign on the spot who should be 'on the harmonium' (lead the performance), but there may be competition to 'push down' (*dabānā*) a colleague out of antagonism, or just for fun. The earnings from all communal singing are distributed equally, but strictly to those present at the time of receipt, so that Meraj becomes eligible for a share from the moment he sits down to sing, even if just before that a big offering has come in. Like all members of the group, he is sharp at instantly calculating the share for any number of claimants out of any amount of money. This is for self-protection, lest the money 'get lost in the pick-up man's fingers' (*ungliyoṅ ke bhūl bhulayye ban jāte haiṅ*, literally: his fingers turn into a maze).

A somewhat different sharing system governs the big anniversaries at the shrine: all those who are present on the first evening are entitled to a share, even though with the many and simultaneous Qawwali events everyone cannot, or need not, be present everywhere, as long as all ritual singing is carried out properly. The main point about *mushtar* singing is the equal right of each member to a share, as long as he contributes his part. Old men with failing voices are subject to this right too, and at the time of writing even the deaf-mute son of a senior performer! For Meraj, as a lead performer with his own party, community singing is obviously a secondary source of income, although it does have the advantage of providing a baseline of more or less assured earnings.

Party singing is what counts for Meraj, as it does for any established Qawwal. He, like the three other parties in the *brādrī*, has an assured 'turn' to perform in the various anniversary occasions led by the principal representatives at the shrine. Normally he is entitled to first place after the ritual singing, but that can be superseded on special occasions. Meraj also has a customary right to sing at various other annual assemblies or *mahfils* in and near Delhi, as well as in shrines around Hyderabad where his ancestor Tan Ras Khan had settled after the 1856 Mutiny. Such rights, however, are subject to validation by the assembly leader, which entitles, but also obligates, the performer to attend.

At the time of writing, Meraj's party always included his younger brother Iqbal Ahmad Nizami, who played the *ḍholak* and had a good voice, so that the two brothers could perform as a complete team. In addition, Meraj normally added a senior *brādrī* member, Nasiruddin Khan Gore, called Gore Khan, and one or two young relatives. Meraj controls his party and makes all performing decisions; he also takes a double share of the earnings, while giving equal shares to the others, in accordance with the *brādrī* rules.[20]

Plate 8   Qawwal's house (extreme left) near Nizamuddin's tomb, surrounded by graves and hutments

Plate 9   *Panchāyatī gānā* in front of the Nizamuddin Auliya tomb, commemorating the anniversary of the death of Hazrat Ali. Leading on the harmonium (l. to r.) are Qawwal Bachche Inam Ahmad Nizami and Hayat Ahmad Nizami
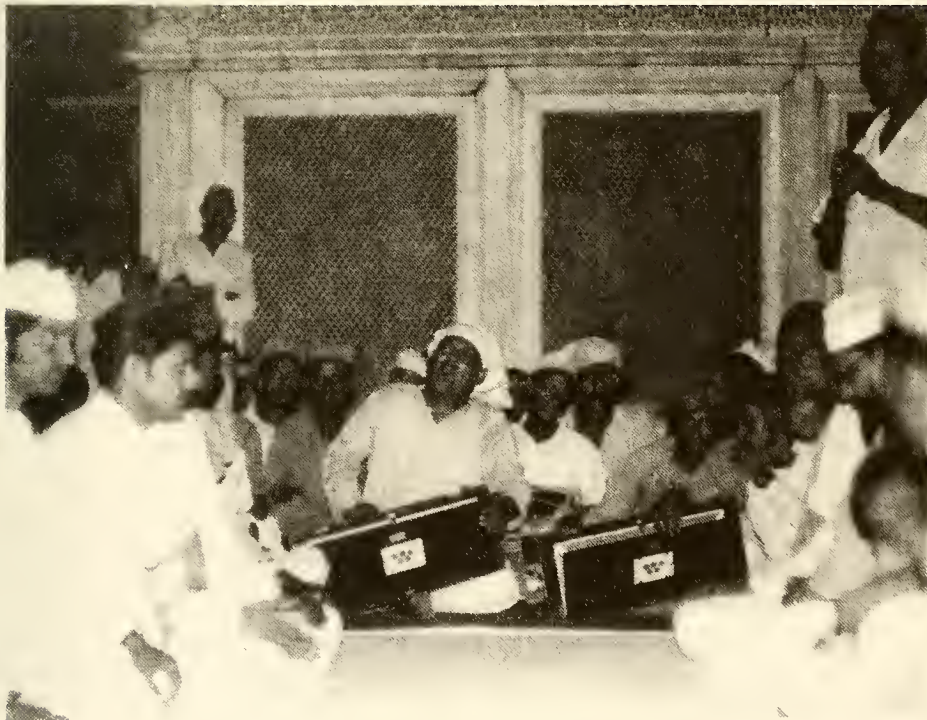
In general, for Meraj, as for other lead performers in the *brādrī*, his close personal associates and relatives are also his keenest competitors. To a degree, the hereditary allocation of rights regulates their professional interaction, but they all need more work, while performance opportunities are limited. Hence Meraj needs to cultivate his patron who will favour him over his colleagues and pass any private performing work to him (*kām dilānā*). As a special service, Meraj offers a weekly performance at the tomb of his patron's father.

Meraj is one of the few highly cultured Qawwali performers today who know and truly appreciate the repertoire of Sufi poetry along with their singing knowledge. Indeed, it is because of his intelligent understanding and remarkable memory for Sufi poetry that his father chose to train him as a lead singer and 'gave him the harmonium' (*bājā de dīā*, signifying musical leadership). His brother had a far superior singing voice but was made an accompanist, playing the drum, for he could never remember or understand verses well. Meraj's sophistication and his exclusively Sufi orientation has also made it difficult for him to adapt to the recent popularizing trends that inevitably followed the demise of the Muslim landed élite, the socio-economic backbone of Muslim cultural traditions. That trend is exemplified by the singing of other performers within and outside the *dargah*, many of them not hereditary professionals.

One of these new amateur Qawwals is Iftekhar Ahmad Amrohvi. Untutored but endowed with a musical inclination and a pleasant voice, he has acquired a limited repertoire of Qawwali songs by imitation, picking up tunes and verses as best he could, as illustrated in *Kisī ko kuchh* (Repertoire No. 7). A young man with a hereditary artisan background, he hails from the nearby town of Amroha (hence his chosen second name, Amrohvi, that is, 'of Amroha', in the absence of a saintly lineage affiliation), and he is a regular visitor to Nizamuddin Auliya.

On the other hand, some of Meraj's *brādrī* brothers in both India and Pakistan have managed to increase the immediate appeal of a sophisticated style of Qawwali singing by making it more attractive musically. One is Aziz Ahmad Khan Warsi of Hyderabad, the most famous serious Qawwal in India today, honoured by the government of India. A descendant of Tan Ras Khan's sister, he adds special musical and performance ability to a sound hereditary background. Even though today he commands high fees for his concert performances, Aziz Warsi still values his hereditary tie with the Nizamuddin shrine and 'offers' his performance to the saint whenever he visits Delhi (see *Chashm-e-maste*, Repertoire No. 2).

4 *The structure of the Qawwali occasion*

A An ethnographic overview

The Qawwali assembly reflects the life of the Sufi community all over the Indian subcontinent – wherever there are Sufis and Qawwals, there will be Qawwali. Thus it is the shrine, centre of Sufi tradition, that is also the centre of Qawwali. At these *loci* of spiritual authority, saintly descendants, representatives and spiritual guides hold Qawwali assemblies in which hereditary shrine Qawwals are the core performers, and both resident Sufis and devotees visiting the shrine – that is, anyone who believes in the saint's power – constitute the core audiences.

Qawwali assemblies everywhere, but particularly at shrines, are oriented to saints, since saints symbolize the nearness to God which the Sufi seeks to achieve in *sama'*. Thus the commemoration of a saint's final union (*wisāl*) with God on his death day (*'urs*) constitutes the prime *raison d'être* for holding Qawwali assemblies. Anniversary commemorations range from a single Qawwali occasion led by the representative of a small shrine, or by a sheikh with a group of disciples, to a week-long succession of many assemblies held by different spiritual personages for different audiences among large numbers of pilgrims at a major shrine. At such shrines, Qawwali occasions are also held on the saint's monthly or weekly death days; furthermore, Qawwali is performed weekly on Thursday, the day for the remembrance of the dead in Islam, or on Friday, the day of congregational prayer. In addition to those regularly scheduled events, spiritual leaders convene Qawwali events to serve their own needs or those of visiting devotees. Outside the shrines it is established Sufi sheikhs or saintly descendants who hold Qawwali assemblies for their followers, with varying regularity but guided by the same basic pattern of their saint's commemorative days. For this they normally rely on performers attached to nearby shrines.

Several types of assemblies have evolved in accordance with their specific purpose and occasion of occurrence. Most prominent among them are the major *'urs* assemblies, held to celebrate the saints' union with God with Qawwali, and also to commemorate his death by the appropriate ritual for the dead (*qul*, *khatam*). These assemblies are attended by the largest numbers of devotees and include the entire hierarchy of Sufis present at the *'urs*. Their time and place are fixed by tradition though they vary widely between shrines and assemblies. Located near the actual tomb or otherwise close to the saint, they are held during either day or night and can last from half an hour to all night long.

Complementing these major performance occasions for Qawwali are what Sufis consider the classical *sama'* of mystics: intimate gatherings convened by shrine notables or spiritual guides for their particular circle of Sufis, disciples or devotees. Such assemblies for the spiritually initiated are part of the regular sequence of events at every major *'urs* (cf. Performances Nos. 1 and 2), but they are often convened spontaneously as well. It is this

type of assembly which individual Sufis sponsor throughout the year, both in and out of shrines.

At shrines, Qawwali is performed at yet other kinds of occasion considered to be of less significance by Sufis; they include minor shrine rituals, as well as unscheduled Qawwali performances held in the shrine compound for visiting devotees. These occasions vary widely as to leadership and audience composition.

Musically, this wide array of Qawwali performance occasions is served, first and foremost, by the local shrine performers. As hereditary shrine servants they cover ritual singing and perform at all styles of assemblies as arranged by the particular patron who leads each gathering. An important shrine may require its performers to sing at about 50 assemblies in a year, around half of them major ones. At small assemblies one local group may be the only one to perform, but for major Qawwali assemblies, and during the ʿurs in particular, outside performers from nearby, and sometimes from far-off shrines, visit the shrine so that assembly leaders can draw from a pool of performers. Thus the performing sequence presented at any Qawwali assembly may range from a single local performing group to a variegated series of local and outside performers.

The performance occasions at Nizamuddin Auliya

The range of Qawwali assemblies is very well exemplified at the Nizamuddin Auliya shrine, where a wide and representative variety of Qawwali occasions forms part of the established tradition that governs the entire Islamic year, including both of the two great anniversaries as well as the in-between periods of other, minor, events. On the basis of distinctions significant to both performers and listeners these occasions fall into four major categories. The intimate, 'special' assembly (mahfil-e-khās) is really at the heart of Sufi Qawwali at Nizamuddin Auliya. Both major representatives of the saint hold them during the ʿurs, in special locations around the shrine and at fixed times. Thus Pīr Zamin Nizami holds an early morning assembly in the small cell where the saint is said to have taught and meditated; on this occasion the use of instrumental accompaniment is restricted to the harmonium, as in band samaʿ (see p. 82). But it is Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami, Meraj's patron, who maintains the true Sufi tradition, with his special gatherings both in his hujrā opposite the tomb of Amir Khusrau, and at the 'Chilla', a most remarkable cell and gallery nearby, overlooking the Jumna river where Nizamuddin's Sheikh, the saint Fariduddin Ganj-e-Shakar, is said to have performed a forty-day seclusion of chillā (see Plate 23 and Performance No. 1). In these assemblies, no uninitiated audience component imposes restraint on the sense of spiritual elation which is evoked by the sounding of the Qawwali message. Only choice Qawwals are admitted, whether it is Meraj who always performs at the chillā assembly, or selected performers visiting the shrine during the ʿurs. The audience regularly includes major spiritual representatives, as well as cultured and well-placed devotees from Delhi and elsewhere. These gatherings are relatively short and held during daytime.

There is, however, another type of intimate 'special' assembly not primarily associated with the shrine, though held there as well: the gathering of disciples around their sheikh or pīr. At Nizamuddin Auliya a few such assemblies are held, when disciples of one sheikh visit the shrine for an occasion like the ʿurs and gather together there to share the experience of a Qawwali. Such an assembly may be very small, but the spiritual bond between those present

is particularly intense. Meraj sings at several such assemblies by customary arrangement; indeed, the setting suits him particularly well (see Performance No. 2).

The major, celebrational assembly held in a large public place constitutes the second category of Qawwali at Nizamuddin Auliya. Sponsored by each of the three leading shrine representatives, these are the mainstay of every 'urs celebration and attract the largest number of devotees. They are held at night and last for hours, their sound spread wide by loudspeakers. Of the three leading sheikhs, Pīr Zamin Nizami and Khwaja Hasan Sani hold their celebrational assemblies at Urs Mahal and Qawwali Hall respectively, for hundreds of listeners, including a full representation of the Sufi hierarchy. Qawwali Hall gatherings, particularly, are always dominated by a spiritual élite, regardless of the number of listeners. The third leader, Qazi Safdar Ali, holds his assembly in the open; it attracts a more entertainment-oriented crowd such as gathers at the fair surrounding the shrine during the 'urs, for Qazi Safdar Ali is a highly popular spiritual guide.

At Nizamuddin Auliya a third category of Qawwali is the Major Shrine Ritual, a large assembly held in the shrine compound facing the sanctuary. This is the official death ritual of the 'urs called qul or khatam; it has a set sequence of songs, and the recitation preceding Qawwali singing is given special importance here, since the saint is being addressed directly. Given the auspiciousness of the ritual occasion, the qul attracts large numbers of devotees – including women, who are permitted in the shrine compound. There is a set time for the qul, in the late morning, and its duration is limited, although no one person is in control of this event, due to the peculiar situation of collective representational rights shared between pīrzāde.

What is left is the minor ritual and non-ritual Qawwali occasion. Included in this category is a variety of occasions all held before the sanctuary and characterized by the absence of individual leadership and by an audience which is either very scant, as during minor rituals and informal shrine singing, or extremely fluid, as during Thursday and Friday Qawwali. Because of this, they are of least significance as performance occasions of Qawwali.

With all the external variety, the Qawwali assembly is characterized by consistent internal features, which may be abstracted into a normative structure. Thus in this chapter the Qawwali occasion will be considered as a religious institution with an established setting and procedure, supported by an established conceptual framework and functioning within a particular socio-economic structure. The analyis will deal first with the Qawwali occasion at the level of its manifest religious function as realized in concept, setting and procedure. To complement this detailed outline, the entire structure will then be considered at the level of the latent social and economic function being served by it at the same time.

The religious ritual to be outlined here is part of the knowledge current today among participants in Qawwali practice and found among members of different Sufi teaching traditions, although the particular version presented here most closely represents the teaching of the Chishti lineage, principal exponent of Qawwali in India (see Plate 10). It is important to note as well that the notions governing the Qawwali occasion, like other Sufi conceptions, are shared among all the participants in the Qawwali occasion, including the performers – even though their part is merely to provide service. For informed Sufis and scholars their knowledge of Qawwali structure takes the form of a fully developed scheme, while others, including most performers, have a more limited access to this knowledge and thus confine their awareness to the areas in which they are directly involved as participants.

Plate 10   *Pīr* Zamin Nizami Syed Bukhari, leading *pīrzādā* of Nizamuddin Auliya, attends to his teaching function with the author in attendance

The social and economic dimensions of the Qawwali ritual are of course not conceptualized formally, nor are they often made explicit even on inquiring, but Qawwali participants do acknowledge them, performers and devotees more than Sufi sheikhs.

As in the analysis of Qawwali music, a set of tables (Tables 20–28) presents the salient features of the entire structure of the Qawwali occasion in summary form.

B   The Qawwali concept: a 'gathering for listening' and a 'royal court of saints'

The concept of the Qawwali occasion in today's Indian Sufism comprises a layered composite of rules and conventions, developed initially out of principles which were expounded by early saints and divines, and adapted in accordance with changing social conditions. The principles laid down between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries (discussed by Sijzi 1884, Hujwiri 1970, Ghazali 1979, among others; see also Rahman 1971) not only serve as a charter for this concept, but they contribute to an amazing extent to the concepts in use today. What has happened since is an expansion of these principles to take account of the more public context of Indian Sufism in recent centuries (see above, p. 92 f.).

The Qawwali occasion is conceptualized by Sufis in two complementary ways, each equally significant for an understanding of its structure, and each reflecting basic assumptions rooted in the ideological and historical background of Indian Sufism. The two conceptualizations are contained in the two formal terms which Sufis apply to the Qawwali occasion: one is the *mahfil-e-sama'* or 'gathering for listening', the other the *darbār-e-auliyā* or 'royal court of saints'. Each suggests for the Qawwali occasion a conceptual structural framework centred on

the listener; one focussing on the listener in relation to the medium of performance (the music), the other focussing on the listener in relation to the total audience. In both, the performer is included only by implication.

The Qawwali occasion as *mahfil-e-sama'* or gathering for listening

As a 'gathering for listening' the Qawwali occasion is conceived in accordance with its primary purpose: to serve as a context for the Sufi's encounter with mystical experience through listening to music. The focus here is on the individual listener and on that which he hears, that is, the medium of performance. The way in which the two are seen to inter-relate in the process of listening is best understood as an application of certain fundamental Sufi premises concerning the influence of the music on the listener, and the listener's response to the music.

The Qawwali medium of performance is subject to three premises, all relating to its power over those who listen to it. The first premise, based on the primacy of God's word in the Koran, and fundamental to all of Islam, concerns the power of the word, and extends to Qawwali poetry. The second premise holds that words are effectively applied through the power of repetition, particularly rhythmic repetition as practised in *zikr*.

The third premise, and the one most fundamental to the Qawwali occasion, concerns the musical rendering in which both the word and its rhythmical repetitions are clothed. According to this premise musical sound (*ghinā*, song, music, or *achchhī āwāz*, melodious, pleasing sound, voice) has the power to stir the soul (*takrīk-e-qalb*), and to arouse emotions of love to the point of ecstasy. Moreover, the effect of music on the receptive listener's emotion is immediate, for it transcends comprehension, as attested in Sufi verse (see verse quoted as motto to Part I). Through the Qawwali occasion Sufism utilizes this power of music as a means for spiritual progress (*rūhānī taraqqī kā ek zariyā*), by activating and directing the listener's emotions of love toward the divine by way of its manifestations, beginning with the sheikh, leading through saints and the Prophet to cognition (*ma'rifat*) of the ultimate Truth (*haq*). According to Sufis, the primary precedent for this power of musical sound was set at the time of Creation, when the beauty of God's voice transported the human soul into a state of divine ecstasy (*wajd*).[21] However, this premise implies that music can also stir emotions of love toward profane purposes. For this reason Sufi music is to be assigned a religious character through text choice and the invocation of *zikr*, and through rules of style and presentation avoiding profane association.

Ultimately, though, the focus in the *mahfil-e-sama'* concept, rather than being on the music itself, is on the listener and on his ability to draw spiritual benefits from it. Two premises concerning the process of spiritual arousal are relevant here; they are related to the two dimensions of mystical love (see p. 79 f. above). According to the first one, the listening process is an individualized means for the Sufi devotee to activate emotion on the basis of his inner state and according to his personal need of the moment. This implies that the listener responds to the music intuitively and individually, and must therefore be provided with a structural setting of the utmost flexibility and scope for self-expansion. At the same time, a second premise holds that the individual emotion finds fulfilment through his link with the spiritual hierarchy. The process of arousal through listening, then, must take place within the frame of reference of the Sufi hierarchy and be directed toward its divine representatives.

This is all the more essential because love, as an emotional force, can be directed toward a profane as well as a divine target.

For the individual listener, the totality of the Sufi spiritual framework and his own place within it become realized in the concept of the Qawwali occasion as 'royal court of saints' (*darbār-e-auliyā*).

The Qawwali occasion as *darbār-e-auliyā* or 'royal court of saints'

Seen as a 'royal court of saints', the Qawwali assembly represents the institutional framework for the Sufi to pursue his personal quest for mystical union. The way in which the listener relates to this framework or spiritual order reflects two premises basic to the Indo-Muslim social order. One is the premise that inner reality is confirmed in outward manifestation; accordingly, the spiritual reality of the Sufi saintly hierarchy becomes manifest in the physical presence of its assembled representatives in the assembly. I know of no better charter for this conception than the thirteenth-century poetic vision of Amir Khusrau in one of Sufism's best-known and best-loved poems, *Namī dānam che manzil būd* (quoted as motto to Part III), where the poet finds himself transported in an ideal assembly of ecstatic Sufi saints, exalted by the Prophet's presence and presided over by God himself. Thus in the Sufi assembly the individual listens to Qawwali in the presence of spiritual superiors and under the ultimate authority of the presiding figure among them.

The second premise complements the first one; it holds that formal rules are required to govern individual expression. For the Qawwali occasion this means that external form serves as a framework; symbolically indicating the individual's submission of his personal emotional experience to the spiritual interpretation of the Sufi system. It is in this sense that Sufis consider that love is achieved firstly through proper form (see Sufi adage quoted as motto to Part II).

On the basis of both these premises the Qawwali occasion as an assembly of divines has come to be conceptualized in terms of its equivalent in the worldly authority structure: the royal court of Muslim rulers and its formal etiquette (see above, p. 90 f.). It is implied in this concept that spiritual status does not contradict worldly status; rather, both must be incorporated in the formal scheme of external manifestation. Accordingly, the Qawwali occasion is a formal assembly, structured in accordance with the relative status of its participants, headed by the highest spiritual authority, and musically attended to by service professionals.

In its totality, both as *mahfil-e-samaʿ* and as *darbār-e-auliyā*, the conception of the Qawwali occasion may be termed an occasion for Sufi devotees to experience mystical arousal within the framework of the Sufi spiritual hierarchy, through the medium of mystical songs performed by professional functionaries. This conception, along with all its implications regarding performer, medium of performance and audience, informs the structure of the Qawwali occasion with respect to setting as well as procedure.

C   The proper setting for Qawwali

Setting comprises factors that remain fixed throughout the Qawwali occasion or are prerequisite to it; they include dimensions of time, space and occasion as well as personnel. It is on the basis of setting factors that categories of Qawwali occasions have come to be disting-

uished, along with corresponding expectations regarding the procedure of the assembly. Table 20 outlines categories of personnel, while Table 21 summarizes factors of setting. Knowledgeable Sufis like to discuss the setting for Qawwali with reference to three standard categories applied to the *sama'* in classical Sufism (after Al Ghazzali; see Ghazali 1979, Book II, Ch. 9, Rahman 1971): *zamān*, or time, *makān*, abode and *akhwān*, participants. While these categories continue to be relevant for the proper regulation of *sama'* assemblies, they are too limited to cover all aspects of this actual setting.

The first and foremost aspect of setting is that the assembly must be in the charge of a spiritual authority, whether in the person of a spiritual guide (*sheikh*) or a saint personified by his representative. The entire proceedings are in the care of this spiritual leader or 'chief of the assembly' (*mīr-e-mahfil*), and he is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the participants. Thus the establishment of the 'proper conditions' for a purposeful assembly ultimately rests with him. To quite an extent, the leader gives the gathering its character, hence assemblies are often identified by their leader.

Table 20 *Categories of Participants* (in hierarchical order)

Functional category	Status attributes	Status category		
Assembly leader (*mīr-e-mahfil*)	saint's official representative saint's descendant spiritual leader	spiritual status and seniority	spiritual status holders (*mashāikh fuqarā darwesh sūfī*)	participants with status (*khās*)
Audience (*sunnewāle*)	senior saint's representative	spiritual seniority		
	saint's official representative saint's descendant spiritual leader senior devotee	spiritual status		
	devotee with wealth devotee with (official) power	worldly status	worldly status holders (*umarā, rau'sā*)	
	poor devotee non-religious young men 'common people'	minimal status		participants lacking status (*'ām*)
Performers (*qawwal*)	senior saint's shrine affiliation junior saint's shrine affiliation	hereditary pedigree (*maurūsī*)		participants outside and beneath audience status categories
	no shrine affiliation	no pedigree (*ām qawwāl*)		

Table 21 *Setting Categories*

a) *Occasion for Qawwali*
   saint's anniversary: death day
                        special life event

   saint's special day: monthly death day
                        weekly special day

   opportune day in Islam: day of remembering the dead (Thursday)
                           day of weekly prayer (Friday)

b) *Place (makān)*
   saint's abode: saint's tomb, shrine (*dargah*)
                  saint's dwelling place (*hujrā, chillā*)

   spiritual guide's abode: spiritual guide's dwelling place (*hujrā*)

c) *Location*
   public place: shrine compound
                 hall
                 open space/field/tent

   private place: cell (*hujrā*)
                  room

d) *Time (zamān)*
   defined in relation to times of Islamic prayer (*namāz, salāt*)

1. *fajr*	2. *zohr*	3. *asr*	4. *maghrib*	5. *ishā*
dawn	mid-day	mid-afternoon	sunset	after nightfall
	(flexible time)	(flexible time)		(flexible time)

   fixed by ritual requirement (½–1 hour long): preceding *zohr*
                                                preceding *maghrib*

   extended/open-ended (over 4 hours long): after *fajr*
                                            after *ishā*

   limited in duration (1–2 hours long): between *zohr* and *asr*
                                         between *asr* and *maghrib*
                                         between *maghrib* and *ishā*

Normally, the leader of the assembly is also its spiritually most exalted member. However, a representative of a senior saint – a saint higher in status than the patron saint of the occasion – may grace the assembly with his presence. In such a case he will be recognized as the ceremonial head of the assembly (see below, p. 144) and the leader regains charge of the assembly by his leave, while he may assert his own authority through the leader. It is also possible for a devotee of social prominence to sponsor a Qawwali occasion in association with a spiritual leader, usually his own guide. Sponsorship, in this case, implies material backing only – for instance, making a location available – while the authority over the assembly is placed entirely in the hands of the spiritual leader.

Next in importance, and closely linked to the presiding personage, is the audience. According to the generally accepted classical rules of Sufism the assembly is open to serious devotees who are in a spiritual frame of mind and ritually pure (*bā-wuzū*, that is, having

performed ritual ablutions). Women, as well as young boys, are specifically excluded because of the temptation which their presence constitutes. This rule is generally enforced; for women in particular, a separate enclosure may be provided, in keeping with Indo-Muslim social custom. As for the rule requiring a spiritual orientation, it can, for obvious reasons, only serve as a standard for attendance and deportment. For the rest, there is an ideological commitment in Indian Sufism to accept all comers, which in effect means that no-one is to be prevented from attending a Qawwali assembly – exceptionally not even a woman (as is evidenced by this study). In actual fact, it is the leader's stature which effectively determines the character of the audience, mainly through the presence of his personal following of associates and devotees. In a small-scale or privately held gathering they make up the entire audience; in a large public assembly they form its prominent core.

A Qawwali audience, then, may range from a small, homogeneous group to a large, heterogeneous crowd. The former is most characteristically led by a spiritual guide with or without hereditary affiliation with a major saint, and consists of the circle of his personal disciples (see Performance Nos. 1 and 2 below). An assembly led by a recognized representative of a major saint and held at his tomb, on the other hand, draws from the large general following which such saints have, and may therefore include not only the leader's personal disciples, but also other spiritual guides with their disciples and representatives of other saints, as well as individual devotees outside the spiritual status framework.

It is in this latter type of audience that status categories according with general social norms become relevant: these are socio-economic standing and, to a much more limited degree, seniority. Persons of high socio-economic status are, in fact, an important audience component, especially since devotees from this class have traditionally been the worldly patrons of the Sufi divines, (see above, p. 90 f.). Indeed, a partnership between spiritual and feudal lords exists historically and conceptually; this is manifested in the paired idioms that group together the 'saintly' and the 'wealthy' as in *fuqarā aur umarā* (*fuqarā* = plural of *faqīr*, saintly mendicant; *umarā* = plural of *amīr*, wealthy leader).[22] Persons of high status, spiritual as well as worldly, are furthermore classed in the category of 'special' or 'noble' (*khās, sharīf*), as distinguished from those lacking either qualification, who are residually termed 'common' or even 'lowly' ('*am, zalīl*). This latter distinction can actually serve to identify an assembly by its dominant audience component: a 'special assembly' (*khās mahfil* or *mahfil-e-khās*) is one consisting only of special people and implying a limited number of listeners, while a 'common assembly' ('*am mahfil* or *mahfil-e-'am*) is one attended by common people as well, which, given their relative number, implies a large audience.

Seniority in the form of old age cuts across all these categories, for it accords to the individual the status of potential spirituality; this is expressed in the fact that the very term for an old or senior person (*buzurg*) is also the term of reference for saints, individually (*buzurg*) or collectively (*buzurgān-e-dīn*). Likewise, the term *bābā*, often attached to a saint's name (Bābā Farīd, Bābā Zahīn Shāh), is a common term of address for an old man. The implication of the spirituality of old age is contrasted with the assumed worldliness of the 'young men's category' (*naujawān tabqā*), which, in the absence of other status, constitutes the least significant component of a Qawwali audience.

The remaining participants are the performers. They are peripheral to the setting of the assembly, principally because they stand in a service relationship with the leader. While their presence is obviously prerequisite to the performance of Qawwali, that presence is ensured by

the assembly leader who also controls the appearance of a particular performing group. Thus it is only as a category of service professionals that the performers are part of the Qawwali setting, not as individuals. Also, since their interest in the assembly is recognized as being professional rather than spiritual, the performers are not expected to have a devotee's disposition or training. Even those who are formally attached to the Sufi hierarchy by a discipleship bond are not considered to be Sufis or devotees.[23] In fact, in the case of the performers the rule specifying good personal and ritual habits is hardly considered relevant beyond its external manifestation in the assembly (see below for decorum).

The formal setting of the Qawwali assembly consists of a number of distinct, but related, categories, as summarized in Table 21. Among factors of formal setting, what occasions the holding of an assembly is of first importance and influences the more circumstantial aspects such as time and place.

In keeping with its function, the primary occasion for holding a Qawwali assembly is one invoking mystical union. Foremost among these is the day of a saint's final union with God (ʿurs), followed by other commemorative days. Likewise, the primary place for holding a Qawwali assembly is one linked to mystical precedent, most of all the locus of a saint's final union, that is the shrine, but also any other locality having an associational link with a saint (such as the Chilla of Baba Farid near the Nizamuddin Auliya shrine; see Performance No. 1), or one graced by a living personage of high spiritual standing.

As for the specific location of the assembly, two types have come to be distinguished. One is the house or abode (makān) of classical Sufism, a private, secluded room or hall where a select Sufi audience can meet without providing access to curious outsiders. The other is the large hall or shrine compound designated to accommodate the numerous devotees who congregate at a saint's anniversary. Major shrines contain both types. The first type consists of the hujrās (cells or meeting rooms) of saintly representatives which usually surround the tomb and its courtyard (Performance No. 2 is held in such a location: a hujrā at the Nizamuddin Auliya shrine). The second type includes the shrine courtyard itself and various halls especially designated for Qawwali assemblies in and around shrines (for example Urs Mahal and Qawwali Hall at Nizamuddin).

Time and duration for the Qawwali occasion vary considerably. What must be observed are the customary timings of commemorative rituals; for the rest, any time not requiring attention toward worldly cares is suitable, provided that times of prayer (namāz; see Table 21) are avoided. Ritual commemorations are generally held during the day and their duration is constrained by ritual requirements. Substantial Qawwali assemblies are often held during the earlier part of the day when no prayer is scheduled – this is a preferred time for anniversary assemblies at some shrines. But the favourite time for substantial assemblies is the night, when no interruption threatens, continuing as late as early morning prayer (see Performance No. 2). Of all times, the early morning hours are felt to have a special aura of meditative spirituality. Otherwise it is the times with ritual association that hold a special sanctity, most of all the concluding commemoration ritual at the annual ʿurs of a saint (qul or khatam).

The duration of a Qawwali assembly is relatively open-ended to allow for its conclusion at any spiritually beneficial time. Certain assemblies are limited in duration by a timing of ritual or prayer; such events generally last from one to two hours (Performance No. 1 precedes a

ritual). Four to five hours are quite standard for the duration of a Qawwali occasion not limited by ritual requirements.

Part of the setting of the Qawwali occasion is the decorum observed within the assembly, including the physical arrangements, seating order and participants' dress and posturing. The internal structuring of the occasion is modelled after the concept of a royal court of Sufi divines convened in the name of a saint by his spiritual or familial descendants. By implication, the saint himself is present through his representative, and so are other saints if their descendants are in attendance. Each is recognized according to his position in the spiritual hierarchy, with the most exalted presiding.

There is a formal seating order in the assembly, as shown in Table 22. Appropriate to both

Table 22 *Layout Plan and Seating Arrangement*

a) Assembly held at tomb of saint

b) Assembly held elsewhere

Holy Kaaba ← (W) Saint's tomb

a) seating diagram:

	+s		+s	−s	−s
−s	+s		sl		
			L	+s	
			sl		
−s	+s		+s		−s
−s	±s		±s	−s	

p

b) seating diagram (gaḍḍī):

	+s	sl	L	sl	+s	
−s	+s			+s	−s
−s	+s			+s	−s
−s	−s			−s	−s

p

+s   listener with status
−s   listener without status
L   assembly leader
sl   spiritual leaders
p   performers
W   cardinal direction

the function of the assembly and its status arrangement, it reflects the formal relationship between performers and listeners, and, among listeners, differences of standing. Worldly status, too, is recognized within this framework as a secondary principle of audience ordering. The highest place is assigned to the saint presiding over the assembly, either represented by his tomb, if the assembly is held at his own shrine or *darbār* (court), or else by his *gaḍḍī* (throne), in the form of the seat occupied by his most exalted representative who controls the event. Directly opposite is the space set apart for the performers, who thus principally face and address the 'throne'. The remaining listeners are seated facing each other along the central open space between throne and performers (Performance Nos. 1 and 2 both have this format). If the assembly is held at a saint's tomb, the row facing in the direction of the Holy Kaaba (see Table 22)[24] is reserved for the leading saintly representatives, including the leader himself. Additional listeners are seated behind the front rows and, rarely, behind the performers, when conditions are crowded.

Quite naturally and of their own accord, participants take front or back seats in accordance with their status, social or spiritual. The leader will ensure that special or prominent listeners are given prominent seating at the front near the *gaḍḍī*; very rarely is he required to relegate a presumptuous commoner to the back.

Given the fact that the Qawwali assembly is a performance occasion, it is significant that the seating order does not facilitate the listeners' focus on the performers. This reflects the purpose of the assembly – to promote for the listeners an inner concentration on the mystical quest, with the help of the Qawwali as a medium only. In fact, in some mystical traditions the devotees are not even to raise their eyes toward the performers (for example in the Abū Ulāhī *silsilā*). Only the leader faces the Qawwals directly, for he is required to control them thus.

A certain external decorum is required of participants: their dress should correspond to traditional standards of decency and include a head covering, the traditional symbol of respect in Islam. There is, however, no rule of conformity as to style of dress, as long as the appearance of the Sufi does not obviously serve the purpose of visual display. Indeed, the Sufi tradition of not conforming with orthodoxy has found expression in a wide range of acceptable apparel, which may reflect both the Sufi's individual preference and the standing of his saintly lineage. The classical dress of Sufi saints or sheikhs (see Plate 11), characterized by a turban (*sāfā*), a long cloak (*khirqā*) and usually a long scarf draped over the shoulders (*galdaonī*), still designates exalted spiritual standing today, but serves higher-ranking Sufis in conjunction with the preference for discreetness that marks high social status in Indo-Muslim society. Accordingly, Sufis with higher standing either wear the traditional Sufi attire in plain or inconspicuous colouring, or they even prefer the traditional formal apparel of the Muslim secular élite, adorned by a scarf that marks their particular saint's identity (see Plates 12, 25). Conspicuous Sufi dress, on the other hand, is generally worn by representatives of minor shrines.

The performers are subject to similar general rules of dress. Unlike Sufi listeners, however, they should not wear anything conspicuous that attracts undue attention. But as a transmitter of aesthetic as well as spiritual delight the Qawwal should nevertheless be appealing in his personal appearance.

Deportment within the assembly must convey respect for the saintly presence at all times. This respect is to be expressed first of all through a sitting posture that does not show the feet – a sign of disrespect in Indo-Muslim tradition. The ideal sitting position is one of kneeling

Plate 11   Classical Sufi attire, worn by a Sufi who is awaiting the start of a Qaw-wali assembly

while sitting on the heels, preferably with the right foot crossed over the left one, arms dropped by the sides, head bowed – the classical devotional posture of submission in Islam, prescribed for the prayer ritual (*dozānū*, see Plate 25). Changing position and moving about are frowned upon as attracting undue attention to the physical presence. The greatest onus for realizing this ideal of deportment is on the leader, who sets the standard for all the others, and on the front ranks of the assembly in general. Thus, spiritual leaders sit for hours without moving during an assembly. Performers too are expected to stay within the general confines of decent deportment, which means sitting as Sufis do and exercising restraint as to expressive gesticulation during their performance.

D   The proper procedure for Qawwali

The proceedings of the Qawwali assembly (see Table 23) are governed by a rather flexible structural framework which is subject to the guidance of the leader in accordance with the function of the occasion. This guidance or potential control also extends to the sequence of Qawwali songs performed, and to the audience's response to them.

The religious cast of the Sufi assembly is formally expressed in the fact that it 'begins and ends with the Koran', specifically in the form of the Koranic recitation and prayer offered to the dead in Islam (*fātehā*). Thus the beginning of the event consists of chanted recitation from various *sūrā*s of the Koran, at least including, and always concluding with, the relevant Koranic portion for the *fātehā* (*sūrā-e-fātehā*), followed by an intercessionary prayer (*du'ā*).

Table 23 *Standard Performance Format*

Items Presented	Execution
I *Koranic recitation* (duration: 5–15 minutes)	*Leader*
a) prayer for the dead (*fātehā*)	leader
b) other passages (*qira'at*)	prominent and competent listeners
c) Sufi genealogy (*shijrā*)	leader or expert
d) intercessary prayer (*du'ā*)	leader
II *Qawwali singing* (duration: ½–5 hours)	*Performers*
a) songs or hymns of obligatory ritual use (*rang-qaul, panchāyatī gāne*)	communal group of local shrine (*panchāyatī, mushtar*)
b) songs of customary ritual use (*panchāyatī gāne*)	
c) songs freely chosen – guided by thematic sequence of focussing on God, Prophet, saints, mystical love and states	private 'parties' (*partī, chaukī*)
d) in place of a) and b): songs of obligatory or customary ritual use	
III *Koranic recitation*	*Leader*
a) prayer for the dead (*fātehā*)	leader

The very end of the assembly is marked with a similar prayer. Specific reference to the assembly and to its place in the Sufi universe is made through the recitation of the spiritual genealogy (*shijrā*) that links the presiding saint or even his representative to the Sufi hierarchy, reaching up to Prophet Muhammad. All of this recitation is led by the assembly leader, who chants himself or else designates a supporter to do so, especially for the genealogy, which requires extensive memorization (see Plate 12). However, in accordance with the Muslim concept of man's equality before God, anyone who has the competence may take his turn in reciting a Koranic passage – including, though rarely, a Qawwal.

The Qawwali songs, then, are religiously legitimized, so to speak, by the Koranic frame of reference. Inside this frame, the sequencing of songs is governed by further religious conventions. All Chishti and most Qadri descendants and followers (see p. 91 above) include in their tradition at least one obligatory hymn, the *Qaul* (see *Man kunto*, Repertoire No. 1 and Performance No. 1), which marks either the beginning (for example Nizamuddin Auliya, Chiragh-e-Delhi) or the end (for example Muinuddin Chishti, Syed Muhammad Gesudaraz; see Table 18) of their assemblies. Based on a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, the *Qaul* establishes the principle of spiritual successorship on which the concept of the Sufi hierarchy is founded. To this, prominent saintly lineages add one or more obligatory hymns which refer to their founding saint. The best-known of such hymns is the *Rang* (colour, delight; see also p. 152) in which Amir Khusrau rejoices in Hindi over finding his spiritual

Plate 12   The saint's spiritual genealogy (*shijrā*) is recited during the *Qul*, major anniversary ritual of the *ʿurs* of Nizamuddin Auliya held in front of his tomb. Leading sheikhs from this and other shrines are present

guide in Nizamuddin Auliya, thus testifying to the principle of discipleship, and to this saint as the ideal Sheikh or *pīr* (other such hymns are <u>Kh</u>waja-e-<u>Kh</u>wājagān for Muinuddin Chishti and *Bekāram-o-bākāram* for Nasiruddin Chiragh-e-Dehli; see Ex. 6).[25]

Outside the obligatory hymns the songs performed should follow the convention, common to Islamic tradition, of beginning any formal endeavour with the praise of God, followed by the praise of Prophet Muhammad (traditional Urdu books are introduced in this way, for instance). Thus the thematic sequence of songs for a proper Qawwali occasion is similarly hierarchical: it begins with poems in the praise of God (*hamd*), continues with praise of the Prophet (*naʿt*), and then goes on to the praise of saints (*manqabat*). Other mystical themes follow in the form of poems expressing mystical emotions (love, separation, union, etc.; see above, p. 85 f). This conventional order of song themes is no more than a general guide, however, for in fact the choice of poetry and songs is left open to the inspiration of the performer, although a listener may make a request for a particular song. This is in keeping with the Sufi conception of the mystical experience as a blessing (*faiz*), which is ultimately intuitional in nature (*cf.* p. 81 f) and therefore beyond elicitation through formal procedures such as text choices. For the listener's heart to be moved, anything may become fortuitous enough – not only the song's message, its musical presentation or its delivery, but also other factors such as the occasion of a saint's union with God, the intensifying presence of a sheikh, the powerful ambience of a saint's tomb, and even the auspicious time of an early morning assembly.

Given these considerations, it is thus enough for the leader to see that the song choices stay within the bounds of the Sufi tradition, and the poetry within the thematic realm appropriate to the mystical quest in general. Here particular attention needs to be given to the mainten-ance of the delicate boundary between that which suggests mystical and that which suggests

Plate 13   During Qawwali singing, Mahtab Ahmad raises his hand (*hāth batānā*) in a standard gesture of intensification

human love – for the wrong sentiments must not be stirred in the listener. It is the leader of an assembly who is responsible for maintaining a spiritually appropriate standard of song choices. As regards text, explicitly inappropriate is love poetry that lacks a link (*nisbat*) with mysticism, whether through its content, its author or its historical association. The same concern extends to the music of the songs and to their style of presentation. While the singer is expected to adorn his songs with some basic musical sophistication, even extending it to the use of classical ragas, his music should not make itself conspicuous through artful vocal display or the use of current popular song style. Inappropriate in the same sense is a theatrical performance style that attracts undue attention to the singer's person. In case of any such lapse, it is part of the general expectation that the leader will exercise a veto over the performer and direct his performance to a more appropriate course. A modicum of gestures by the performer is nevertheless considered acceptable, as long as he keeps them within the bounds of what a Sufi uses to express mild enthusiasm, prime among them the raised arm with palm upturned (*hāth batānā*, see Plate 13 and Table 25 below).

Listening process

The Qawwali listening process, that is, the part played by the Qawwali audience, is subject only to limited external structuring; however there are guidelines and even rules to facilitate the achievement of the spiritual purpose of the assembly, while maintaining its decorum. Of necessity, these rules are flexible, since their application needs to govern a wide range of internal experience and external expression. Indeed, they even embody certain potential contradictions inherent in both the experience and its expression. To begin with, the spiritual

advancement through intensified mystical love requires that the process of emotional arousal be allowed to progress to its culmination. At the same time, the outward physical expression that results naturally from such a process must be prevented from causing a distracting external effect that would be detrimental to the spiritual goal. As for the achievement of the mystical goal itself, conditions must be created to promote both the dimension of conscious striving and that of ecstatic self-abandonment. For, on one hand, mystical love, once aroused, is cultivated to progress through stages of gradually intensifying emotion, implying consciousness; on the other hand this process may culminate at any time in a state of ecstasy resulting in an obliteration of the conscious self.

Central to the mediation of these potential contradictions is the sheikh, or spiritual leader, not only as the one in a position of controlling the *sama'* proceedings, but, more specifically, in his recognized capacity as a teacher and guide setting an example to the other listeners. Listening to Qawwali is part of the spiritual training a Sufi receives from his sheikh. Until fully initiated he is to listen under spiritual guidance and in the presence of his sheikh or a spiritual superior. For cultivating the spiritual delight of a mystical arousal and allowing it to progress to the point of ecstasy is a gradual process achieved only by the spiritually advanced. The dynamic of the process is conceptualized in what amounts to stages in a continuum, ranging from the normal unaroused inner state to the state of ecstasy. These states are most adequately represented as a framework of three stages linked along a continuum of increasing intensity, as summarized in Table 24. Participants articulate this framework in two ways.

Table 24 *Framework of Spiritual Arousal*

a) *Concepts underlying framework*

3 overlapping contrast sets provide structure for continuum of increasing intensity

1) Neutral state vs Aroused state (*kaifiyat, kaif, kaifiyat tārī honā*)

2) Potential spiritual experience vs Realized spiritual experience (*rūhānī taraqqī*)
   Incipient arousal vs Strong arousal

3) Arousal within control of self vs Arousal outside control of self (*hāl, hāl khelnā*)

(b) *Stages (darje) of arousal (kaifiyat)*

Based on above concepts and organized along continuum of increasing intensity

Stage	Spiritual state	Self control
O	Neutral, receptive to spiritual arousal (no term)	present
I	Activated devotional attitude Enthusiasm (*kaif*) Incipient or mild arousal (*halkī kaifiyat*)	present
II	Deeply moved, overcome with spiritual emotion (*rūhānī kaifiyat*) Intense spiritual experience (*rūhānī taraqqī*) Strong arousal (*ālā darje kī kaifiyat*)	present
III	Transported, self obliterated (*beqābū, behāl*) Trance, ecstasy (*behoshī, wajd, hāl*)	absent

One is to identify states of arousal according to the degree of their intensity, juxtaposing them in what amounts to overlapping contrast sets (see Table 24a). The other way is to focus on nuances within the state of altered consciousness, implying differences between stages of arousal (see Table 24b). The stage of normal consciousness is generally taken for granted; nevertheless, seen analytically, it is clearly part of the conceptual scheme and must therefore be included in an analytical perspective. Best termed 'neutral', this stage is characterized by the absence of any spiritual arousal and symbolized as 0 in Table 24.

Of the three stages of arousal, the first is characterized by conscious intent: to adopt a devotional attitude with the help of spiritual discipline, to keep the inner senses focussed on manifestations of the mystical goal. Thus the inner eye should see but the image of the sheikh, and the inner ear hear but the name of God over and over (as in *zikr*). The result is an inner state of receptiveness to the mystical experience, in which the listener easily responds to the spiritual stimulation in the Qawwali songs, experiencing enthusiasm and what may be termed the beginnings of emotional arousal (this is exemplified in Performance Nos. 1 and 2 below).

The second stage includes the entire range of states characterized by strong arousal, from being deeply moved to being overcome by emotion and transported by intensity of feeling, yet still retaining consciousness (exemplified in Performance No. 1). The third stage may be called ecstatic, when the mystical arousal becomes so overwhelming that the conscious self is obliterated by the experience of mystical union (exemplified in Performance No. 2).

As for the listeners' outward responses, it is assumed that mystical emotion, though spiritual in nature, will express itself physically, and strong emotional arousal, being an inner movement, needs to find outward expression in physical movement. While different saintly lineages and teaching traditions vary in the extent to which they permit such outward expression, all recognize that, in the extreme state of ecstasy, complete restraint from physical movement is impossible. Equally basic is the premise regarding the rôle of form as a framework for the individual to submit his personal experience to the interpretation of the Sufi system. Sufism recognizes two complementary modes for the expression of mystical emotion in the assembly; they correspond to the two dimensions of the Sufi quest for union with God – one through the individual mystical experience and the other through the active link with the Sufi hierarchy of spiritual power. Accordingly, one comprises the expression of the Sufi's spiritual state; the other the expression of his attachment to the spiritual hierarchy. The two modes also accord externally with the two conceptualizations in which these dimensions are manifested: the first makes reference to the individual's experience of mystical song as conceptualized in the *mahfil-e-sama'*, the other to his presence in the saintly gathering as conceptualized in the *darbār-e-auliyā*. Both modes are subject to constraints. For obvious reasons intuitive self-expression takes place within a wider range of individual variation, whereas activating the link with a Sufi divine is governed by rather more formal rules.

Expressive response

The limits to intuitive responses of an individual's self-expression are not formally defined; rather they represent a mould for expressive behaviour which the devotee internalizes through his exposure to the expressive responses of his sheikh and other Sufis, and which are rendered meaningful through spiritual training. Thus it is in conjunction with his spiritual

maturing process that the Sufi develops his language of stylized, yet personal, expressive gestures. In accordance with this, the tenor of expressive behaviour is established by the spiritually prominent, who have acquired the capacity for mystical experience. This applies specifically to the extent and frequency of the expressive response; conspicuous or unrestrained self-expression on the part of the uninitiated or spiritually less committed is frowned upon. A much-quoted precedent for this attitude was set by Nizamuddin Auliya and once again concerns his disciple Amir Khusrau: when Khusrau danced in ecstasy at his sheikh's assembly, the saint immediately restrained this free expression, for the disciple was still a courtier and committed to worldly pursuits. On the other hand, given the intuitional nature of the mystical experience, it is considered possible for spiritual benefice to accrue to a spiritually less advanced person, who may then be overcome with emotion to the point of losing control over his movements. Here too it is ultimately up to the spiritual superior, be it the ecstatic person's own guide or the assembly leader, to assess his state and guide him through it, be it by facilitating his expression or by restraining him (see Performance No. 2).

There is a range of expressive responses which are generally current and deemed appropriate in the assembly. This repertoire, summarized in Table 25, in fact constitutes a languge of gestural and sound expressions. Analogous to verbal language in its signifying function, its meaningful units are essentially signs. Structurally, they are limited in number and syntacti-

Table 25 *Categories of Expressive Responses*

a) *Manifestations symbolizing Sufi attitude* – specific to Sufism

  – bow head (symbolizes respect, submission)
  – join hands (symbolizes reverent attitude)
  – prostrate (*sajdā*, symbolizes deepest reverence)
  – hand on chest (symbolizes image of Sheikh in heart)
  – rub face, touch eyes (symbolizes taking in spiritual blessing)

b) *Standard manifestations of enthusiasm, mild arousal* – common to Indo-Muslim cultural expression

  – move head (sideways, nod)
  – sway (*jhūmnā*)
  – tap rhythmically
  – raise arm, hand (*hāth batānā, hāth uṭhānā*)
  – verbal expression of approval
  – exclaim (*āwāz nikālnā*)
  – involuntary movement, twitch (*harkat*)

c) *Standard manifestations of strong arousal* – specific to Sufism (in order of increasing intensity)

  – sudden, uncontrolled movement, twitching, jumping
  – weeping (*riqqat, giriā, ronā*)
  – arms raised – both (*hāth uṭhānā*)
  – shout (*chīkh*, slightly pejorative: *hūhā*)
  – stand up (*kharā honā*)
  – dance (*raqs*)
  – walk (no standard term, usually subsumed in *raqs*)
  – fall down, roll, toss about (*loṭnā*)
  – die (*wisāl*)

cal manipulability. Semantically, they are characterized by a low degree of specificity and a highly evocative content which is supported by their inherent indexical meanings. These meanings are rooted, and find reinforcement, in the general idiom of kinesic expression which has been standard in Indo-Muslim élite society and is manifested both in the formal context of cultural and religious performance and in informal social interaction. Additionally, the repertoire of Sufi expressive responses embodies a set of signs transmitted and sanctioned by classical Sufi tradition, as the manifestations of spiritually more advanced stages. The use of the entire idiom is flexible, but its frame of reference is always the continuum of spiritual arousal.

At the first stage of mild arousal, appreciation or expression of pleasure (*kaif*) occurs, often in response to a specific song portion, in the form of an upturned palm, an exclamation, even a verbal expression. The Sufi's state at this stage may express itself in a more generalized way through swaying or an arm pointing upward to indicate the awareness of the divine presence. Generally, the outward expression of this stage parallels responses in other performance occasions of Indo-Muslim culture, particularly the *musha'ira* ('poetic symposium'; see Qureshi 1969: 430 ff.). At the second stage, when mystical love is truly aroused, it expresses itself through tears (*riqqat*) and perhaps restlessness or even a shout, all signs of being overcome by strong emotion. Generally the surge of mystical delight (*kaifiyat*) will then subside, perhaps to rise again upon a further stimulation from the songs. However, occasionally the emotion is not to be overcome and culminates in complete ecstatic abandonment, the third stage of arousal. This condition is normally indicated by the devotee's rising to his feet in order to be able to move more freely. Once he moves on his feet, he is considered to be in the state of ecstatic dancing (*raqs*). *Raqs*, properly speaking, is a stylized form of dance in which the Sufi turns more or less on the spot by alternately raising his feet, while his right hand may point upward. But *raqs* can also include walking, or any rhythmic movement along with gesticulation and vocalization. In the case of extreme self-abandonment jumps, falls, rolling and shouting may also occur.

A sequence of intensification is implied in this expressive framework, and indeed the general expectation always extends toward the next more intense emotional expression. At the same time, the occurrence of these expressions is governed entirely by the individual's inner reaction to the performance situation at any given moment. Thus they may indicate either an increase or a decrease of emotional arousal, as well as a sudden surge of emotion breaking that continuity.

Formal response

The second mode of responding to the Qawwali experience serves the expression of the Sufi's attachment to the spiritual hierarchy of Sufism, thus representing the structural dimension of the Sufi experience. As an essential component of the Sufi path, activating this link forms an integral part of the Sufi's emotional response in the assembly, at any stage of mystical arousal. Whatever the emotional state, however, the quality of this link remains constant and therefore finds a consistently formalized manifestation which stands in some contrast to the wide expressive range of the experiential dimension (that is, the expression of 'states'). This outward expression reflects the essential characteristic of the Sufi's attachment to his spiritual superiors: submission.

Allegiance through submission, embodying the Sufi's striving toward God through a spiritual superior in the Sufi chain, is the primary quality of this, the structural dimension of mystical love, and it is to be confirmed by outward expression wherever representatives of spiritual superiors are present. In the assembly, these include descendants of saints, foremost among them the leader who represents the patron saint of the assembly, but also a personal spiritual guide or even the very threshold of the saint's tomb, *locus* of his resting place. A much-quoted incident from the life of the saint Nizamuddin Auliya exemplifies the importance of outward deference to anything symbolizing the spiritual superior in the assembly: the saint, attending his own Qawwali assembly, suddenly rose in respect, motivated not by inspiring mystical song, but by the sight of a dog outside the door that resembled the animal he used to see by the house of his own spiritual guide, the saint Baba Farid. Implied in the Sufi's activating the spiritual bond with a saint or his own guide is also an active solicitation of the divine benefices that flow from God through the spiritual chain of Sufism. In its most intense form, however, submission becomes an expression of mystical love as an emotional force, that sacrifices life and possessions to merge with the Beloved.

Whether serving more as a deliberate gesture of deference to the divine representatives present in the court of saints, or more as a spontaneous extension of emotional arousal directed toward the spiritual Beloved, the external format of encountering the saint or 'meeting the Sheikh' (*sheikh se milnā*) is constant. In essence, it consists of making a formal offering (*nazrānā*). Table 26 summarizes the *nazrānā* with its components; in its standard form the devotee rises to approach the spiritual superior, bows down (with unbent legs) or kneels before him, and extends on his open palms – right hand over left – an offering of money, usually a single note (see Plate 14). This note is lightly picked up or touched by the recipient as a gesture of acceptance and placed on the floor before him (see Plate 15). The donor may respond to the blessing of the sheikh's touch by touching his forehead or by raising his palms to his eyes. If he is a personal disciple, he may well kiss the hand or knee of his guide, or the ground before him, as a gesture of ultimate devotion, or he may prolong the encounter by remaining in a prostrated position, indicating ultimate submission (see Plate 16). When returning to his seat, he may further show extreme deference by retreating backward so as not to turn his back to the saint.

It is important to note that this formal offering represents a generally accepted mode of

Table 26 *Link Response (sheikh se milnā)*

a) *Formal offering (nazrānā, nazar):*	
standard presentation	: bow to offer
presentation expressing need for spiritual indicator	: offer jointly with senior person
presentation expressing submission, respect	: 'kiss' or touch feet (*qadambosī*)
presentation expressing submission, devotion	: 'prostrate' (*sajdā*)
presentation expressing aroused mystical love	: embrace (*galā milnā*)
b) *Propitiatory offering (sadqā)*	
to avert evil from sheikh	

Plate 14   A devotee bows to make an offering during the 'urs of Abdus Salam in Delhi

Plate 15   Ahmad Mian, the assembly leader and *sajjādanashīn* of the *dargah* of Abdus Salam, accepts an offering

Plate 16   A disciple prostrating himself before his sheikh, Ahmad Mian of the *dargah* of Abdus Salam, after making an offering

formal social interaction with superiors which is based to some extent on Islamic precedents, but above all on the Indo-Islamic imperial court tradition. The implication is principally that of deference, which is indicated by bowing as well as by the presentation of a gift that serves as a material token of submission, while also implying a request for beneficence. The offering gesture itself clearly indicates that the offerer puts himself in the position of supplicant, a 'taker', whereas the spiritual superior, while the recipient of a gift, is nevertheless himself the benefactor or 'giver', as indicated by the gesture with which he accepts the offering from above.

In addition to this formalized meaning, the offering further represents the material manifestation of the Sufi's emotion of totally giving himself away to merge with the divine, by sacrificing all he has (*muhabbat kī qurbānī meṅ jān-o-māl denā*, literally: 'to give life and possessions in the sacrifice of love'). Indeed, today's money offerings also symbolize what in the past is said to have been a spontaneous giving away of anything a Sufi had access to when overcome by mystical emotion, including the very clothes on his body.

Whatever the specific meaning of the offering,[26] the general implication is that an offering is itself the means for linking up with a spiritual superior in the assembly. This means, however, is available only to those who have money. While Sufis do not consider this to be an actual rule, it is nevertheless a general fact, superseded only in the event of an ecstatic experience during or following which even a penniless devotee may 'meet the sheikh'. Then the rules of conduct are relaxed, so that the lowliest ecstatic person, if he is so moved, may even embrace or kiss the highest spiritual personage present.

The recipient of the offering accepts it on behalf of the spiritual power he represents. Then, unless he occupies the highest spiritual status in the assembly, he too is required to present the offering to a spiritual superior, most likely the leader; thus he articulates his own place in the spiritual hierarchy and thereby validates the structural universe of the royal court of saints. Very rarely, even a leader may wish to express his personal devotion or submission to the divine power whose blessing he enjoys. This he may do by making an offering of his own to any other saint's representative, who will then be obliged to present it back to him as the spiritually highest person present (see Performance No. 1).

No sequencing is implied in the offering response *per se*. The only point in the assembly where offerings are certain to be made is during the obligatory hymns, especially where they introduce the performance, for each such hymn reiterates in some way the foundation of the Sufi spiritual hierarchy, thus inviting every member to reaffirm his allegiance to it. For the rest, offerings generally follow, or are part of the expression of, emotional arousal. Even an ecstatic state normally comes to its conclusion by the devotee 'meeting the sheikh'. Ultimately, the two responses are blended together, complementing each other, for an upsurge of mystical emotion invariably draws the devotee to the saintly representative. Of the two modes, the formal offering is clearly the more complex in its implication, for it involves interaction between all categories of participants, actually articulating their inter-relation. Emotional self-expression, on the other hand, is considered the primary response, as the immediate indicator of mystical arousal which provides the dynamic for the offering, and indeed for the entire proceedings.

In the absence of a sequential structure of audience responses, it is the function of the leader to control and mediate their often highly individualized and unpredictable occurrence. This function applies both to the channelling of emotional expression in the assembly and to the management of its structural dimension.

Plate 17   The assembly leader turns over the offering money to the performers

Emotional expression is monitored indirectly by a calm and composed attitude on the part of the leader. Thus, he does not allow his own feelings free reign, for he serves as a spiritual anchor for the feelings of everyone else. Overt action to this effect may include calming a devotee by placing a hand upon his back or head, during an offering encounter, or even by reciprocating an embrace. The leader's guidance becomes most crucial when a devotee is overcome with ecstasy. To begin with, it is the leader who gives recognition to the ecstatic state by rising, out of respect for the divine blessing it represents, whereupon everyone in the audience does likewise. Throughout the duration of ecstasy, he monitors the devotee and ensures that the performer provides appropriate *takrār* repetitions. Finally, when he perceives the state subsiding, he chooses the right moment to sit down, and thus to have the entire gathering return to a sitting position.

As for the structural dimension of Sufism expressed through the offering, the leader provides its ultimate legitimization by accepting all offerings on behalf of the highest spiritual authority whom he represents in the assembly. Once accepted by him, however, their purpose of articulating a spiritual relationship is completed and they now become money to be given away, in keeping with the Islamic tradition of turning religious tributes into charity. In this particular situation the money serves to remunerate the performers for their service. The relationship thus articulated between Sufi audience and performers is paraphrased most appropriately through the following simile explaining *samaʿ* practice: the recipient of a precious gift brought to him by the donor's servant must reward the servant for bringing it, even though this reward has no relationship to the gift itself (Idris Khan 1973:5).

The leader thus has the additional function of rewarding the performers. Either at the end of their performance, or more often as every offering is accepted by the leader, one of the

Plate 18 The Qawwal's pick-up man deposits the offering money on the harmonium while the singing continues

Qawwals – or an assistant of the leader – goes to receive the money. The standard gesture of turning over the money to the performer is the reverse of the offering: the leader drops the money into the extended palm of the performer, thus always maintaining the formal distinction between the giver and the taker (see Plate 17). The taker raises the money to his eyes in a gesture of partaking of the blessing conferred on it, and returns, ideally by walking backwards, to place the money on the harmonium or next to the lead singer (see Plate 18). The leader, then, plays an essential part in managing the transformation of the offering from a token of spiritual deference into a payment for service.

The performer, finally, is expected to react to his audience in accordance with their spiritual needs, and to respond to the preferences of spiritually prominent persons. This implies that he has an understanding of the setting and participants of the particular occasion and is capable of selecting appropriate songs for his performance. In his delivery of each song he is expected to be sensitive to the listeners' responses, and to conform to one principal requirement: to repeat or amplify any effective part of a song. This becomes crucial when a devotee attains a state of ecstasy; at that point it is incumbent upon the singers to repeat incessantly and briskly the particular song segment that inspired the state. This form of repetition is singled out by the special term *takrār*, and it is the one characteristic of Qawwali music understood and expected by every participant in a Qawwali occasion. Indeed, Sufis believe that this repetition is essential to sustain the ecstatic state and bring it to completion; for if the salient song portion is discontinued prematurely, the ecstatic person may die. Frequently cited examples of mystics who died in ecstasy during a Qawwali assembly include great saints of the past, but also documented cases of present-day Sufis.[27] The account of the saint Qutabuddin Bakhtiyar-e-Kaki, second in the spiritual lineage of the Chishti *silsilā* (see

Table 18), serves best to illustrate how Qawwali functions in this extreme situation. The following famous couplet by the Persian mystic Ahmad Jām inspired the saint to ecstasy:

Kushtagān-e-<u>kh</u>anjar-e-taslīm rā	For the martyrs of the dagger of submission
Har zamān az <u>kh</u>aib jān-e-dīgar ast	The Unseen brings a new life every moment

As the Qawwals repeated every first line, the saint fell down dead, but on every second line, he rose to life again. This alternation continued for many hours to several days, but the singing could not stop, until finally the Sufis present had the performers end on the first line to allow the saint to rest in final union with his Beloved.

E   The social and economic dimensions

Being a gathering of individuals and groups who interact, the Qawwali occasion is also governed by the social norms operating in the larger society. What is presented here, then, is an outline of the social dimension as it governs the structure of the Qawwali occasion.

Taken together, the background discussion and the foregoing outline of the Qawwali as a religious occasion make apparent the basic congruence between norms of Indo-Muslim social structure and concepts of Sufi ideology. Quite naturally, this congruence is manifested in the concept and structure of the Qawwali occasion. The most prominent principle of social organization thus incorporated in the Qawwali occasion is that of hierarchical structuring. Hence, social status and worldly authority are recognized as legitimate indices of privilege, which are ultimately derived from divine beneficence. This notion is reflected in the *darbār-e-auliyā* concept of the royal court of saints. And it is clearly incorporated in the setting of the Qawwali occasion, where worldly status is recognized along with spiritual status, so that listeners with a high status are invariably seated and treated with deference, while low-status or service class listeners are relegated to insignificance, as long as they do not exhibit outstanding spiritual achievement. This notion is further reflected in the position accorded to the performer, whose identity as a type of religious functionary is nevertheless subsumed within the traditional identity of the service professional, so that a performer, almost by definition, cannot also be a Sufi.

It is in the process of interaction in the Qawwali performance that the social dimension sometimes operates independently of, or acts as a modifier to, the spiritual dimension. Social status and relationships come into operation as soon as the performance process begins. For listeners of high status, this means expressing and validating their status; for those of low status it means activating or solidifying vital links of patronage with patrons. These social goals affect both modes of responding to the mystical experience: individual self-expression as well as the offering expressing attachment to the Sufi hierarchy.

Dealing first with the expressive response, it is clear that the manifestations of intense spiritual arousal (shown in Table 25) consist of behavioural responses deviating considerably from the accepted social norm for a gentleman. Beyond this, the expression of a state of ecstasy and self-obliteration implies behaviour not subject to any social control. From a social perspective, such expression puts the devotee on centre stage, exposing him before a more or less heterogeneous audience. The socially prominent devotee, therefore, tends to avoid reaching a state in which he may indulge in any eccentric behaviour contradictory with his social image. For the devotee who lacks social standing, on the other hand, reaching such a

state gives him momentary prominence. Indeed, observation suggests that it is elderly devotees of lower status who are most likely to be seen dancing ecstatically, whereas high-status listeners, including saintly representatives with high social and religious standing, very rarely 'stand up' (khạre hogaye) to go into ecstatic movement. True, in the case of a spiritual leader, this is primarily due to the restraint he imposes upon himself to exercise his leading rôle, but social considerations also operate wherever high status is involved. The fact is that restraint and controlled behaviour are characteristic of high status, so that even among Sufis or spiritual personages the frequent and expansive expression of strong arousal, especially ecstasy, is associated with lower status – just as are conspicuous items of characteristic Sufi clothing. Leading Sufis, then, validate their status with self-control, along with a more subdued outward appearance generally.

There is another aspect to the social dimension of ecstatic self-expression. While prominence is accorded to anyone reaching an ecstatic state, a low-status listener is likely to be reminded of his social place if his state continues too long – after all, he is keeping higher-status listeners standing. And if his state culminates in embracing the leader – or any spiritually high person – as is often the case, the leader may well signal a supporter to have him pulled away gently, sometimes even before he can take the liberty. The point is that the Sufi assembly may be a place where only spiritual values are pursued, and social norms may, as a result, be superseded by spiritual ones, but the basic rules of interaction between juniors and seniors, or low and high, will not be contravened altogether – they do, after all, constitute the very foundation of the Sufi assembly.

As for the formal offering response, its built-in social ingredient is the public giving away of money, a worldly asset. Besides its spiritual function, the offering also constitutes the social gesture *par excellence* for expressing high status and a position of patronage. The fact that the money offered ultimately serves to pay for the service of the performer points directly to this socio-economic implication, by marking the offering as an act of patronage toward a client. In the Qawwali assembly, therefore, it is the accepted social norm that listeners of high worldly status should be seen offering generously and in accord with their status, while failing to offer is considered to result in a loss of face. Specifically, these offerings serve to fulfil two social requirements for the 'special' listeners. One is the obligation ('noblesse oblige') for them, as patrons, to share in the support of those who provide them with service, that is the singers. The other is the formal requirement for guests at the royal court – be it of king or saint – to present themselves at the beginning to the presiding personage, expressing their deference by a token offering (nazrānā in its secular meaning). In Qawwali this is indeed customary, so that during the first song there is often a rush of offerings to the leader (see Performance No. 1).[28]

The operation of this social norm does highlight the importance of money as a material token of status. Indeed the notion is prevalent – though in opposition to the spiritual norm of the Qawwali occasion – that status validation by means of offerings is an obligation regardless of spiritual experience. For devotees with social status, limited financial ability can actually operate to limit their attendance at Qawwali assemblies. Finally, the offering provides by implication the opportunity to establish or activate a social link parallel to the spiritual one that is explicitly being sought. This aspect of the social dimension is particularly relevant to the low-status listeners seeking patronage; so that their limited offerings also serve the highlighting of their social as well as their spiritual dependence. Performers in particular,

while they are not singing, often make use of this means of being 'recognized' by the assembly leader or another spiritual person.

To consider the economic dimension of the Qawwali occasion apart from the social and spiritual dimensions is necessary mainly in order to achieve a perspective on the part played in the assembly by those participants whose purpose in attending is neither spiritual nor social, but economic: the performers. There is general agreement among participants that a performer sings for money and will operate not only on the spiritual but also on the material plane of making a living, so that spiritual requirements may be superseded by material needs. Sufis accept this to an extent – 'that's the Qawwal's nature, pulling money (*paise luṛaknā*) out of people' – but they consider control essential to maintain the spiritual priority. This reflects the general attitude of participants regarding the economic dimension of the Qawwali context: that dimension is recognized, and accepted by implication, but kept in check by allowing only an exclusively spiritual conception to operate at the explicit level.

In past times, assembly leaders exercised total control over the economic dimension by retaining the offering and rewarding the performers later at their discretion – an expression of a more solid feudal tie between them. But even today, the leader retains his economic position of power as a redistributive agent. As for the donor, the spiritual meaning of the offering makes it equally legitimate for him to offer much or nothing, although social motivations for offering do operate to an extent, as discussed above. Ultimately, all Qawwali participants consider the material dimension of Qawwali to be subsumed within the spiritual conception, and an economic windfall for the performers – or its absence – is seen in terms not of human generosity but of *karam* or divine blessing.

In purely economic terms the Qawwali occasion is a setting for the Qawwali performer to provide his services in return for a monetary reward from the audience. Three aspects characterize this process and set it apart from that operating in other types of performance occasions. First, the performer depends entirely on the whim of his listeners as to whether he will be rewarded and with how much, so that it is hardly surprising that he can only explain an economic windfall (or its absence) in terms of 'divine blessing' (*karam*). A lack of consistency in reward is not unique to Qawwali performers: other Indian musicians and performers generally experience it too, but not to the extreme extent which results from the fact that the donation is motivated by spiritual emotion, rather than the donor's desire to reward the performer.

This points to the second and more uniquely economic aspect of Qawwali: the fact that the money is offered purely as spiritual – and social – currency, so to speak, and in a sense becomes a thing of material value only once the non-material transaction is completed. For the Qawwal, then, there is no way that he can pursue his economic goal of performing for money directly, by simply eliciting his material reward directly from the listeners. He is expected to do so indirectly, creating the conditions for arousal, so that its effect may motivate the Sufi to activate his link with the hierarchy by means of an offering – provided the Sufi actually has money to offer.

This in turn leads to the third aspect characterizing the performer's economic pursuit: the fact that the performer's success in creating favourable spiritual conditions hinges primarily on his conforming to standards and requirements of those with spiritual authority, not just on his appealing to wealthy listeners directly. Most of all this is manifested in the absolute authority of the leader over the assembly, expressed in the fact that the leader exercises *de*

facto control over the offering transaction; after all, the performer gets his reward only by the leader's leave.

This concludes the outline of the Qawwali occasion in all its salient features, and thus the *excursus* into a consideration of the Qawwali context of performance. Having dealt with this context in the abstract results in a model of a clearly conceptualized structure expressed in terms of a well-defined setting and procedure, all informed in a logical way by the ideology and the socio-economic background of Sufism. Just like the model for Qawwali music, this context model also incorporates a wide range of variables and options which all form part of the Qawwali *occasion* in the abstract. But it can be actualized only in the particular, that is, the actual performance *event* – which is the same as saying that structure becomes operationalized as process. In that respect, the structure of the context is no different from the structure of the music. Yet they do differ substantively in that the contextual dimension of the Qawwali assembly also contains the motivational dynamic for making a Qawwali event happen, *including* the music; in other words, this motivational dynamic is ideological, social or economic; it is not intrinsically musical.

What is needed in order to demonstrate this dynamic in action is to introduce the actor, to show how the participants interact in Qawwali events to actualize the contextual structure, and thereby cause the musical structure to be actualized. How this shift from structure to process can be made, and what analytical tools are required for the endeavour, will constitute the analysis proper.

Part III
The performance process: the Qawwali event

بنی دانم چہ منزل بود شب جائے کہ من بودم

بہ ہر سو رقصِ بسمل بود شب جائے کہ من بودم

خدا خود میر مجلس بود اندر لامکاں خسرو

محمد شمع محفل بود شب جائے کہ من بودم

Namī dānam che manzil būd shab jāe keh man
 būdam
Bahar sū raqs-e-bismil būd shab jāe keh man
 būdam

Khudā khud mīr-e-majlis būd andar lāmakān
 Khusrau
Muhammad shamm-e-mahfil būd shab jāe keh
 man būdam

I know not in what state and in what wondrous
 place I found myself last night
Victims of Love ecstatic danced all around me
 where I found myself last night

God Himself was Lord of this assembly – o
 Khusrau, partaker of the Infinite
Muhammad was the Beloved illuminating that
 wondrous place where I found myself last
 night

Back in the assembly the seeker is once again enveloped by the continuous sound of Qawwali singing, now a familiar idiom, while all around him is an audience whose very stance and actions have become profoundly meaningful. He listens and observes, yet the puzzle remains: Why does the Qawwal sing this particular song, choose that verse, repeat this word, embellish that tune? And why does one listener exclaim in fervour while another sits swaying when suddenly they both rise at once with an offering to the sheikh who now weeps but did not stir earlier? With the Sufi we must accept the mystery of the sama experience, the ultimate Why; yet it is possible to pursue the How. The guide for this quest, once again, is the musician, one willing to reveal what his agile musical mind creates, shaping an ongoing message of both statement and response to what his eagle eye continues to perceive among his Sufi listeners. To grasp what really happens in Qawwali means learning to follow the musician both by ear and by eye – a revelation. What remains is then to practise the skill and to sharpen the perception toward an ever deeper understanding of how Qawwali functions, how music shapes meaning and meaning shapes music; how they shape each other.*

Part III turns the focus back to the music, only this time it is music considered not in the abstract – as analysed in Part I – but performed in the context of the Qawwali assembly – as outlined in Part II. With both musical and contextual stuctures accessible to analysis, it is now possible to proceed to investigate how this musical idiom is actually used in its performance context, how music and context inter-relate in the process of performance.

5 *Introducing performance analysis*

A   The task

There are two problematic aspects facing any analyst of a performance process. One is the problem of having to deal with an interaction between two domains which are totally different from each other qualitatively, each consisting of a divergent range of variables. The second, more fundamental, problem is having to analyse process, an ongoing dynamic, by means of a procedure – conventional analysis – which operates by segmenting its object, so that the dynamic linking the pieces, the very crux of process, tends to be left out of an analysis, which by its nature tends to turn process into structure.

I propose to deal with the first problem at two levels. Diversity within either domain can be organized by setting out each domain as a structure, to serve as referential grids for individual variables as they occur in the performance process. These structures – of Qawwali music and context – are already available for such reference, as presented in Parts I and II. As for dealing with the qualitative difference between musical and contextual variables in the analysis of an interaction between the two, this problem can only be solved if the dynamic link operating between them can be perceived as a common denominator which can act to generate some form of equivalence between musical and contextual variables. It will be the major task of this process analysis to identify the several such common denominators operating in the Qawwali performance process, and to investigate the important equivalences that exist, on their basis, between features of music and context.

It is in the same direction that the second problem – analysing process in terms of structure – may find a possible solution. For if the common denominators are in fact dynamic links, that dynamic must be identifiable as a channel or referent along which a context variable can cause the occurrence of a corresponding music variable. It will be by means of these denominators or referents, finally, that context variables can be 'plugged' into the music, and context constraints can thus become part of a musical grammar.

But this is only half the answer to the problem; for it sets up a model for the mechanics of the interaction process without accounting for the motivation that leads to specific choices made by using this mechanic. It is here that the human actor must be brought on to the scene. Not that he has been excluded from the ethnographic perspective, but in analyses dealing with musical sound he is often conspicuously absent. A Qawwali performance, however, is so manifestly shaped by the participants, even at the level of its religious function, that the real question is not whether participants should become the focus of the analysis, but which one should. It is this question that provides the starting point for dealing with the Qawwali performance process.

This process basically consists of the decisions and actions of the participants, musicians and audience, which all together constitute the performance interaction. The common basis

for this interaction is their shared conception of what a Qawwali occasion is – the standard model as outlined in the preceding section. At the same time, the strategies that motivate their respective decisions and actions differ, most fundamentally between performers and listeners. What accounts for these differences is the particular vantage point from which each participant contributes to the realization of that shared conception during an actual performance. Logically speaking, to analyse the process of a Qawwali event in its totality would require the consideration of all participants' strategies put together, as informed by their respective vantage points. Such an analysis is not intended here. The goal of this investigation is an analysis of the music, which means that the context is relevant only inasmuch as it contributes to that analysis, that is, inasmuch as it affects the music. Therefore, the interaction process to be analysed is that between context and music, not the interaction between participants *per se*. Among Qawwali participants, only the performer knows and makes the music, hence such an analysis can only be built on him. Indeed, for the purpose of analysing any performance event involving a performance medium, the key participant is the performer who knows and uses the medium of performance. All other participants and their actions, in other words the entire interaction process, are relevant to this analysis only in terms of the performer's perception, because it is he alone who is responsible for the actualization of the music.

Focussing the performance process analysis on the musician should not imply that the musician therefore has a dominant position among participants; quite the contrary: the discussion of the Qawwali occasion's every aspect – concept, setting and procedure – has made it amply clear that the performer is accorded the least possible significance, considering his indispensable rôle. In fact, it appears that he and his actions are controlled by the audience. But that control is variable, that is, the performer is not *structurally* constrained by it (as for example certain musical features are by textual features), and therefore his actions cannot be predicted on the basis of audience actions. Herein lies his position as an originator of strategy, for his action, despite his marginality – socially and professionally – are nevertheless the result of his own decisions, even though these may arise from a vantage point of weakness and dependence.

B   The performer's vantage point

In order to set the stage for a performer-centred analysis of the Qawwali musical process, it is essential that the performer's vantage point be outlined in very specific terms, drawing upon the larger social and professional frame of reference which broadly limits his sphere of operation. The purpose is to provide the reader with a sense of the performer's *rationale* as it arises from the opportunities and constraints that define his position in the Qawwali occasion.

The most basic aspect of the performer's vantage point is his own position in the assembly, including his access to it as a performing opportunity. Here the over-riding reality is the performer's dependence on the personal control exercised by the spiritual leader, who convenes the assembly both over access and process of the performance. By definition, the performer stands in the position of a client dependent on patronage, whether it is a permanent personal patron–client tie with a saint's representative of his home shrine (as between Meraj and Khwaja Hasan Sani; see Performance No. 1, p. 144), or the temporary patronage sought or obtained from the leader of a particular Qawwali assembly (as between Meraj and Khalil

Mian; see Performance No. 2, p. 175). An important and valued exception to this is the hereditary right performers attached to a shrine have to ritual performance occasions – as Meraj has at Nizamuddin Auliya – but since these rights are held communally by the performing lineage (*brādrī*), their benefit for the individual performer is limited.

As for the performance process itself, it is in all cases subject to the supreme control of the spiritual leader. Even where the performer has a hereditary right of access, the leader can have him time and structure the performance according to his wishes. And where he controls the performer's very access – as he does in almost all situations – everything the performer does, including his very act of performing, can be liable to the leader's guidance, correction or censure.

The implications of this control for the performer are particularly crucial, due to the fact that in most assemblies he is only one of several performers, any of whom may easily replace him. This pits him against his colleagues – or lineage brothers – in direct competition. It may be relevant here to point out again that the performer has neither an ideological nor a socio-economic base to secure his position in the assembly. In ideological terms the performer is only a medium with no spiritual merit or authority, even though some Qawwals try to claim spiritual status inherited from, or assigned by, a Sufi authority. Such claims are quite categorically denied by Sufis. In worldly terms, the performer has traditionally been identified with a low social class without assets, 'a despised lot', even though exceptionally a *nawāb*'s young son may please himself by performing Qawwali (as happened at the 'urs of Kakori in 1976).

Given the utterly dependent position of the performer in the performance occasion, it follows that his need for securing the approval of those controlling the assembly is of paramount importance, if he is to be successful. For this reason, his view of the Qawwali assembly as a performance context, and of his goal within it, constitute the most crucial aspects of the performer's vantage point.

The Qawwal's performance goal

What is the Qawwali performance to the performer? Basically, the performer shares in the commonly held conception of the Qawwali occasion as outlined in Chapter 4. As a participant he is committed to contributing to a successful realization of this conception. For him, as the performer, this means singing Qawwali songs in accordance with the spiritual needs of his audience. His explicit goal is to evoke spiritual enhancement among the listeners, leading to mystical arousal and even ecstasy. The Qawwal is fully aware of the crucial part he plays in the proceedings and he takes very seriously the responsibility it entails toward his listeners. Time and again performers relate how the high point in their career came at the time when a great Sufi or leader went into deep ecstasy during their performance. At such a time the performer, too, shares in the gift of divine benefice manifested in the ecstatic state, valuing it above anything material. However, the performer knows his rôle is simply that of a mouthpiece, and consistently denies having any personal share in the impact generated by his performance.

At the same time the Qawwali occasion is to the performer the context for earning a living, as outlined in Chapter 4E, pp. 128 ff. The peculiar situation for the Qawwal – as compared with other Indian musicians or with professional performers generally – is the fact that his
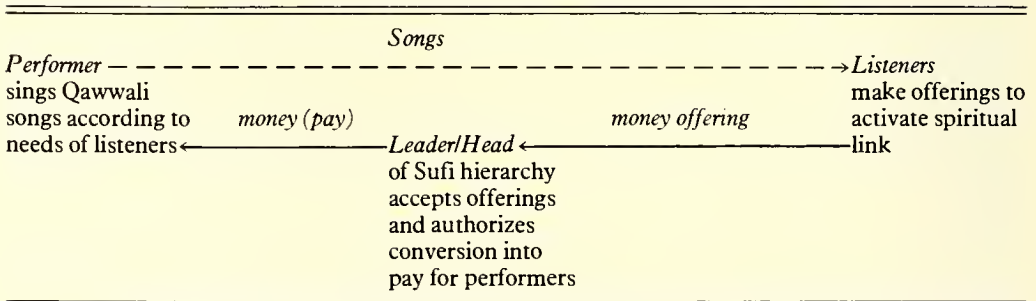
Plate 19   A rupee note about to be transformed from offering to pay, as it passes from the devotee to the performer via the sheikh

remuneration does not come to him as a direct reward for a good performance. Rather, it is the indirect material result of what is essentially a non-material transaction: the symbolic expression of the spiritual link between a Sufi and his spiritual superior – a transaction not involving the performer at all. While the offerings are of course linked to the performance, inasmuch as they are generally made in response to the impact of the music, they are only incidentally a reward for the performer, just as the performer is only incidentally a contributor to the impact of the music. The entire complex of the offering–pay conversion, in its relation to the performer's input into the performance, is captured in Plate 19, and schematized in Table 27 in such a way as to show its relevance to the performer.

From all this it becomes obvious that earning money from the audience, important as it may be for the performer, has to remain an implicit goal, to be achieved only in conjunction with, or through, the explicit goal of evoking spiritual benefices for this audience. Accordingly, the performer orients himself first of all to the spiritual dimension of the performance, playing his part in the realization of a Qawwali occasion in accordance with the standards set and shared by all the participants. This requires him to consider the factors of both setting and procedure in relation to the spiritual needs of his audience. The performer knows that it is his task to understand and serve these needs; indeed this is implied in his position as a service professional. The strategic onus for this purpose is entirely on him and he is quite free to

Table 27 *Performer's Earning Process*

	Songs			
Performer — →*Listeners*				
sings Qawwali songs according to needs of listeners ←	*money (pay)* ————————	*Leader/Head* ←	*money offering* ————————	make offerings to activate spiritual link
		of Sufi hierarchy accepts offerings and authorizes conversion into pay for performers		

exercise it. The fact that performers invariably use this freedom to attempt as close a compliance with their audience's wishes as possible – rather than to 'express themselves' or innovate – is an obvious manifestation of their dependent position *vis à vis* that audience and, indeed, can be understood only in relation to this reality.

The Qawwal's perspective on the performance context

From the performer's vantage point the occasion in its spiritual dimension is defined by two basic factors; spiritual leadership and thematic focus. Of these, spiritual leadership is primary, for it may also determine the thematic focus. The thematic focus suggests the basic framework for the performance. It is derived most obviously from setting factors such as the occasion (for example a saint's anniversary) or the place (for example a saint's tomb) but even then the spiritual leadership influences the way the thematic focus is realized. Performers, therefore, consider spiritual leadership as the primary factor in their view of the Qawwali occasion, for they are fully aware of the hierarchical structure of Sufism.

As for the performer's implicit goal, that is, the material perspective, it forms an integral part of this vantage point, without introducing a substantive contradiction to the spiritual dimension. For the basic acceptance of the worldly status hierarchy as a God-given social ordering makes possible the acceptance of this dimension of worldly status, in the context of the hierarchical setting of the royal court of saints (*darbār-e-auliyā*). Thus worldly status is seen to play the rôle of confirming spiritual status through deference expressed in offerings, which, at the same time, serve to validate the status of the donor. The performer, by virtue of being the client providing service to this alliance of spiritual and worldly status, considers himself the natural beneficiary of these offerings. From a material perspective, then, the performer sees the Qawwali occasion in terms of two major factors: the audience composition with its offering potential, and the authority structure that controls his access to these offerings (the leader).

In an overall sense, taking both spiritual and material perspectives together, the Qawwali performer directs his major effort to the leader and any other spiritual notables closely allied with him, for he knows that their state and responses are known to affect their spiritual dependents, that is the rest of the audience. However, should the performer disregard this authority structure by catering to a rich devotee over the need of a materially less rewarding spiritual notable, there is potential for conflict and censure (see for example Performance No. 2). What is essential about the Qawwali performer's position *vis à vis* the performing occasion is the fact that, no matter how harsh the economic reality, or how purely financial his interest, the performer can pursue this material goal only by implication, so to speak, and his financial success ultimately derives from 'scoring' at the spiritual level. This is not to deny the genuine importance which spiritual success holds for many a performer, but his overall vantage point must invariably include the explicit mystical as well as the implicit financial dimension. Indeed, it is in these very terms that the Qawwal defines himself: 'I am a complete Qawwal . . . looking equally to spiritual benefice and to money.'

The Qawwal's perspective on the performance medium

The stage has been set for the performer to enter and assess the occasion of performance on the basis of his own position within it, and in accordance with his goal as a performer of

Qawwali music. What remains is to consider the musical idiom as the strategic medium by which he pursues this goal. In broad terms, the musical content and style of the performance idiom of Qawwali are defined by the consensus of participants' expectations, as outlined in Chapter 4. The performer abides by this standard of expectation; indeed, doing so is a prerequisite for an acceptable performance. At the same time, the nature of the performance occasion not only gives the performer choices to make, it requires them of necessity. In fact, the musical idiom in itself reflects this dual requirement, of conformity on one hand and flexibility on the other. In terms simplified from the music outline in Chapter 2, this idiom consists of an established repertoire of songs (text and music) along with techniques and ingredients to manipulate, modify or amplify this repertoire. However, there are limits of conformity – set by the listener's expectations – within which the performer can exercise his musical options strategically. They leave two broad, principal areas of choice: one concerns the choice of the song, both as to textual and musical content and as to its stylistic presentation; the other area comprises the totality of options governing the internal structuring of the song in performance. Competent control of both areas is required of the performer who wishes to pursue his goal successfully. This means that he should have at his instant command a memorized store of texts and tunes covering the stylistic range that will enable him to choose the song appropriately. Further, he should control the range of internal structuring devices, both textual and musical, in order to shape the song once it is chosen.

Finally, to convey his musical choices successfully in performance, the Qawwal needs a competent and well worked out performing ensemble. The basis for such an ensemble is strong leadership on the part of the lead singer and instant compliance on that of the accompanists. In fact, the onus for handling the entire performance is on the lead singer. Of course, his 'companions' (*sāthī*) share the same basic musical and contextual knowledge, but he alone is required to operationalize it in terms of strategy, and his authority is paramount. Within a party, I have never heard anyone argue with his leader, though leaders do so in the context of a communal performance. When it comes to considering strategy, then, the only relevant performer to be considered is the lead singer, and it is he who figures in the performance descriptions which are to follow.

The outline of the performer's vantage point is now complete, having covered the performer's own position in the performance occasion, defined his goal in performance, outlined the resulting perspective *vis à vis* the performance context, and, finally, dealt with the performance idiom as his strategic medium. The next step is to consider the way all this is actualized in the process of performance.

C   The context–music interaction

With the performer established as the hub of the context–music interaction, this interaction can now be redefined as follows: the performer, using his knowledge of the Qawwali performance idiom and of the Qawwali occasion of performance, takes cues from the occasion to select the musical variables for his performance. In doing so he fulfils the spiritual function of Qawwali music in the assembly, while at the same time maximizing his own socio-economic position. Thus he makes particular choices based on general principles of strategy, which reflect both ideological and socio-economic commitments.

The logical way of proceeding with an analysis of the performance process would be to start

with the identification of these principles or criteria by which the performer relates context to music, and then to analyse how he uses them, illustrating the systematic *exposé* with ethnographic examples. However, while this sequence is logically appropriate, it leads the reader into an analytical excursion based on principles whose derivation will be less than clear, simply because that derivation itself stems from a novel perspective on performance, that is, viewing music and context simultaneously and from a single standpoint, that of the performer. This perspective and its logic are crucial to the entire analysis of the performance process.

I can think of no better way of conveying this perspective to the reader than by illustrating how I applied it myself, in a step by step procedure that leads from the description of details to the analysis of principles. Essentially, this involved three levels of abstraction. The first is to observe and then describe the performance interaction in concrete detail as it takes place in each particular Qawwali event. Here videotaped performances provide an accurate record of both Qawwali sound and audience behaviour, which is indispensable for transcription and subsequent review by participants. Chapter 6 presents this ethnographic level in the form of video transcriptions and their interpretation.

The next level of abstraction entails drawing a generalized picture of the performance process based on the particular instances of Qawwali performances. This is done in Chapter 7 by charting a song performance as a performer experiences it, but 'in the abstract', covering the singer and the relationships between his performance options, both musical and contextual, at every step.

The third level, the analysis itself, presented in Chapter 8, in a sense parallels the outline of a performance, but in the process replaces concrete options and relationships with abstract principles of meaning (semantic referents) capable of generating those options and relationships under given conditions. It is at this level of abstraction that it becomes possible to formulate the rules for the contextual input into the musical programming of Qawwali. Throughout this part of the book, graphs, charts and tables dealing with features of the context–music interaction are of particular importance, because graphic representations permit isolating such features as well as the relationship between them. In the analysis chapter particularly, tables serve the purpose of making the analytical model more portable by simplifying each step in the argument to its essentials.

The source material for this section deserves special comment. The material for the entire section is derived from two complementary sources: recorded observation of performance and talks with performers. In an overall sense, this presentation, no less than the sections on musical and contextual structure, draws heavily from notions learned – directly or indirectly – from performers; but these notions may well be incomplete. It must be understood that the vital domain of the performer's strategies is not easily accessible to an outsider, and for good reasons. If the outsider is a listener and therefore a potential patron – as any foreigner, no matter how modestly endowed, will be classed – then the performer's stance toward him obviously precludes divulging strategies not congruent with the conception of Qawwali as spiritual in nature. If, on the other hand, the outsider is a performer and therefore a potential competitor – as even a foreign musician could be expected to be – then he is not likely to be let in on anything that may be considered secrets of the trade. In this respect only, being a woman and therefore a misfit *vis à vis* these all-male categories was probably a help in setting me, as investigator, apart professionally, while enabling me to establish a family relationship

Plate 20   Family visit
at Meraj's house –
photographed in the
privacy of his rooftop

at the personal level (see Plate 20 – a male investigator would not have access to families due to women's seclusion). At any rate, I consider my informants' sharing of performance strategies as a special gift. And the trust on which this information in particular is based imposes a responsibility for which immediate rewards can only partially compensate. I have tried to treat this trust with respect, attempting especially to avoid sharing in the attitude of contempt which not only upper-class listeners but – by their own implication – even performers themselves often evince toward the Qawwali *métier*.

6   *Observing the Qawwali performance*

This chapter aims at presenting the ethnographic evidence for the way in which the Qawwali performance process works, in the form of two actual Qawwali performances. The reader has already encountered these performances (Introduction pp. 1 ff.), and the music (Repertoire Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 11, 8, 10) is familiar, as is the general setting – the *mahfil-e-khās* at Nizamuddin Auliya. The performer is Meraj Ahmad who also contributed to the evaluation of his performances. Recorded on videotape (see Plate 21), the two performances also serve to illustrate how the process of observing, coding and interpreting has provided an important data base for this study. In order actually to capture both detail and dynamic of the interplay between music and audience behaviour, I developed two methods of transcribing and interpreting these video recordings: the videograph and the videochart.

The videograph (see pp. 148 ff.) provides an accurate visual record of audience behaviour as it occurs in response to the ongoing song performance and also supplies the temporal axis for plotting that behaviour. The more interpretative videochart (see pp. 181 ff.) traces the interaction between the musician's ongoing performance decisions and the audience responses as he perceives them, along with the resulting song sequence. The two 'notational systems' are thus complementary in emphasis: the one (videograph) effectively portraying

Plate 21   Author and equipment are in place for video-recording the Chilla Mahfil

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the complexity of multiple audience responses, the other (videochart) focussing on the interactional dynamic of the performance.

A   Performance 1: The Chilla Mahfil

This first and primary performance example is a short but complete Qawwali event during which Meraj, the sole performer, sings three of the songs (Repertoire Nos. 1, 3, and 4). The Chilla Mahfil is held on the second day of the ʿurs of both Nizamuddin Auliya and Amir Khusrau; this is the actual death day of both: 'the auspicious seventeenth' (*sattarvīn sharīf*), that is, the seventeenth day of the Islamic months of Rabi-us-Sani and Rajab respectively (see p. 95 f. above). As instituted by Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami (see p. 95 above), this assembly is timed to precede the anniversary ritual (*qul, khatam*) which is held at the sanctuary after 11 a.m. on that day; accordingly, it is expected to begin at about 10 a.m. and to last for at most one hour, so that the participants can return to the shrine in time for the ritual (see p. 105 above). Because of this special situation, the Qawwali performance at this event is to be managed exclusively by Meraj (see Plate 22). The Chilla Mahfil is perhaps the most exclusive or intimate Qawwali event at Nizamuddin Auliya. Due to the somewhat remote location of the Chilla (see p. 104 and Plate 23) only a limited number of committed devotees attend, all connected in some personal way with the leader Khwaja Hasan Sani.

At this particular Chilla event of Nizamuddin Auliya's ʿurs in 1976, Meraj finds the expected components of special listeners among his audience of nearly 30 (see Plate 24). Representing the spiritual status hierarchy are not only his patron with his two brothers, but also two most important saintly descendants from the shrine in Ajmer, abode of the Chishti founder-saint. One of these, Syed Haleem Chishti, is a *gaddīnashīn* (senior representative) of that saint; he is also a special friend of Khwaja Hasan Sani. A regular visitor at Nizamuddin Auliya anniversaries, he is well known there for his spiritual sophistication and receptive sensitivity to Qawwali, as well as for his generosity. The other, Syed Zainul Abedin, is a first-time visitor, young and newly installed as the titular representative (*dīwān*, see p. 92 above) of the Ajmer saint after his father's death. This means that he formally heads the hierarchy at this assembly, and indeed at any Qawwali assembly in India; he is therefore the final recipient of all offerings, even though in personal standing and seniority, Syed Haleem Chishti is far above him. Meraj is aware of this constellation and especially of his own patron's close association with the senior representative, whom he is therefore prepared to favour with special consideration (see Plate 25).

Another special listener who claims and gets Meraj's attention is Anwar Sabri, a well-. known and venerable Sufi poet who is always part of Khwaja Hasan Sani's special audience (see Plate 26). Meraj also notes a number of other spiritual personages, including local representatives of lesser saints. Two of them are distinctly newcomers; one was already identified to Meraj as a first-time visitor from a shrine in Eastern India, the other one, from his apparel, looks like a Sufi visiting the ʿurs from Pakistan. Both have yet to be assessed as listeners.

Other prominent listeners belong to the worldly status category. Meraj notes with satisfaction the presence of several well-to-do devotees and disciples of his patron's father, who had a large circle of followers; some of them are businessmen from Bombay who regularly attend the ʿurs. Also present, as expected, is the author's husband whose literary orientation Meraj

knows and appreciates, as well as his invariable generosity which Meraj knows to be tied to the author's study with him. There is further the usual group of local devotees, some businessmen, others of a literary bent, and finally a few religious old men who have no particular standing other than their age.

In addition to the audience Meraj also considers the two important setting factors of the Chilla Mahfil: it is the first formal assembly of the 'urs, and its duration is limited – especially today, due to a late start. Meraj can therefore expect time for at most three songs, possibly only two, in addition to the two obligatory ritual hymns which are sung communally. It is all the more important for Meraj to curtail the duration of the ritual hymns, so that enough time remains for the more profitable 'party' singing.

At this occasion, only Meraj's own performing group is present, so that they normally sing the communally sung ritual hymns as well. Meraj therefore always likes to take special care to let his senior accompanist lead the community singing, so that he himself appears as leader only at the start of his own party singing, and uninformed listeners may not have the impression that Meraj already led and received offerings during the ritual hymns, which would reduce the impact of his party singing. But this time Meraj is making an exception because only recently his leader – and at an earlier occasion the Sufi poet Anwar Sabri – expressed annoyance at the unsatisfactory vocal quality of the senior accompanist, a rather old man (*cf.* cassette 1 (a) and (b)). Indeed, that annoyance had at the time resulted in Meraj losing his initial turn and being relegated to the end of a large Qawwali assembly. So he himself leads the hymns today, thinking that at least this will enable him to control their duration more effectively.

The Qawwali performance sequence at this event corresponds to the standard format of a Qawwali occasion (see Table 23). This is evident from the following outline of the complete event, as recorded (the recited portions and a second obligatory hymn, the *Rang* – see p. 116 f. above – are omitted from the transcription and marked★).

I	Recitation:	*Qira'at*★	– by various participants
		(Koranic passages)	
		Shijrā★	– by Ashur Mian (Kachocha saint's descendant)
		(Genealogy)	
		Du'ā	– by Khwaja Hasan Sani, assembly leader
		(Prayer)	
II	Qawwali:	1. *Qaul*	– by communal Qawwal group, led by Meraj
		2. *Rang*★	– by communal group, as above
		3. *Masnavī*	– by Qawwal party, led by Meraj
		4. *Torī sūrat*	– by Qawwal party, as above
III	Recitation:	*Fātehā*★	– by Khwaja Hasan Sani, assembly leader

The video transcription which underlies the interpretation of this performance (and of all the others which were analysed for this study) is presented here in excerpts of salient interactional episodes, which are amplified and connected by a descriptive commentary. All the behavioural information relevant to the Qawwali performance interaction – but not every move of each listener – is visually presented in relation to the structural units of the song which provide a mechanically as well as semantically appropriate durational framework for it. Across the top of the graph the sequence of song units is written out along a horizontal axis in

Plate 22 Meraj Ahmad with his brother Iqbal Ahmad and two future Qaw-wals, awaiting the start of the Chilla Mahfil

Plate 23 The Chilla of Baba Farid, a thirteenth-century structure overlooking the river Jumna, where the Chil-la Mahfil is held

Plate 24 From his place be-hind the harmonium Meraj is surveying his audience at the start of the Chilla Mahfil

Plate 25 The leading sheikhs of the Chilla assembly: Khwaja Hasan Sani, leader of the assembly; Syed Haleem Chishti, *gaḍḍīnashīn* of Ajmer; Zainul Abedin, *dīwān* of Ajmer; and Ashur Mian, a local saint's descendant

Plate 26 Sufi poet Allama Anwar Sabri outside the Chilla

Graph 1   *Qaul*: lines 1 and 2

PERFORMERS:

Lead singer with accompanists

Pick-up man   ∝

LISTENERS:

Diwan of Ajmer	Z
Gaddinashin, Ajmer	H
Assembly LEADER	K
Leader's elder brother	P
Leader's younger brother	M
Sufi poet	A
Descendant, Kachocha	S
Wealthy Bombay disciple	L
Bombay disciple	T
Canadian patron	Q
Kashmiri devotee	Y
Bombay devotee	B
Delhi devotee	E
American Sufi	F
Disciple, businessman	G
Disciple's companion	O
Old devotee	C
Very old devotee	V
Kanpur disciple	U
Junior devotee	J
Neighbourhood devotee	N
Pakistani visitor	I
Rudauli descendant	R
Unidentified devotees	X, W
Unidentified, mostly invisible to camera	Є, ∧

tonic = A, 8/8 bar, ♩ = 76

Graph 2   *Qaul*: lines 1-3

Graph 3   *Qaul*: lines 3–6

Graph 4   *Qaul*: line 1

which one unit of the musical metre of the song corresponds to a specific graph length. This represents the performer's part of the interaction, along with the activity of picking up offering money. Below this, the listeners are lined up vertically in accordance with their status position – rather than the seating order of the assembly, although that too has some relevance. Listeners' responses are coded descriptively. Where relevant, this includes the duration of a response (for example, for swaying) and the person it is directed to (for example, for offerings); combined responses are noted as well. In this way the visible responses of each listener can be plotted against the sequence of musical units which runs along the top of the transcription. The timing of these responses is accurate to the metric unit or half unit, depending on the duration of the metre, a sufficient degree of precision in relation to the shortest meaningful text unit, and adequate even to represent the more subtle interaction based on purely musical communication (see for example p. 165f. below)

1   The *Qaul (Man kunto)* (Repertoire No. 1; CD item: 1)

Graphs 1 and 2: Qaul, lines 1–3.   During the *Qaul* it is incumbent on the spiritual leaders to pay their respect to the Sufi hierarchy, by making offerings to the highest representatives present as well as by honouring each other. Since it is the short first line (*A1* and *A2*) which carries the message of the song, its presentation must be extended, so as to give everyone the opportunity to respond to it. This Meraj does by using alternate repeat endings. But he is also most keen to use the precious time of this short Qawwali event for party singing, so as soon as he gauges the high point of offerings to be over, he moves on to complete a minimal statement of the remainder of the song while his pick-up man is already standing by.

Graphs 3 and 4: Qaul, lines 3–6, 1.   Waiting for two more offerings to be completed and passed to their last recipient, he repeats the opening phrase (*A*) just enough times to have his man pick up the last offering, and then proceeds immediately to the second ritual song, the *Rang*.
    Meraj follows much the same strategy during the *Rang*, though this hymn is both longer and of more immediate importance to the ʿurs celebration, since it expresses Amir Khusrau's joy at finding Nizamuddin Auliya as his guide. An even greater number (20 persons) offers a total of 51 rupees, so that it all takes more time. The end of this song, which also marks the end of ritual singing, is announced by the briefest of cadences – an extension of the last note of the song – and then Meraj is free to begin his own personal 'turn' to sing. During the *Rang* Meraj has been considering the choice of his first song. Given the spiritual and literary standing of his audience, he deems it appropriate to begin with that most auspicious Sufi classic, the *Masnavi*.

2   The *Masnavi* (Repertoire No. 4; CD item: 6)

    First Verse

Graph 5: Masnavi, verse 1 (recitative) line 1.   To start this song Meraj needs to lower the tonic from the previous song, because of the *Masnavi* tune's high register emphasis. Meraj first intones the opening couplet as a recitative, as is the custom for this particular song. If the response is good, he plans to convert the recitative into a song by reiterating it in regular

rhythm with the drum. Almost immediately Meraj sees Syed Haleem Chishti, the *gaḍḍinashīn* of Ajmer, respond in a reverential gesture, bowing his head and joining his palms, to express symbolically his identification with the poetic message; then he begins to sway. Also, three listeners signal to the Qawwals, two to change money – which indicates their wish to make more offerings.

Graph 6: Masnavī, verse 1 (recitative). By the second line (A) of the verse, Khwaja Hasan Sani, the leader, rises to make an offering to Syed Haleem Chishti, in deference to his superior spiritual status. Meraj therefore quickly decides to turn the *Masnavī* recitative into a song.

No Graph: Masnavī, verse 1 (statements 2–5, with drum). As soon as the drum signals the start of the song, Ali Seth, the devout disciple from Bombay, follows his sheikh's lead and makes an offering too, but to the Sufi poet Anwar Sabri. On the second line three more offerings come from the Canadian patron, made to all three leading personages of the assembly. Meanwhile, Meraj observes that both his patron and his friend from Ajmer are tapping along with the drum rhythm, and the latter now bows again and starts weeping, then returns to swaying. Meraj therefore repeats the entire verse, observing him weep with more intensity, while others show light arousal. Knowing that Khwaja Hasan Sani, the leader, never gives free expression to his mystical emotion, Meraj suddenly observes a response in his face and therefore decides to repeat the verse once again, to bring out its full impact by means of reiterating the second line. The leader's emotion now prompts him to make two more offerings to Syed Haleem Chishti who weeps intermittently. The Canadian patron, in appreciation of the verse, offers again.

Nothing warrants multiple repetition at this time, but Meraj nevertheless is attempting to generate some intensification through a gradual increase in tempo, while repeating once more the opening verse. But no change occurs in the level of arousal all around, so after a dual statement, Meraj decides to proceed to the second verse which he knows to be particularly effective.

Second Verse

Graphs 7 and 8: Masnavī, verse 2. The first line (B), stated three times, brings no response, except for one senior devotee changing money, an indication of intended offerings. It is on the second line (*Graph 8*) that spontaneously the *gaḍḍinashīn* of Ajmer rises and kneels down before the assembly leader with an offering, thus acting out the poet's textual message of submission in love: for lovers the place of adoration is your presence (see translation, p. 28). The assembly leader, deeply moved by the verse and by this gesture from a spiritual superior, reciprocates the gesture, at the same time showing his deepest submission by touching his feet. The *gaḍḍinashīn* then rises and touches the wall behind him, hallowed abode of the saint Nizamuddin Auliya. Several other offerings are received, and Meraj fully expects the heightened emotion of the leading sheikhs to have its impact on the audience, particularly on those who are personally linked to the saint by discipleship. One senior disciple (U) is visibly moved, even calling out the text of the verse, but does not make an offering yet (though he has changed money earlier in the verse and might wish to offer). Meraj therefore decides to repeat the entire verse.

Graph 9: Masnavī, verse 2 (statement 2) line 1.   In the light of the second line (*A*), once stated, the first line (*B*) has now a greater impact than on its initial presentation (see *Graph 7*). Several listeners offer in order to add a validation of their own mystical love to that of the two leaders.

No Graph: Masnavī, verse 2 (statement 2) line 2.   On the restatement of the second line, however, the impact subsides, except for the continued arousal of the *gaḍḍīnashīn* of Ajmer and repeated exclamations and gestures from the visiting saintly representative from Rudauli (*R*). A young devotee moves the tray of food offerings to be distributed later, but that is no concern of Meraj. Also, Meraj is beginning to discount the frequent responses of the visiting Rudauli descendant, for he has been expressing himself almost continuously, yet he has not focussed his enthusiasm on any part of the song, nor validated his link with an offering even once. Obviously his behaviour is not in keeping with his status and spiritual identity. However, Meraj always takes the *gaḍḍīnashīn*'s responses most seriously and therefore decides to repeat this verse once more now, also hoping for some more offerings.

Graph 10: Masnavī, verse 2 (statement 3) line 2.   In this last attempt to generate more enthusiasm for the second line, Meraj introduces multiple repetition, first introducing intensification by means of a higher pitch in the ending of A (A↑ ↑ ↑). But only one rupee is offered which the leader in turn offers formally to his elder brother, Pasha, in recognition of his chronological seniority (not on Graph); the brother then rises to offer it to the *dīwān* of Ajmer, highest status holder of the assembly: so as soon as this offering has reached its final destination in the hands of the pick-up man, Meraj moves on, now deciding to make the switch into the closely related poem by Amir Khusrau which addresses the saint Nizamuddin directly.

Third Verse

Syed Haleem Chishti immediately responds by covering his face and gives expression to his emotion. The senior disciple who was moved earlier and had continued to sway, now finally offers to both the leader and the senior representative from Ajmer. Another offering by the Canadian patron is received, but Meraj is missing out on responses from those listeners who do not understand Farsi, though they are not many.

The second line yields no offerings at all, yet Meraj repeats it, even intensifying it with the high-pitched alternate ending (A↑ ↑ ↑), because now not only the *gaḍḍīnashīn* but another very senior Sufi is showing strong emotion – swaying, even gesticulating and weeping. He also notes the local disciple's (G) emotion, but sees no intensification in any state to warrant continuing the repetition.

Fourth Verse

This verse is one reinforcing the message of the first one, and it evokes strong responses in a number of the 'special' listeners, including the foremost among them, the *gaḍḍīnashīn* of Ajmer. On the second line even the leader cannot restrain himself from verbalizing the delight. But only one offering is received, which the *gaḍḍīnashīn* uses to express once more his

deep respect to the saint, by standing up to offer it to the leader Khwaja Hasan Sani as the saint's representative. Meanwhile Meraj is making just one repeated statement of the verse, and as soon as that offering has reached the *diwān* of Ajmer and is picked up, he moves on to the last verse, even though several Sufis are still responding – because time is passing quickly.

Fifth Verse

Graph 11: Masnavī, verse 5 line 1.   In this verse the name of the Saint Nizamuddin has the expected immediate impact of exclamations and gestures. Here the Bombay disciple (L), who has been less affected by this Persian poem, responds again, expressing his devotional link through offerings made to those he cherishes as being close to the saint. On the second line Meraj notes more offerings as well as expressive responses, so he decides to repeat the verse.

Graph 12: Masnavī, verse 5 line 1 (continued).   Ready to set off into multiple repetitions of the first line containing the saint's name, Meraj uses the higher pitched tune ending (B↑↑) for impact. But nothing much happens. A second disciple from Bombay (T), and the American Sufi convert (F), not knowing Farsi, have understood the saint's name and make their first offering on it. The intensity of other expressions subsides. By the second line (not on Graph), the first disciple from Bombay (L) has just obtained change again, for more offerings, so Meraj decides to repeat the verse once more, in case he wishes to offer again. But the offering does not materialize, although the disciple shows some arousal. And the leading Sufis are no more aroused. Meraj therefore decides to go on immediately to the next song.

During the last statement of the last verse, Meraj has also had to decide on the next song. If, as is normally the case in a Chilla assembly, there had been time for three songs, Meraj might now have considered it appropriate to insert a song in praise of the senior saint of the Chishti hierarchy, Mu'inuddin Chishti, in recognition of that saint's presence in the person of his two highest representatives. But today only one more song can be added, and that must express devotion to Nizamuddin Auliya whose *'urs* is being celebrated. Meraj decides to complement the Farsi poem with the more direct appeal of Hindi, while continuing the thematic link with the preceding song. He therefore concludes the *Masnavī* and introduces the new selection by a brief melodic bridge, leading down to the tonic where the next song starts.

Graph 5 *Masnavī*: verse 1, line 1 (recitative)

Graph 6 *Masnavī*: verse 1 (recitative)

PERF:

B recitative   **A** recitative

Lead singer with accompanists

Muflisānem— ā – madā— dar kū–e–to   Shai lillah   az jamāl–e   rū–e–to, Ai

Pick-up man   α

αQ αG
takes order from Q and G

αQ αG
brings change for Q and G

LISTENERS:

Z
H   H^s~~~~~ sways   H^s~~~ sways   kHZ offers K's offering to Z
K   K↑———KH rises,walks   offers to H
P
M
A
S
L
T
Q   Qα asks α for change   αQ takes change from α
Y
B
E
F
G   Gα asks α for change   G^s~~~~~~~~ sways   αG takes change from α   OV offers to V
O
C
V
U
J
N
I
R   R^{vh} verbalizes, moves head
X
W
Є
Λ

Graph 7   *Masnavī*: verse 2, line 1

PERFORMERS:

Lead Singer with accompanists

Pick-up man

LISTENERS:

Kāba-e-dil qibla-e-man rū-e-to, āhe | Kāba-e-dil qibla-e-man rū-e-to, āhe | Kāba-e-dil qibla-e-man rū-e-to,

H^S sways H^W weeps

U^S continues to sway $U^V(R)$ verbalizes (to R) U^S sways

R^{hv} moves head, verbalizes R^V verbalizes

Graph 8   *Masnavī*: verse 2, line 2

Graph 9　*Masnavī*: verse 2 (statement 2), line 1

Graph 10 *Masnavī*: verse 2 (statement 3), line 2

Graph 11   *Masnavī*: verse 5, line 1

Graph 12   *Masnavī*: verse 5, line 1 (continued)

PERF.: ♩ = 232

Yā Nizāmuddīn Mahbūb-e-Ilāh   Yā Nizāmuddīn....   ...Ilāh, āhe Yā Nizāmuddīn....   Ilāh, āhe Yā Nizāmuddīn...   ...Ilāh

Pick-up man α   α↑ rises, walks   αZ picks up from Z

LIST.:

Z
H   kHZ offers K's offering to Z   kHZ offers K's offering to Z   pHZ offers P's offering to Z   H^s sways   H^ta taps hand, extends arm
K   aKH offers A's offering to H   tKP offers T's offering to P   fKH
P   kP↑ rises with K's offering   kPH offers K's offering to H
M   ℓMZ offers L's offering to Z
A   ℓAK offers L's offering to K
S   S^bs bows, sways intermittently
L   L* gets change from Performers
T   TK offers to K
Q
Y
B
E
F   F↑ rises, walks   FK offers to K
G
O
C
V   V^s sways
U   U^s continues swaying intermittently
J
N
I
R   R^a raises arm   R^v R^a verbalizes, raises arm   R^ao raises arm, shouts
X
W
€
Λ

3   *Torī sūrat* (Repertoire No. 3, transcription ex. 17a; CD item: 5)

    Opening Line

Graph 13: Torī sūrat, opening line.   At the very start of the opening line of this favourite song the audience comes to life with immediate spontaneous response, most of all from the Bombay disciple (L) who shouts, raises his arm and then cannot restrain himself from seeking his sheikh and saintly guide's son, leader Khwaja Hasan Sani, demonstrating his devotion and allegiance by a prostration (*qadambosī*; *cf.* Table 26). In response to his state, Meraj repeats the complete first line several times, so as to enable him to complete his offerings to all three leading personages on the same message. Then he inserts a brief responsorial repetition, using the initial part of the line (A↑↑) with the salient word *sūrat* ('face', of the Beloved), alternating with appellations of the saint *yā Mahbūb* ('O Beloved'). This he intersperses with restatements of the complete line, while observing the Bombay disciple's continued state of arousal, as well as the *gaḍḍīnashīn* of Ajmer being moved to tears.

Graph 14: Torī sūrat, opening line (continued).   Meraj's focus has remained on several other special listeners who are showing incipient arousal. To intensify the impact of the repeated statements he therefore employs the higher-pitched alternate tune (*A* alt) and also restates the responsorial repetition of *A1* (A1↑, A1↑↑). But no increase of their arousal occurs; so he decides to insert a *girah* to expand on the range of meaning inherent in the opening line. First, however, he waits for a prosperous devotee (E) to complete his offering to the leader and for it to be passed up the hierarchy, to Khwaja Hasan Sani, the leader, to Syed Haleem Chishti, the *gaḍḍīnashīn* of Ajmer, and finally to Zainul Abedin, the *dīwān* of Ajmer, so that his pick-up man can receive it and deposit it on the harmonium, and no distraction interferes with the recitative he is about to begin.

    Inserted Verse (cf. Man turā, *Repertoire No. 10*)

There is a Farsi *ghazal* by the author of *Torī sūrat*, Amir Khusrau, which Meraj finds particularly suited to this purpose, and the associational link between the two poems – through their common author and his discipleship to the saint – is additionally enhancing. The four couplets of this Insert are all variations on the recurrent theme of self-sacrifice in love, as expressed in the reiterated monorhyme *qurbānat shawam* ('I sacrifice myself on you'; see *Man turā*, Repertoire No. 10). But it is the last couplet which introduces in its first line another dimension – 'I see you, yet I see you not' (see translation, p. 43). This is related most ingeniously to the meaning of the opening line of the song – 'To behold your face, I offer myself in sacrifice' – expanding it in an unexpected and profound way. Meraj is expecting the entire Insert to affect spiritually sophisticated listeners and thus keeps a sharp eye on the senior Sufis in the audience as he begins the eight-line sequence.

    After the briefest melodic transition on the harmonium Meraj intones the first of four couplets of which the *girah* consists. Since the poem is set to the same poetic metre as the *Masnavī* (see Table 19, No. 9), Meraj likes to enhance its associational impact further by singing it to the *Masnavī* tune, but of course in recitative style, using a free rhythm and omitting to use alternative endings, as befits an Inserted Verse. The only place where such an

ending will be needed is at the end of the Insert, to signal the return to the main song.

This tune does not correspond to the melodic frame of a *girah*, however. A *girah* must at the end descend from a high pitch so as to lead back into the main song, whereas the last line of every *Masnavī* couplet starts low and actually rises in pitch. This means that Meraj will have to modify the tune of the last line of the *girah*, starting it high, in order to allow it to descend and lead back into the opening line of *Torī sūrat*.

Graph 15: Torī sūrat, Insert, lines 3 and 4. By the third line there is the beginning of a response and the leader makes the poetic statement his own, expressing the emotion of sacrificing the self in love by means of the gesture of an offering to the one who to him represents the closest link with the Beloved, the senior representative from Ajmer. Meraj of course repeats the line until the gesture is completed in its entirety. Then he gives the two subsequent lines a restatement too, expecting his patron to respond further. But this does not happen, so that he now moves on to the culminating last couplet – without waiting for the completion of the Canadian patron's offering, a gesture he knows to be motivated by personal consideration for him rather than by the quest for a spiritual link.

Graph 16, Torī sūrat, Insert, concluding line. On the opening line of the last couplet Meraj sees both his patron and the *gaddīnashīn* of Ajmer react with fervour, as well as several others. When he moves on to the final line of the Insert (see Graph), the latter gives an emphatic signal to continue repeating it. Then the *gaddīnashīn* offers the Bombay disciple's (L) offering – which has reached him through the leader's younger brother (M) – to the leader, Khwaja Hasan Sani, showing his utter devotion to the saint Nizamuddin Auliya (rather than passing it on to the *dīwān* of Ajmer, as would be standard procedure). The leader accepts in the name of his saint, but he does so while touching the senior saintly representative's feet to express his own submission to his spiritual senior. Meraj, of course, decides to repeat the last two lines of the Insert. While mild responses continue, another offering comes from a local devotee who has not responded so far and is not expected to become aroused.

Graph 17: Torī sūrat, Insert, concluding line (intended lead-back). By the time Meraj repeats the last line, the various swaying responses subside, except for the continued gestures and exclamations of the Rudauli saint's descendant (R) which Meraj by now disregards entirely as not evincing any spiritual basis. He therefore decides now to give the *girah* its final impact by leading it back into, and thus connecting it thematically with, the opening line of the song. This he does by restating the last line of the Insert with a high starting pitch (F below) in order to make its tune a descending one, as is appropriate for the lead-back of an Insert. However, something unexpected happens: the *gaddīnashīn*, as soon as he hears the high pitch, moves his head and finger disapprovingly (H^{hi} on Graph 17). Meraj immediately – and correctly – interprets this as a signal not to conclude the Insert but to go on repeating its last two lines, which had moved the saintly representative particularly. Verbally returning to the beginning of the inserted couplet is an easy task, but musically Meraj has already introduced the descending tune that indicates the completion of the *girah*. The only thing he can do now is modify that tune, steering it away from the melodic lead-back into the main song line, in order to avoid giving the audience a contrary structural signal. This he does, as written out below.

EX. 23. Directional melodic movement applied in performance

(*Man turā*, cf. Repertoire No. 10)

(a)   *Intended concluding line*
        (*antarā* pitch with descending melodic lead-back into opening line, i.e. low-register *asthāyī* of main song)

(b)   *Actual modified concluding line*
        (*antarā* pitch, but descending melodic movement reversed so as to anticipate return to beginning of inserted couplet, i.e. high-register *antarā* of *girah*)

No sooner has the direction of the tune changed upward, than the *gaḍḍīnashīn* nods approvingly, having instantly understood Meraj's intended compliance with his wish.

No Graph: Torī sūrat, Insert, concluding line (actual conclusion).   The fact that Meraj had to interrupt the formal lead-back, once started, means that a truly effective link-up between Insert and main song has been thwarted. On the other hand, Meraj has helped sustain the arousal of one of the spiritual leaders of the assembly. The *gaḍḍīnashīn* once again responds visibly to the first line of the restated inserted couplet, and so does the assembly leader; but as Meraj does not see any potential for intensification, he therefore moves on to the final line and – this time without melodic lead-back, so as not to invite another signal requesting a repeat – unceremoniously returns to the main song, thus avoiding giving any indication of his intent, since he does not wish to comply with another request for a repeat.

Graph 18: Torī sūrat, opening line (continued further).   The unexpected repetition of the concluding verse has, however, reduced the impact of the Insert on the opening line of the song. The response to its restatements is minimal, even though Meraj does his utmost to intensify them by using higher-pitched melodic alternatives of the *asthāyī* (A alt, A alt.1). He decides therefore to continue into the body of the song, where he can expect supplicatory stanzas to rekindle his audience's fervour. Also, time is running short.

First Verse

Initially, the first verse appears almost as an anti-climax; indeed, it takes until the third line of this stanza to generate responses. Since it symbolically expresses the Sufi's quest for being filled and purified with the mystical love of the saint (by means of the saint's 'colour'; see explanation, p. 85), link responses are appropriate here. The link responses continue,

predictably, into the supplicatory closing line, so that Meraj decides to repeat the two lines without returning to the first half of the stanza. But the effect of this repeat is minimal, hence Meraj moves on to the next stanza which is certain to yield offerings, since it constitutes an appeal to the saint in the very name of his own spiritual guide, Baba Farid.

Second Verse

Meraj dwells on the first line containing the saintly name, and, on adding the second line, decides to repeat, to allow for the full impact of both. During the second statement he observes how the leader's younger brother makes an offering to the Pakistani Sufi who has so far failed to respond, either expressively or with an offering showing his deference to the saint at whose *darbār* (royal court) he is a visitor. By thus initiating the Pakistani visitor's participation into the hierarchical presentation of respect, the leader's brother finally causes him to rise and to present the offering he received to the leader.

Third Verse

The third stanza, of four lines again, is one not familiar to most performers and Sufis today, and Meraj takes pride in inserting it into his performance of this song, showing his special knowledge. But at this point not enough time is left for his listeners to be deeply affected by a new dimension in the song, although the *gaḍḍinashīn* of Ajmer does bow deeply and join his palms on the supplicatory last line. Just as Meraj has introduced the final descent of the tune, the Canadian patron gets up to offer, so that Meraj decides to repeat the last two lines which contain another supplication. After waiting for the offerings to reach their destination and allowing the mild arousal of several Sufis to abate, Meraj concludes the verse.

Fourth Verse

Graph 19: Torī sūrat, final line and refrain (conclusion).   The final couplet again contains saintly names: those of Nizamuddin's spiritual preceptors. But it is the name of Khusrau, the disciple *par excellence*, that evokes another offering response from the devoted disciple from Bombay (L). Meraj extends repetitions of the line until the offering is complete. Then, anticipating the leader's command to conclude the song from his countenance, he replaces the repeat alternate ending of the last tune section ($B^e2^{al}\uparrow$) which he has been using to introduce its repeated statements. Using the regular descending ending ($B^e2^{al}\uparrow$), he leads back to a final statement of the opening line (A). Just then the leader exchanges a remark with the *gaḍḍinashīn* which Meraj knows to be a signal to end the performance. He therefore brings the ending of the opening tune down to the tonic ($A\downarrow$) while his brother Iqbal, not needing any separate prompting, instantly contributes a threefold closing candence (*tīyā*) on the *ḍholak*.

Graph 13   *Torī sūrat*: opening line

Graph 14   *Torī sūrat*: opening line (continued)

PERF:

Lead singer with accompanists

♩ = 184

↑Aalt.   A1↑   A1↑↑   A1↑↑   A↑↑   Aalt.   A   //

Torī sūrat...   Nijām, Torī sā, ā-hā, Torī... yā Nijām...   Torī sūrat...   Nijām, Torī...   Nijām, Torī....   balhā /

Pick-up man   α

α — αZ
walks, picks up from Z

LISTENERS:

Z
H
K — kHZ *offers K's offering to Z*; aKH *offers A's offering to H*
P
M — ℓM↑ *rises with L's offering, offers L's offering to Z* ℓMZ
A — ℓA↑ *rises with L's offering, walks*; ℓAE *offers L's offering to E, walks*; AEK *with E offers to K*
S
L — LA *offers to A, sways*; L^s; L^w *weeps* L^s *sways*
T
Q
Y
B
E
F
G — G^s *continues to sway*
O
C
V — V^ss *continues to sway intensely*; V^b *bows head*
U — U *continues to sway*; U^s *sways again*
J
N
I
R — R^h *moves head*; R° *shouts*
X — X^s *continues to sway*; X^s *sways*
W
E — E↑ *rises, walks*; AEK *with A offers to K*
∧ — ∧^s *continues to sway*

K^s *continues to sway*

H^w *weeps*

Graph 15   *Torī sūrat*: Insert, lines 3 and 4

Graph 16 *Torī sūrat*: Insert, concluding line

Graph 17   *Tori sūrat*: Insert, concluding line (attempted lead-back)

Graph 18 *Torī sūrat*: opening line (continued further)

Graph 19   *Torī sūrat*: final line and refrain (conclusion)

B Performance 2: Ecstatic arousal in the Hujrā Mahfil

This performance example complements the first one by presenting an excerpt – one song – from the other type of intimate assembly of 'special' listeners, a gathering of disciples all focussed on one spiritual leader and thus linked by a bond of mystical 'brotherhood' – they are all *pīrbhāyī*, brothers through their *pīr*. This assembly consists of a group of Sufis all related by two generations of discipleship of the 'Kanpur *silsilā*' of the late Babu Haya of Delhi, who was himself a follower of Nizamuddin Auliya. Every year these disciples travel to Delhi from Kanpur and other parts of India, to attend the *'urs* of Nizamuddin Auliya, joining in brotherly commemoration of their own sheikh in an assembly which they hold late at night on the eighteenth of Rabi-us-Sani; the third day of the *'urs* celebrations. The place is auspicious; a *hujrā* within the shrine belonging to the third leading representative at Nizamuddin Auliya, who, however, is not present there.

The *mīr-e-mahfil* or leader of their assembly is Khalil Mian, who is spiritually most senior among them, and has himself the authority to act as a spiritual guide (*khilāfat*). The other members of the group are of varying ages and material standard. Outstanding among them are two more disciples with spiritual leadership authority; they are also among the few who are able to make generous offerings. The only senior person from the Nizamuddin Auliya shrine community is Miskin Shah, who, in the absence of a descendant, takes on their rôle in an unofficial way.

Because of its location at the shrine, the Qawwal Bachche have a first right to perform at this assembly. Among them it is Meraj who, by customary right, functions as the principal performer, although the assembly leader also gives occasional 'turns' to visiting performers. Meraj values this small group of listeners for their serious commitment to the mystical path and their respect for his own special competence of classical Qawwali singing.

During this assembly, intense emotional arousal comes about repeatedly because of the strong and mutually reinforcing spiritual bond among the participants. The excerpt presented here serves to show the entire course of an ecstatic state during a performance, set within the context of the larger performance sequence. It also shows a complete succession sequence of Prelude, Introductory Verse and Song.

The interaction during this song is presented by means of the videochart. This method of transcription, slightly more interpretative than the videograph, conveys in its very format the polarized dynamic operating between the two processes – one musical, one contextual – which go on interacting with each other during the performance: the musician continues to sing, and the audience responses continue to inform his perception. For this purpose the multiplicity of details among audience responses – as recorded on the videograph – is summarized from the interactional perspective of the musician and juxtaposed with his continuing musical utterances, along with a running explanation of his performance decisions. Salient excerpts of the videograph transcription follow a synopsis of the entire song performance for context and continuity. Plates 27 to 32 document significant moments in the process of ecstatic arousal, in the form of outline drawings made from photographs of the videotape.

Setting

The assembly begins at midnight, after devotees and performer have taken part in a large public assembly in the Urs Mahal hall. By the time Meraj arrives, however, a Qawwal visiting from Rampur is already singing an extended turn of three songs. During the second song, Meraj appears at the open door of the *hujrā*; then in order to signify his presence, he makes an offering to the leader and withdraws until called upon to perform. Meanwhile he has time to assess the elements in the setting which he considers relevant to his choice of a first song. The two songs he hears his predecessor sing are both devotional in theme; the first one is a traditional Hindi song praising the saint Nizamuddin Auliya and expressing the love and longing that activate the mystical bond. This song evoked fervent, even ecstatic responses from the audience. The song following it picked up the theme of mystical love in general, in the form of a contemporary Sufi song poem in Urdu. The response was general enthusiasm and a number of offerings, so that it is obvious to Meraj that the same thematic orientation of devotional mysticism should be continued. And addressing the saint, whose closeness all have come to experience, would also be appropriate. To convey the closeness the more familiar idiom of Hindi or Urdu would be more suitable than Persian; between the two Meraj gives preference to Hindi, because its association with classical mysticism is certain to appeal to this initiated audience.

Finally Meraj takes into account yet another factor in the situation, the composition of the audience at the time of his singing. The familiar group is assembled, but he notes that one of the more affluent members is absent from the assembly. From those who remain there seems no definite directive as to the choice of a particular song. However, in the doorway where I am operating my videocamera, he has also noted my husband, an important personal patron at the present time, who had earlier asked him for an old song, *Kachh jagmag jagmag howat hai* (see Repertoire No. 5 and Ex. 17). Since the song is appropriate to this occasion, Meraj has a good mind to begin his 'turn' by responding to that request.

1)   *Naghmā-e-Quddūsī* and *Shud dilam* (Repertoire No. 11a and No. 8a, CD items: 11 and 15)

Together with his brother Iqbal, Meraj sits down in the doorway of the crowded *hujrā* facing the leader Khalil Mian, his back to the open door (and the camera). That his two junior accompanists, both nephews, have yet to arrive is of no great concern to Meraj, for the two brothers constitute a complete performing ensemble (see Plate 27). Given the familiar setting, Meraj could well dispense with the mere preliminary of an Instrumental Prelude. But he perceives a momentary pause of relaxation among his audience following the very intense song just concluded. To allow for a breathing space and to attract the attention of the audience to himself he decides to introduce his performance with the modernized version of the *Naghmā-e-Quddūsī*. As he begins to play, he observes Khalil Miyan, the leader, still exchanging expressions of delight with other disciples over the previous song. But gradually the *zikr* rhythm of the Prelude makes its impact upon the listeners. While the higher-pitched phrases of the Prelude are repeated with continuing acceleration, two younger devotees start clapping to the beat; some others sway.

These reactions tell Meraj that his listeners are now ready for the message of his song.

Immediately he brings the *naghmā* to a conclusion on the lower tonic and the drumming ceases. As one listener exclaims *subhānallāh* ('praise be to God'), Meraj begins to sing. On the spur of the moment he has decided to preface the song with one of his favourite Introductory Verses, *Shud dilam* (see Repertoire No. 8). Appropriate to the chosen song's focus on love, this *rubaʿi* in Farsi will surely appeal to his sophisticated audience and set the right tone for the song. He starts by intoning a brief wordless melodic formula connecting the conclusion of the *naghmā* to the initial pitch of the *rubaʿi*, the fifth. Accompanying himself on the harmonium he declaims the first line of the verse, and then, with a slight nod, signals to his partner Iqbal to repeat it. Iqbal complies, moving on to sing the second line and concluding the first couplet by a descending melodic movement. Now Meraj again takes over, moving back to the fifth for the third line and then, without waiting for a repeat by his brother, he starts the last line directly on a higher pitch (the seventh scale degree, *Nī*) in order to make the final descent into the first line of the song (*cf.* Repertoire No. 8, minimal version). His brother now immediately joins in the singing, and on the *dholak* provides the appropriate rhythmic framework of an 8/8 musical metre: the song has started.

2)   *Kachh jagmag* (Repertoire No. 5, transcription ex. 176; CD item: 7)

   First Verse

The opening verse evokes immediate enthusiasm, especially from the older listeners who cherish this song. Incipient arousal is manifest on both verse lines and one elderly disciple is particularly touched by this song (see Plate 28). Few offerings are made, however.

   Second Verse

A heightened state of arousal among the devotees as a whole culminates in an ecstatic state experienced by the elderly disciple. During the four extended statements of this verse Meraj sees the disciple move through gradually intensifying arousal to the total abandonment of ecstasy, expressed through ecstatic dancing, and brought to a conclusion through an offering and then an intense embrace of the assembly.

   During the first presentation of this verse the elderly disciple is already showing signs of more intense arousal which increase as Meraj starts the verse a second time (see Plate 29). However, rather than catering to the disciple by continuing to repeat the salient second verse line, Meraj, due to his concern for other, more prominent members of his audience (including the foreign patron), decides instead to enhance this verse line by inserting a Farsi verse as a *girāh*. But he is immediately stopped by Miskin Shah, the senior Sufi of the shrine, and made to return to repeating the song line, so that the disciple's arousal is further intensified, until he is dancing ecstatically (*raqs*) while the other listeners stand in reverence (see Plate 30).

   Meraj now complies with the requirements of this state of ecstasy (*kaifiyat*) by providing *takrār* repetitions of the same line and closely monitoring the needs of the ecstatic Sufi (see Plate 31). In response to a signal from him, Meraj returns to the beginning of the verse a third time. Well into the second line the ecstatic disciple's *raqs* culminates in an embrace of Khalil Miyan, the leader (see Plate 32). This suggests to Meraj that he should make a final statement of the entire verse, but this time with a new *antarā* tune lower in pitch to give the strained

Plate 27   Ecstatic arousal during the Hujrā Mahfil as documented by the video recording (outline drawings of video still frames): the Qawwals have started their turn to sing – Meraj Ahmad on the harmonium, Iqbal Ahmad on the *ḍholak*
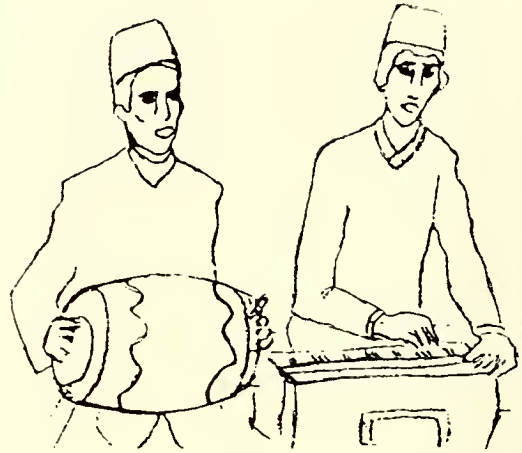
Plate 28   The assembled Sufis are taking in the song's first verse – at the centre the assembly leader Khalil Mian (L), second from left the senior disciple (D), who begins to move forward in response to the first line (*cf.* Chart p. 181, para 1)

Plate 29   Now kneeling in the central space, the senior disciple instantly turns round to the performers and breaks into loud weeping, on hearing the salient second line of verse 2 repeated (Chart p. 183, para 2)

Plate 30 Having reached ec-
stasy, the senior disciple is
turning with small steps, arms
extended upwards, while every-
one stands respectfully (Chart
p. 183, para 5)

Plate 31 Ecstasy intensifies:
now one arm raised high, the
senior disciple continues *raqs*
(Chart p. 184, para 1)

Plate 32 Ecstasy culminates in
the embrace of the leader who
holds the disciple securely while
encouraging the performers
(Chart p. 184, para 2)

voices of only two singers a rest. But even while locked in embrace, the ecstatic Sufi continues his dancing movements, so that the performer is required to continue his *takrār* of the second line until the state finally subsides. At this Khalil Miyan sits down and the rest follow his example, whereupon Meraj immediately terminates the verse to go on the next one.

Third Verse

As Meraj intones the third and last verse of the song, Miskin Shah – in the absence of any recognized descendants representing the local saint – seizes the rare opportunity to assert personal control over the Qawwals. His command to insert a single verse line, inspired by the previous verse, complicates but also enhances the song presentation. The line, originating in Hindu devotional poetry, fits the song in both meaning and form.

EX. 24. Extra verse line suggested by listener

Thematically related Verse 2:

Sukh nīnd se akhiyāṅ khol zarā, kho ghaflat Rab se dhyān lagā	From a sound sleep open your eyes, become conscious and focus on God;
Yeh prīt karan kī rīt nahīn, Rab jāgat hai tū sowat hai	This is not the way of loving; God is awake, yet you are asleep.

Extra line:

Jo sowat hai woh khowat hai, jo jāgat hai woh pāwat hai	He who is asleep, loses; but he who is awake, finds.

Given the thematically and structurally conclusive character of this single line – sharing the common rhyme – Meraj decides to integrate it into the song by treating it musically as a concluding line set to the *asthāyī* tune of the song. Only a mild response from the devotee ensues, so that Meraj soon reverts to the beginning of the verse. Indeed, as a sophisticated Qawwal extremely well-versed in the classical Qawwali repertoire, he appreciates appropriate Inserts but is critical of interruptions with incomplete or inappropriate materials, and sometimes resents having to comply where he considers the initiator's status insufficient and where no financially beneficial response is forthcoming.

The correct second line of the verse brings another wave of enthusiasm, especially once again from the elderly disciple, so that Meraj decides to sing the complete verse once more. But now the elderly disciple is the only one who expresses excitement. Expecting nothing more in emotional response or in offerings, Meraj decides to end the song with a last statement, in slower tempo, of the extra line inserted earlier by the local Sufi. Educated as he is in the Sufi tradition, Meraj realizes that in this concluding position the inserted line sums up appropriately the message of the whole song.

VIDEOCHART

	Performer	*Interaction*	*Audience*

Verse 2 (contd.)

First line (B)

Suhk hindse akhiyan khob zara, -ra

2× B1 — Introduces line half by → Elderly disciple (D)
half, — responds by moving forward, kneeling.

Kho ghaflats kabs se dhyan laga, dhyan laga

3× B2 — then moves on to A. → ∠ Attention aroused for conclusion of verse.

Second line (A)

Yeh prits karans ki _ rit nahin, rits nahin

2× A1 — Expects line to have impact,

Rabs jagats hai tu sowats hai, tu sowats hai

3× A2 — especially A2 ('God is → General approval sounded.
awake ...'). ↘ D turns toward assembly leader (L), raises arm and shouts.

Yeh prits karns ki— rits nahin, rits nahin

5× A1 — Restates line, → D exclaims, turning to performers.
expanding each half. Local Sufi (S) receives offering, presents it to another senior disciple who offers it to L.

Rabs jagats hai tu sowats hai

2× A2 — Keeps line going ← L offers same *nazrānā*
during offering formally to S who rises
sequence. ← in respect, so that both
While receiving ∠ pass it to performer.
offering with humility,
his brother takes
opportunity to lead,
initiating another
statement of verse
before offering
sequence complete.

	Performer	Interaction	Audience

Verse 2 (contd.)

First line (B)

Sukh nindo se akhiyan kholo zara

$1 \times B1$ *alt*   Brother sings higher-pitched *antara* (see p. 31) showing quality of his voice.

Kho ghaflato Rabo se dhyan laga

$2 \times B2$ → D, still kneeling, grasps his chest with emotion.

Ake, Sukhnindo se akhiyan kholo zara

$1 \times B1$ Single statement of complete line 1(B), serves to reintroduce line 2(A).

Kho ghaflat Rabo se dhyan laga

$1 \times B2$ → Listeners expectant.

Second line (A)

Yeh prito karah ki rito nahin, rito nahin

$2 \times A1$ Settles into *A1*.   → General response, heads shaking, arms raised.

Rabo jagata hai tu so wato hai, so-wato hai

$3 \times A2$ Drummer accentuates arrival of *A2*.   → D more intensely aroused, turning on knees and bowing in reverence.

Yeh prito karah ki   rito nahin, rito nahin

$3 \times A1$ Expects to expand this line to allow full meaning to sink in.   → D moves with increasing intensity.

Rabo jagato hai tu/

$1/2 \times A2$ Interrupts *A2* to insert Farsi verse as *girah*, to amplify meaning of line and impress sophisticated listeners.   → D becomes still instantly.

Verse 2 (contd.)

	Performer	Interaction	Audience

Insert, line 1

Adab-e-jumin-e-ulfat   yeh maqam-e/

(1×) I — Begins *girah* in solo presentation. — → ↙ — S immediately signals performers to stop Insert and continue repeating A2, giving priority to D's aroused state.

Second line

Rab jagata hai tū sowata hai, ki so wata hai
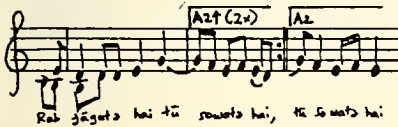
(3×) A2 — Instantly obeys S and returns to repeating A2. — → — D instantly turns round to performers and breaks into loud weeping.

Yeh prīta karan kī rīta nahīn, rīta nahīn
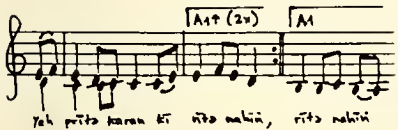
(3×) A1 — Returns to beginning of line to keep its message intact. — → ↙ — D, shaking head, searches pocket, stands up with a shout and makes offering to L, bowing low.

Rab jagata hai tū sowata hai, sowata hai
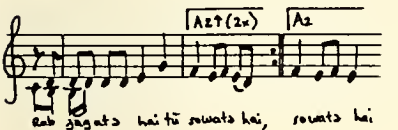
(3×) A2 — Waits for offering to reach him, repeating A2. — → — L passes offering to S who hands it on to performers. D, meanwhile, stands up, raises arm and shouts several times while starting to turn on the spot, having reached ecstasy.
L and S rise in recognition of D's state.

Completes A2 as soon as everyone is standing. — ← ↙ — Everyone follows L's lead and stands up.

Rab jagata hai tū sowata hai, tū sowata hai
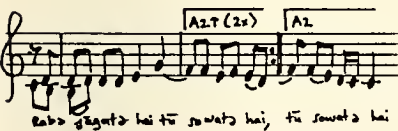
(3×) A1 — Fulfils duty to accompany ecstatic state for its duration by repeating A, amplified by B intermittently. — → — D continues turning with small steps, arms extended upwards in classic posture of *raqs*, shouting repeatedly. Entire audience is focussing on D.
← S urges on performers by handclaps.

	Performer	**Interaction**	**Audience**

Verse 2 (contd.)

Second line (contd.) (A)

3× A2 — Intensifies arrival on salient A2 by drum accents. → General response to A2, exclamations. ← S motions to performers with rhythmic arm movements. D, now with one arm raised, continues *raqs*.
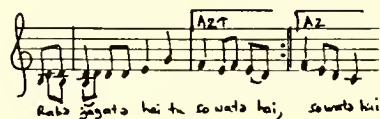
(Central portion of verse 2 omitted)

Verse 2 (later):

First line (B)

2× Balt 1 — Introduces lower-pitched *antarā* tune (see p. 31) composed on the spot, to lessen strain on voice, in anticipation of more lengthy repetitions. → L nods, encouraging performers, now holding D securely.

1× Balt 2 — Interprets S's signal as request for A2, so he cuts short B2 and immediately continues on to line A. ← S loudly reiterates the phrase '*jāgat hai*' from A2, which reminds him of extra line (see Verse 3, A).

Second line (A)

1× A1 — Sings A1 only once since A2 contains S's request phrase. → D starts stamping feet slowly, still locked in embrace.

2× A2 — Expects to sing A2 over and over. → S, hearing '*jagat hai*' again, shows his enthusiasm by rhythmical hand motions. D stamps and bounces rhythmically. L shares in D's arousal, raising arm, but verbally indicating A1.

Picks up signal from L for reiteration of A1, hence

Verse 2 (contd.)

Performer   *Interaction*   *Audience*

Second line (contd.) (*A*)

Yeh prīta karan kī rīta nahīn

1 × *A1* restates the entire line
2 once, responding to
the

Rabs jāgata hai tū sowata hai

1 × *A2* needs of both L and S,
then:

| A1↑(3x) | A1 |

Yeh prīta karan kī rīta nahīn, rīta nahīn

4 × *A1* For L, he sings *A1* 4   →   L raises arm, expresses
times, then goes on to   approval, delight, then
sing *A2* for S.   pats D.
                                D is still bouncing,
                             ↙ arm raised.
                                S addresses performers
                             ↙ again with his phrase
                                '*jāgat hai*', suggesting
                                extra line (see Verse 3,
                                A).

| A2↑(2x) | A2 |

Rabs jāgata hai tū sowata hai, sowata hai

3 × *A2* Instead of responding   →   D shouts, turns to
to S's request for   ↙ performers and points
something new, he   to them,
completes *A*, in   acknowledging the
support of D's   source of his delight.
renewed arousal.   L holds D fast.

Yeh prīta karan kī rīta nahīn, rīta nahīn

2 × *A1* Given D's state, he   →   D cries out once more
provides him with   at beginning of *A1*,
repeated *A*, but   then just sways, his
without wishing to   ecstasy abating.
prolong verse.

Rabs jāgata hai tū so-wata hai, sowata hai

2 × *A2*   ↙ D is swaying gently as
                                he becomes calm.
                             ↙ L now guides D to his
                             ↙ sitting place.

Observes L move
toward concluding the
ecstatic episode, hence

Yeh prīta karan kī rīta nahīn, rīta nahīn

2 × *A1* restates *A1* just   D sits down limply.
enough times to finish   L sits down and
the verse

Rabs jāgata hai tū sowata hai

1 × *A2* with a single *A2* while ← all the other devotees
all sit down.   follow suit.

| | *Performer* | *Interaction* | *Audience* |

Verse 3

First line (*B*)

Jo kāl̄a kare so ājahī kar,   kar

2× *B1* Immediately proceeds to state *B*, by halves.

Audience still settling down.

Jo ā- ja kare/

1/2× *B2* Begins *B2*.
(inter-
rupted)

← S interrupts, loudly
↙ shouting out the verse line he has been trying to introduce.

Insert line (set to *A*)

Jo sa-wata hai woh khawata hai

1× *A1* Interrupts *B2* immediately, to comply now with S's command, deciding to set extra line to *asthāyī* → tune.

S raises arm in rhythm, becoming visibly aroused.

jā jā-gata hai woh pā-wata hai,   pā-wata hai

2× *A2*

↙ No particular response from others.

Jo sawata hai woh khawata hai

1× *A1* In the absence of a general response he restates the entire Insert, to let it make its full impact.

→ S nods repeatedly in delight.

Several devotees respond with raised arm.

Jo jāgata hai woh pāwata hai,   pawata hai

2× *A2*

Expects nothing more, since not even S has made an offering in appreciation of his insert, hence

← No offering indicated.
↙

Jo sa-wata hai woh khawata hai

1× *IA1* makes final complete statement of extra line,

Jo jāgata hai woh pawata hai

1× *IA2* then goes back to begin verse 3 over again.

→ D, after sitting still with bowed head, now shakes head in response.

First line (*B*)

(Performance continues)

7 _Explaining the Qawwali performance_

Having experienced the Qawwali performance interaction in the form of particular instances, it is now possible to generalize this process into a coherent sequence, taking into account contextual and musical variables in a systematic way through an outline of the performance process in the abstract. The aim is to consider the performer's strategies by moving with him through an entire song performance, and thus to ascertain how contextual variables serve him as cues for his musical options at every stage. Underlying his performance decisions is a notion of the general structure of the Qawwali occasion (Chapter 4) which the performer shares with other participants, and the categories of setting and procedure (Tables 21 and 23) are entirely relevant to his general view of a Qawwali performance. At the same time, his vantage point imposes particular priorities on his view of these categories, so that logically an outline of performer strategies must be structured in accordance with those priorities.

A   Assessing the setting

A discussion of a performer's strategic use of setting factors must be prefaced by the general point that the Qawwal, like any performer, aims his strategies at his audience, so that his prime concern is for all categories of listeners. Among them, the leader obviously occupies a special position, hence he will be given greatest prominence here, as indeed is done by performers in their assessment of performance occasions. The remaining audience is then evaluated as to its status components, and considered both in reference to the sponsor and to other relevant setting factors. In addition to circumstantial factors of setting, the performer must also assess the last remaining category of participants: himself; here he considers mainly the performing conditions under which he is to operate, but also where he stands _vis à vis_ other performers participating in the same performance event. Setting factors are relevant above all to the performer's initial choices of music and text, as well as their presentation. In addition, the initial assessment of these factors continues to inform the performer's musical strategies throughout the actual performance procedure.

The audience

To begin with, the performer focusses on the leader, by assessing him primarily in spiritual terms, but considering also their material implication. In order to cater to the leader spiritually, the performer must above all know his spiritual status and identity – which saintly lineage he belongs to, and whether he is a saint's familial descendant or even his recognized representative, or whether he is a recognized spiritual guide of some standing. As it is, in most cases the performer is conversant with this information as a function of his attachment to a leader who is also his patron. If the leader is a rich patron sponsoring the event who lacks

spiritual status himself, the spiritual superior to whom the leader is linked becomes the spiritual focus for the Qawwal. The same holds where the assembly of a leader with lesser spiritual status is enhanced by the presence of a superior spiritual figure, usually a representative of a senior saint (as occurred in Performance No. 1 above).

This general knowledge of the leader's identity is pertinent to the performer's choice of appropriate song topics. Thus he knows that for a saint's representative songs establishing a link with the patron saint are a first and safe choice. This link (*nisbat*) may be thematic, in the form of praise or supplication, and it may also reside in a song's ritual association with the saint or his shrine, or in the poet's identity as a disciple or saint of the lineage. Thus, *Tori sūrat* (Repertoire No. 3) articulates all three links, and it was therefore a most appropriate choice for the Chilla Mahfil at Nizamuddin Auliya's 'urs (Performance No. 1). For a spiritual leader of a circle of disciples, songs evoking mystical experience or expounding on the devotional nature of the link between disciple and leader are most appropriate. For this, *Kachh jagmag* was an apt choice in the disciple's assembly at the same 'urs (Performance No. 2).

In addition to his spiritual identity, the personal status of the leader forms an important part of the performer's prior assessment of a Qawwali occasion. This relates principally to the degree of sophistication or popularity a leader wishes to project in his assembly. The performer uses this knowledge to delineate his area of options supplementary to variables expressing spiritual identity. They comprise language and style of the song text, tune and rhythmic framework of the music, as well as their style of performance. To express sophistication, Farsi is superior, followed by classical Hindi, preferably in the form of a sophisticated poetic text. But Urdu, at least theoretically, has no place in a *sama'* gathering of high spiritual status. Indeed, in the early seventies a performing group was evicted from the principal 'urs assembly at the shrine of Ajmer for singing in Urdu, by the newly invested *dīwān* (father of Zainul Abedin; see Performance No. 1), who thereby asserted his status over his predecessor and erstwhile rival.

Musically, a raga-like or old tune is appropriate for this purpose, especially when enhanced by a complex or 'hard' musical metre or at least a serious slow rhythmic pattern. The *Masnavī*, with its measured 7/8 metre, is a good example (see Repertoire No. 4 and Performance No. 1). A sophisticated presentation, finally, is best kept subdued and limited to a few stylized gestures. If, on the other hand, sophistication is not a priority, the performer will keep to songs with a generally understood language – Urdu or standard devotional Hindi – and with a more contemporary style. Musically, he will prefer to choose from song tunes with popular appeal and follow an easy, smartly moving rhythmic framework. *Batufail* (Repertoire No. 6) best exemplifies how a serious 'hard' metric framework of 7/8 can be converted into an 'easy' 8/8 for just that purpose.

EX. 25. Sophisticated versus popular rhythmic setting (*Batufail*)

As for presentation, he will feel more free to impress the audience with 'acting' out the song, using various demonstrative gestures. Since the majority of leaders today prefer a composite image, projecting both sophistication and popularity (due to the patronage situation; see Chapter 3), the performer's safest strategy is to plan on staying on a middle ground and let the immediate performance situation influence his final decision on the spot. Finally, a leader's individual preferences may be known to a performer, especially if he is linked to him as a client and is therefore expected to cater to the personal wishes of his patron. In that case, the only decision he has to make is whether to comply, or to risk displeasing the patron by catering for other audience components.

Although a performer gives priority, at this stage, to catering to the leader, he includes the audience in his preliminary assessment as well, or at least its basic components. Basically, performers divide audiences into the same categories as do other participants of Qawwali, both as to the fundamental division into the 'special' and 'common' audience components (Table 21), and, within the special category, as to the distinction between those with spiritual and worldly status, that is, the 'saintly' and the 'wealthy'. Of the two, clearly the 'special' category is of major importance and interest, since its members are the prime sources both of spiritual enhancement to the assembly in general, and of material benefit to the performers specifically. Certain general strategies are appropriate in relation to this category as a whole. In accordance with their élite status, the special audience can be counted on to understand and respond favourably to sophistication in the content and form of the songs, as contained in texts from classical Sufi verse, and in songs with special spiritual association or with an old or special tune.

Since most Qawwali occasions are regularly occurring events, the performer is usually able to anticipate the presence of special individuals in the audience. Listeners with high spiritual status will be noted particularly as to their spiritual identity and treated musically much like the leader – indeed a representative of a senior saintly lineage or a major shrine establishment will be acknowledged in the performer's strategy in the same way, usually by the choice of a song with a fitting theme or association. Thus, at Nizamuddin Auliya, saintly representatives from Ajmer are regularly recognized with songs in praise of their saint, Khwaja Gharibnawaz (but see Performance No. 1, p. 155, where this was not possible). As for lesser spiritual leaders or representatives – lower-class sheikhs or representatives of minor shrines – the performer usually does not plan to cater to them specifically, but he will anticipate giving priority to their preference, should they express it, in consideration of their spiritual identity.

Listeners with worldly status are of very special value to the performer, since normally they constitute the main source of offerings in a Qawwali event. Thus he anticipates catering to their preferences in a general way, by choosing from a repertoire of appropriate sophistication, in line with their assumed orientation to the spiritual leaders of the assembly or to its patron saint. Listeners outstanding in worldly endowment, or known to be very generous, may even be singled out for special consideration at the level of specific song choices. This was the case when Meraj chose *Kachh jagmag* (Repertoire No. 5) to satisfy his Canadian patron (Performance No. 2). Such a situation can lead the performer to the point of superseding the preference of the spiritual leadership, as by the choice, for example, of a song theme to suit a puritan devotee's orientation, or of a simplistic text to please an unlettered donor.

In contrast to the individual attention bestowed on special listeners, the common component of a Qawwali audience is assessed as a body of secondary importance that always comes,

literally as well as figuratively, behind the special group. In the presence of important and rewarding special listeners a performer may well ignore the common audience altogether, especially if it is limited in size. Where a large crowd is known to gather, on the other hand, and more so where special listeners are scarce, the performer will plan to cater to popular taste in selecting well-known songs with a popular textual and musical appeal. At Nizamuddin Auliya the mass audiences of Urs Mahal or Qawwali Hall invite popular-type Urdu songs like *Kisī ko kuchh* (Repertoire No. 7), which was performed in both locations by Iftekhar Amrohvi (see p. 102 above) and well received.

Fixed setting factors

Fixed setting factors are relevant to the performer's strategies in two ways. One directly affects the thematic focus of the event through occasion and place, to the extent that these set up an associational link with a saint – be it through his anniversary (occasion) or his proximity (place). These require the performer to express that link which the participants are expecting to have confirmed experientially. Thus he will be prepared to sing songs connected to the saint, be it through text topic or authorship, or through ritual association. Among them are those specific songs prescribed for the ritual portions of such assemblies (for example *Qaul*, Repertoire No. 1, and *Rang* in Performance No. 1).

Relevant in a more indirect way are the setting factors that affect the audience components expected to be present in an assembly; these are locale and time of day. Both principally enable the performer to anticipate the presence or absence of a common audience component. Since locale size determines audience capacity, it is clear that a small listening area, even in a public shrine, will accommodate few listeners beyond the leader's immediate circle, which is normally composed of 'special' listeners. A large public hall or shrine courtyard, on the other hand, is expected to attract a sizeable common audience, in addition to the special circle of the leader. As for time of day, assemblies held during working hours are not easily accessible to those who need to earn a daily living; therefore the performer can only expect night performances to be frequented by large common audiences. Of course there is always the destitute component of any common audience, especially in assemblies held at shrines where beggars and mendicants abound. These, however, are hardly given any consideration, either by leaders or by performers. The performer will thus take into account locale and time to assess the prominence of the common audience component, and plan his choice of songs accordingly.

Performing conditions

For the performer, the last, but by far not the least, aspect of setting is that of his own performing conditions, anticipated for a particular Qawwali occasion. The first factor which is significant for his strategies is whether he is performing as an individual leading his group, doing 'party singing' (as in *Masnavī*, *Torī sūrat* and *Kachh jagmag* of Performance Nos. 1 and 2), or as a member of his performing *brādrī* doing 'community singing' or 'mixed singing' (as in *Man kunto* and *Rang* of Performance No. 1). In the first case he controls the singing and also the earnings, so that all possible strategies are crucial directly to him and his partners. Thus he is free to exercise his musical strategies, and confident that his accompanists, out of

their own interest in a successful performance, will comply with his commands. In the second case, the control over both singing and earnings is shared, and leadership is usually established on the spot between the leading singers of the group, who decide on strategy as they go.

Only at events where a performer does both community and party singing, the party leader, anticipating his own party's turn in the performance sequence, will plan to keep the communally sung ritual songs short, in order to save for himself and his group both performance time and his listeners' offering money, rather than to have more income distributed among the greater number of community members. If his 'turn' follows immediately after the communally performed ritual songs, he may even go so far as to avoid taking a lead position there, in order to preserve the impact of his lead singing for his own party's turn instead of wasting it when the reward for it will be dissipated to his entire *brādrī* – a strategy Meraj follows regularly at Nizamuddin Auliya (but could not in Performance No. 1; see p. 145 above).

The second aspect of the Qawwal's performing conditions is his particular place within the course of the performance. Normally, this comprises one 'turn', allotted to him by customary right or by the leader's personal decision. Given the fact that most Qawwali occasions involve a succession of performers with similar access rights, it is of importance to realize that a complete Qawwali performance consists of the sum total of different individual performances. Therefore, in specific musical terms, each performer's concern and strategic input is of necessity limited to his own 'turn'. While the leader has ultimate control over performance turns, there is, at most shrines at least, a customary sequence of those performing groups which have a special attachment to the shrine; and this sequence is maintained from generation to generation, always under the name of the original head of the group (see pp. 99 f. above). Such turns always occur at the beginning of the occasion. Outside performers obtain their 'turn' at an assembly by first paying their respects to the leader, so as to get 'on his list'. Once the list is drawn up, a performer learns of his place in the proceedings usually by being told which performer will sing before him. He also learns whether the usual norm of two songs per turn will apply, although the leader can always shorten or extend that limit during the assembly. All this means that the onus is on the Qawwal to monitor the performing sequence in order to be present for singing at the right time.

The customary thematic sequence of praising God, the Prophet, and then saints would seem to provide a thematic blueprint especially for performers with a first or second turn in the assembly. The fact is, however, that performers do not feel particularly bound by this rule, although they too pay lip service to it and respect it as a principle. Songs praising God are hardly ever heard at all, and often a performer with a first or second turn in the assembly will ignore the theme of the Prophet as well, or at most pay his respect to the tradition by singing one extra Introductory Verse in the Prophet's praise.

B   Assessing the situation

It has been necessary to dwell at length on the background setting of the Qawwali occasion in order to prepare the ground for an outline of the actual performance in sequence. As a matter of fact, a performer may be aware of all these structural setting factors and of their implications even before his performance begins, but he is still unlikely to take any final performance

decisions beforehand. The reason for this is his conviction, confirmed by experience, that nothing is ever certain, that every situation is different and unpredictable, so that it can best be assessed on the spot when the entire constellation of factors is at its most apperceivable.

This happens when the lead performer, with his group, enters his assigned place in the assembly. Now he begins to consider and choose from the series of options open to him, in order to make his music happen. First of all he immediately assesses his performing situation. While he is already informed by his prior knowledge of the structural aspects of the setting as discussed above, he must now, in addition, take into account those factors of a purely situational nature. These situational setting factors concern the 'here and now' of the performing situation and may therefore have much bearing on his musical strategy, whether they confirm, modify, or contradict his view of the structural setting. Two such factors are relevant to the performer; both relate to the audience present at the time of his performance. One is the actual audience composition, the other the state of receptiveness or focus among the listeners, including their explicit song preference, if any.

Taking note of the audience composition is of basic significance, since attendance at Qawwali occasions can be quite fluid, so that special listeners important to the performer – because of their spiritual or worldly status and their personal offering potential – may not all be present at any one time (for example arriving late or leaving early), and outstanding individuals whom he was expecting to address particularly, in the hope of a good reward, may just then be absent, requiring him to change his strategy, as happened at the beginning of Meraj's turn in Performance No. 2 (p. 176). Basically, the performer's view of the listeners actually before him will round out his picture of the audience, telling him what relative weight to give to different audience categories and which outstanding listeners to cater to.

At least as important to the performer, if not more so, is the state and receptiveness toward his performance which he finds his listeners in when he takes the floor; indeed it is mainly on positive or negative clues to this effect that he makes his final decision concerning the choice of song. Here the best indicator comes from the performance immediately preceding his. Hence, for assessing the audience, the performer takes note of both the song selection performed before his turn, and the degree of success it achieved. At one level this can be gleaned from the amount of money the performer sees his predecessor gather at the end of his performance, as he is about to replace him. At another level, the impact of the preceding song can be noted in the free expression among listeners of a heightened state of emotion. On perceiving such a state, the performer may drop other considerations and select a song that thematically matches or extends the previous, successful performance selection. Indeed, this procedure conforms to the Sufi guideline for thematic continuity which is emphasized by both performers and Sufi listeners, stating that once a link (*silsilā*) is established, it should not be broken. Thus, Meraj followed this rule when choosing the song *Kachh jagmag* in Performance No. 2.

In the absence of a visible audience preference, however, the principle of continuity is quite freely disregarded, especially by a more confident and innovative performer who may, on the contrary, choose to make a contrasting selection for his performance in order to arouse a seemingly unengaged audience. More generally, performers facing an unfocussed audience will make their performance decision on the basis of structural factors, trying to suit the occasion or place, or to cater to individuals or components in the audience. This can be illustrated by Meraj's experience in Gulbarga where he attended the ʿurs of Khwaja Bandana-

waz in 1975. After an unsuccessful first song in his turn at the main celebrational assembly he decided to play it safe and sing a song in praise of Nizamuddin Auliya since several Sufis from his home shrine were present, including his own patron. Their response was immediate, as expected, and the song became moderately successful.

C   Building the performance

What has taken paragraphs to outline can obviously take the performer no more than moments to size up before he begins his presentation. Thus, on the basis of both structural and setting factors, he arrives at a performance choice for his first Qawwali item. His decision identifies the song as to song text and includes song theme, association or author, language and style. It also further identifies the music as to choices of tune, rhythmic framework and ritual association, along with, possibly, durational or speed limitations – in case of an inexorably short 'turn'. Finally, his decision identifies the presentational style for the song and it may affect the ensemble. Table 28 represents a synopsis of the musical and setting variables involved in this decision.

However, it may also happen that the performer is unable or unwilling to choose a song by the time he sits down to perform, most likely because he feels the need to get a clearer indication of preference from at least some of his listeners, especially in the case of an unfamiliar setting. In this connection we must recall that the Qawwali song genre is structured in just such a way as to allow the performer an initial time of grace in order to observe, test or 'try out' his audience. This is possible primarily by means of the two parts preliminary to the song, the Introductory Verse (ruba'i), which prefaces the song proper, and the Instrumental Prelude (naghmā) which precedes the entire song complex.

Prelude

A performer will normally introduce his performance with a Prelude in order to focus the audience's attention, especially when there has been a change of performing groups with its attendant distraction. If his audience is very sophisticated spiritually, or if he wants to project a conservative spiritual image, he may build his entire naghmā on the anapaestic rhythm derived from the zikr Allāhū, tracing with it the traditional melodic outline of the naghmā-e-Quddūsī (Repertoire No. 11b). In most performance situations, however, the Qawwal will incorporate that rhythm in the more modern naghmā version current today (Repertoire No. 11a) which he knows audiences prefer 'because it has a smart beat' (kyūṅkeh is meṅ ṭhāp wāp zarā ṭhīk ātā hai). If trying to appeal to a substantial common audience, the performer will encourage his accompanists to liven up his tune with strongly accentuated drumbeats or handclaps; he may even increase the tunefulness of his Prelude by intoning phrases from the song he plans to sing subsequently. Whatever version is used, the Prelude serves to suggest a zikr-like experience to the audience with its rhythmic pattern heavily reinforced by clapping and increasing in speed, until the entire rhythmic activity comes to an abrupt halt just as the melody has descended to the tonic.

During the naghmā the lead performer has time to scan the audience for any subtle signals that could indicate song preference. By looking around solicitously, especially at the leader and other important personages, he also declares himself ready to comply with any direct

Table 28 *Music Variables as Affected by Setting Variables*

Legend
x preference
xx strong preference
(x) optional preference

	Sponsor's identity				Audience				Performing Conditions				Occasion/Place saint's celebration	
	spiritual		personal		special		ordinary		party turn		communal			
	saint's rep.	sheikh	sophisticated	popular	Sufi	rich	common	young	early	single	party follows	only	ritual	place
TEXT *Theme:*														
God	xx	xx												
Prophet	x	x					x	x	x*					x
saint		x					x	x					xx**	x
love														x
ecstasy														
separation														
ritual	x												x	
author		x											x	
Language:														
Farsi			xx											
Hindi			x	x			x	x						
Urdu				xx			x	x						
Style:														
high			xx		x	x								
low				x			x	x						
MUSIC *Tune:*														
old			x		x									
modern				x		x	x	x						
Rhythm:														
hard			x		x									
easy				x			x	x		(x)				
PRESENTATION *Duration:*														
long														
short										x	x	x		
Style:														
sophisticated			x		(x)	(x)								
popular				x			x	x						
Leadership:														
mask											x			
compete											x	x		

* Thematic hierarchy rule prescribes precedence of Prophet theme.
** Ritual repertoire rule prescribes specific songs with saint theme.

requests, thus inviting suggestions from special listeners. Indeed, even when he may already have a song in mind, he knows that his choice can always be over-ruled at the last moment by a direct request from a spiritual notable, for which he must be prepared. A request song is instantly assessed for its appropriateness and impact potential; if the performer considers the selection 'just right' (*sahih*) for the situation, he may start the song directly without spending further time on introductions. As for requests by insignificant listeners, they are fulfilled only if the choice seems right to the performer; otherwise he ignores them. A different situation occurs when a shortage of time is indicated, either by signals from the leader, or caused by delays preceding the performance. In this event, too, the performer is free to dispense with the Prelude and even the Introductory Verse of the song. Normally, however, both introductory portions serve the advantage of the performer, though for a second or third song in his turn he is likely to omit the Instrumental Prelude and sing only an Introductory Verse.

Introductory Verse (*Ruba'i*)

By convention, the Introductory Verse is related to the song thematically and often by language as well, thus representing, for the listeners, a sort of preview of what is to follow in the song. The performer, in turn, has the opportunity of testing their reaction to his choice of theme and language. If he perceives a favourable response, he allows the verse to lead directly into the song appropriate to it, one suggesting a similar theme within the recognized content categories (see above, pp. 85 f.). More often than not the song will also be set in the same language as the Introductory Verse, but the performer is also free to move to what he may consider a more appropriate linguistic idiom. In this he generally follows a hierarchical conception – parallel to the hierarchical sequence of song themes – that permits the Introductory Verse to evoke a higher, but never a lower, status than the song proper. Thus a Farsi song can only be introduced by a Farsi verse, a classical Hindi song may be preceded by a verse in Farsi, but not normally in Urdu, while for an Urdu song verses from all three languages are acceptable. Farsi verses are favoured for introductions because they evoke the classical Sufi saints and the entire symbolic realm of mysticism. Thus in Performance No. 2 Meraj chose the Farsi verse *Shud dilam* (Repertoire No. 8) to introduce the Hindi song *Kachh jagmag* (Repertoire No. 5). The performer knows that a verse in Farsi will make its impression even on an unlettered crowd, giving them enough of a taste of high Sufism without boring them with an entire song they do not understand. Hindi verses are chosen mostly to introduce Hindi songs.

If during the Introductory Verse no favourable responses are forthcoming, the performer need not make it lead into the song as planned, but may pass on directly to a second Introductory Verse, suggesting a different theme and perhaps introducing a different language, in order to explore further the audience's mood. Very rarely a performer proceeds to a third, even a fourth *ruba'i*; such an extended introduction invariably reflects his uncertainty, caused most likely by an unfamiliar audience whose reaction he finds difficult to read. Meraj was faced with such a situation in Gulbarga, which caused him first to extend the Farsi *ruba'i Shud dilam* (Repertoire No. 8b, extended version), then to move on to a verse in Urdu, and finally to a third *ruba'i* in Hindi, while switching themes from ecstatic (*rindānā*) to link-related (*nisbatī*), so as to end up with a song in praise of Nizamuddin Auliya.

Any switch of Introductory Verses is usually a thematic one, between the general categories

of songs addressing the Prophet or a Sufi saint, or of songs dealing with aspects of mystical love. Such a switch is also a recognized strategy where a conservative assembly leader wishes the traditional thematic hierarchy to be repeated. If in such a situation a performer considers the prospect of a mystical love song, or one addressing a saint, more rewarding – as is in fact the case during a saint's anniversary – a first *ruba'i* praising the Prophet will satisfy the formal requirement. This then leaves him free to use his 'turn' for a more promising song with a different theme, which he then simply announces with a second *ruba'i*. A switch in language between Introductory Verses invariably proceeds from the sophisticated Farsi to the generally intelligible Hindi or Urdu. This is called for where an audience is not responding to the Farsi, an indication that sophisticated Sufis are missing. It may also be indicated when a leader is giving precedence to his common audience.

There is another way in which the performer may end up extending his Introductory Verse even without intending to do so. If the verse evokes a very positive response in the form of enthusiastic gestures or exclamations, then the performer is obliged to keep repeating the particular verse line. Rarely, this can lead a listener to the stage of actual ecstatic arousal. Then mere repetition of the verse chanted without drumbeat will not suffice, for this state calls for the intense rhythmic repetition of *takrār*. The performer, therefore, immediately 'converts' the verse, from chanting it in free rhythm to singing it in a musical metre, while signalling the drummer to play the appropriate rhythmic pattern. The entire performing group now joins in the singing, emphasizing the beat pattern with handclaps. In this way the Introductory Verse has itself become a Qawwali song which will now be continued as long as this verse and additional verses sustain the enthusiasm of the listeners. Performers consider such an occurrence a windfall, because, of course, offerings are invariably part of such a positive response. 'This song came to us as a bonus' (*ieh chīz muft meṅ mil gayī*), said Meraj after this happened to him with the *Masnavī* (Repertoire No. 4) in no less a place than the great *'urs* assembly at Ajmer in 1974, and the ecstatic response of several listeners had brought the entire gathering to its feet (*sārī mahfil kharī hogayī*). Meraj repeated this procedure with the same song at Nizamuddin Auliya's *'urs* in 1976 (see *Masnavī* in Performance No. 1), though actual ecstasy was not reached.

This discussion of song choice would not be complete without mentioning the other extreme: a total lack of indication as to the audience's preference. It does happen that a performer finds no setting factor suggestive enough for a song topic, and even after several tries at Introductory Verses he sees no positive response in the audience. In such a case, when he 'can't figure things out' (*kuchh samajh meṅ nahīṅ āyā*), there is only intuition left to follow. So he simply picks whatever he feels like singing at that moment (*jo man meṅ āe*) and trusts in the saint's blessing (*karam*) – it may just succeed; conversely, the performance may have to be written off as a loss.

The song

Finally, the performance has reached the starting point of the song itself. By now, the performer has either received a request and proceeds to carry it out, or he has ascertained to his own satisfaction what topic, language and style of song are likely to appeal to the listeners he considers important. Having chosen the song, then, he now begins the process of performing it. This process is outlined in chart form in Table 29 where musical

Table 29 *Performance Process in Outline: Beginning of an Opening Verse*

Performance Decision	Musical Utterance	Audience Observation
Assess impact of song choice	= opening line to *asthāyī* tune, several times	→ Much success, expressed in offerings, commotion . . .
hence wait for offerings to reach leader	= keep up repeats of opening line	→ All sitting again . . .
hence no extreme response expected yet; as soon as money picked up, initiate completion of verse for enhancement of line 1	= restate line 1, solo to *antarā* tune	→ Attention focussed on lead performer and new message . . .
hence open 2nd, concluding line	= introduce 2nd line solo, repeat with group, to *asthāyī* tune	→ Some more offerings, but no great shift of attention . . .
hence return to opening line to harvest its now enhanced meaning	= restate line 1, solo to *asthāyī* tune, several times	→ Focal listeners respond strongly . . .
hence several options:		
option a) Intensification required, but also wish to enhance general appeal of line	= reiteration (*dohrānā*), using melodic/rhythmic alternatives	→ Enthusiasm spreads hence focal and other special listeners show expressive and link response (offerings) . . .
option b) Focus on intensification of focal listeners' state	= multiple repetition (*takrār*) of line, or salient phrase, interspersed with complete statement of line. Lower tune alternative used	→ Focal listeners respond more strongly, impressing others who then offer . . .
option c) Evoke intensification among multitude of saint's devotees, on his anniversary	= multiple repetition alternating line (segment) with saint's name, may use lower tune	→ Common audience responds, offers, but leader may be displeased, dampening atmosphere/ enthusiasm . . .
option d) Intensification to be spread among specials by amplification at sophisticated level	= reiterate after Insert of Farsi verse in recitative, culminating in line 1	→ Focal and several more special listeners respond strongly and offer . . .

units and interaction between performer and audience are shown for the beginning of a song.

The performer has a basic performing sequence laid out for him, which is implied in the structure of the Qawwali song itself, and has been outlined in Chapter 2 ('A Qawwali song model', pp. 65 ff.). To begin with, he orients himself along this standard format, with the

purpose of projecting the song message in a generally effective way, using all channels of communication available to him. Structurally speaking, this means that he focusses on the most easily comprehensible text unit, the verse line. Using it as the standard unit of communication, he follows a general pattern of repeating each verse line one or two times. On reaching the end of a verse in this manner, he restates the entire verse in sequence once or twice, in order to emphasize its message in its entirety.

In his presentation he aims at clarity and emphasis, by judiciously mixing solo and group singing. The opening line of the song he intones solo, thus presenting its message in absolute clarity as well as drawing attention to his own leadership of the performing group. Subsequent group repetition adds emphasis to the communication, but every new line is first introduced by the leader. Furthermore, within each verse the lead performer takes special care to convey the crucial connection between the initial 'statement' portion (one or more verse lines) and the final 'answer' portion (concluding line). Thus, after the group has repeated the opening statement and its extensions, if any, he stops the group and once more intones the opening – or penultimate – line in solo, always to an *antarā* or high-register tune. Thus he attracts the audience's attention to a new message: the impending conclusion of the verse, which he states for the first time to an *asthāyī* or low-register tune, continuing the solo presentation and effectively underscoring the entire message with facial expression and gestures appropriate to the meaning as well as to the type of audience present. This procedure of musically 'setting up' the connection between initial and concluding verse line is singled out by the special phrase 'to open the [salient concluding] line' (*misra' kholnā*).

EX. 26. *Misra' kholnā*: effectively connecting opening line with concluding line (*Kisī ko kuchh*)

While he is making the initial statement of the first verse, the performer must first of all assess the impact of the song selection on the audience. If the selection is at all fortuitous, this impact will be expressed immediately in the form of at least a few offerings made by those who wish at this time to link themselves to the message theme or identity of the song (see Performance No. 1: all songs). It is up to the performer to judge which part of the verse is making the greatest impact. In some songs, the very first line can electrify a number of listeners, especially if the poem has an important spiritual association or authorship (for example *Torī sūrat* in Performance No. 1). To allow for such an effect to happen, the performer does best to repeat the opening line many times in the *asthāyī* or lower-register tune, even before making the connection to the second line for the first time. Such repeat statements (*dohrānā*; see Chapter

2, p. 57) are kept up at least until all offerings have reached their destination. This is important because it provides even the listener who is last in line with the opportunity to make his offering to the sound of the statement that inspired it. In addition, the strategy also ensures that all commotion caused by the offering gestures has ceased, and nothing will distract the audience from the impact of the next statement. This may also mean extending the repetition until those offerings made to someone other than the leader have been passed on to him, even though this process is a spiritual formality which need not be tied to the statement that initially inspired the offering. The opening of *Torī sūrat* in Performance No. 1 illustrates all these facets.

There are gatherings where the presence of several descendants of a saint causes a great expansion of this formality, for by passing offerings, once received, to each other rather than directly to the leader, these descendants demonstrate mutual respect and validate each other's spiritual status before the larger audience. Predictably, performers find this unrewarding to wait for; often what looks like much offering money is just 'one rupee making the rounds' (*ek rupyā chāron taraf ghūmtā hai*), but when it reaches the performer 'it's still only one' (*to ek hī hai*).

Even if the opening line has an unusual impact potential, there is little likelihood, at this initial stage, of more than incipient arousal, so that excessive repetition of the opening line is not called for beyond the first run of offerings. Rather, the performer's strategy is now to proceed to the second line in order to complete the statement, and thus place the first line in the context of its full meaning. This he does in the standard way of 'opening the concluding line', as explained above.

Whatever the response on this second line, the performer repeats it until the offerings are placed, unless he sees someone in intense arousal, which is, however, unlikely at this stage of the song. Since he is intending to go back to the effective first line of the verse, this automatically means that the second line will then be repeated as well to complete the verse; thus its potential can be realized then, rather than having it repeated now, jeopardizing the still fresh promise of the first line.

The renewed statements of the opening line may well evoke stronger spiritual emotion in one – or even more than one – of the focal listeners. This then calls for intensification through repetition to satisfy Sufi listeners. If at the same time the performer wants to increase the appeal of the line to others, he can do so by introducing melodic variety into the musical intensification, by using alternate, and usually higher-pitched, versions of the *asthāyī* tune. Rhythmic variety may be achieved by doubling the speed of all or part of the line, by stating it twice or by filling the time saved with an appellation.

EX. 27. Repetition using rhythmically denser alternatives (*Chashm-e-maste*)

Chashme ma - ste, chashme maste,

Chashme maste, chashme maste
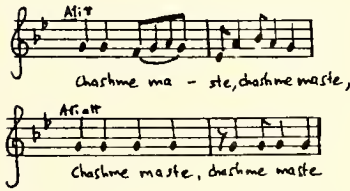
The Qawwal may even, at this early stage of mostly incipient arousal, select salient parts of the line for some multiple repetition, provided the line contains an impressive phrase suitable for this device. At this point, though, such *takrār* repetition will be limited, and interspersed with complete statements of the line, since no specific demand for intensive *takrār* repetition is indicated. This is a standard strategy which Meraj followed in the opening of *Torī sūrat*, by isolating these very opening words.

EX. 28. Repetition including *takrar* phrase (*Torī sūrat*, from Performance No. 1, p. 176)

Torī   sū - rat   to - rī   su - rat   to - rī   sūrat   to - rī   sū - ra - tə ke ..
olo: ā - hā   yā Mahbūb   yā Mahbūb

At this point the performer is obviously using musical intensifiers in order to evoke intensification of his listeners' state, rather than only responding to such states – indeed there may not yet be much to respond to. If he succeeds, the reward will be offerings from those listeners who feel inspired by such an early display of enthusiasm, especially from a spiritual notable. If the listeners to be aroused are devotees of the saint being honoured by the occasion, a simpler type of Insert may be called for, relating directly to the saint: his name or title, presented in alternation with the line or a salient part of it.

EX. 29. Repetition using titles (*Batufail*)

LITERAL TRANSLATION:

Tere dar se jo bhī milā mujhe

From your door; whatever blessings have come to me,

Tere dar se jo, Me-re Maulā

From your door: My lord (Benefactor)!

Tere dar se jo, Maulā Mushkilkushā

From your door; lord, Remover of Difficulties!

Tere dar se   Maulā Mushkilkushā

From your door: lord, Remover of Difficulties!

*Tere dar se jo, Yā sher-e-khudā
, Yā hajos nawā*

From your door: O Lion of God!

Although all these devices are calculated to succeed in intensifying the state of arousal among at least some listeners, thus inspiring them and others to make offerings, they may also fail to do so, for reasons tangible as well as intangible. For one, the leader may show displeasure at too many repeated appeals to the saint's name, for he considers this too obvious a ploy for compelling the devotees to confirm their allegiance by an offering. Any Inserted Verse also runs the risk of inviting displeasure, especially from a discriminating leader or a Sufi poet in the audience, since it represents the performer's own choice – Meraj had to abandon such a verse in Performance No. 2 (see p. 177). On the other hand, if chosen with a good eye to the focal listeners' tastes, it can greatly enhance the general atmosphere of enthusiasm during this early phase of the song, thereby increasing the prospect for further intensification of the audience's state – hence the risk is worth taking, as is evidenced by Meraj's *girah* during *Torī sūrat* (Performance No. 1). An Insert initiated by the performer may also inspire a listener to suggest a verse he wishes to have inserted in turn (see Performance No. 2). Since only the leader or a listener of high standing will take this liberty, the performer is glad to comply with the request. For its author, and probably others respecting his spiritual stature, are likely to assert their link to this message by an offering.

Finally, an Inserted Verse may so inspire a leading listener that he wishes to have it repeated. Normally, this is indicated by a fervent response on the return back into the main verse line of the song proper, so that the performer, after repeating the line to allow for the immediate expressive and offering responses, interrupts his companions to present the Insert once again – this is what Meraj intended but could not carry out in Performance No. 1 (see pp. 165 f.). One special technique to enhance the repeat statement of a single verse *girah* is to add one or more verses preceding it, so that the previous Insert now becomes the culmination of an entire verse sequence. The method of thus enhancing the previous Insert is really the same as that of enhancing a verse line with an Insert, so that this, then, represents a kind of double insertion. Given the fluid recitative structure of the *girah* it is easy to accommodate such an extension, as long as the salient final line, leading back to the line of the song, remains musically the same (see *Sansār*, Repertoire No. 9, and Ex. 22, pp. 87 f.).

A special situation obtains where a listener is so inspired by the Insert itself that he needs it to be repeated just then, before the return to the main verse line. If he has reached such an intense state as to require it, the performer will not only repeat the Insert but try to single out the salient portion for multiple repetition. Even if such an extreme demand does not actually come from the listener, a sagacious performer may consider this move an opportunity to generate more intense feeling all round – provided, of course, that the leader or some outstanding listeners are actually showing signs of arousal. Achieving multiple repetition within a *girah* means converting its musical setting of a recitative into one that is metrically controlled, so that rhythmic repetition can take place. Given the fact that the musical metre continuously sounded by the drum is that of the principal song and may not naturally fit with the verse rhythm (that is, the poetic metre) of the Insert, the conversion may require considerable rhythmic skill on the part of the performer. Furthermore, he may also need to lower the melodic range of the Insert, in order to make multiple repetition easy on the voice, especially if the repeat unit had been the last or penultimate line of the Insert, both of which require high-register settings of lead back into the main song.

EX. 30. *Takrār* repetition of a *girah* recitative (*Sansar*)
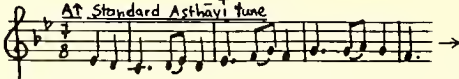
The performer may be tempted to continue with more verses of the Insert, thereby treating it as the song itself. As indicated earlier (p. 196 above), turning recitative into song is musically possible, and, in the case of converting an Introductory Verse, permissible. But once a song has been introduced, and with it a thematic and associational constellation, it would be highly presumptuous for the performer to break that chain or *silsilā* and forge links of his own, even if they were topically appropriate. Very rarely a resourceful Qawwal does get away with the practice of stringing different *girah* verses together, and reaps success, but normally he must expect censure for what Sufis and even Qawwals contemptuously term *tukbandī* ('string-along' of verses).

Thus, no matter how successful it may be when repeated on its own, the *girah* has to be led back into the song. After several repeat statements, this return may well prove anti-climactic. For once the last line has been heard repeatedly as a conclusion to the *girah* statement, it is all the more imperative that musical means be used to recast this same line as an initial statement, which the original song line is then to complete. If this climactic connection cannot happen, a valuable opportunity for offerings is lost. How a performer can get caught musically between conflicting interests becomes evident from the musical treatment Meraj gave to an Insert which he wanted to conclude effectively but then had to repeat for a spiritual notable (see Ex. 23, p. 166 above).
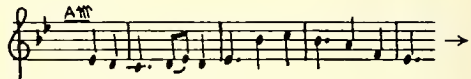
Whether successful or not, the return to the song calls for a restatement of the verse from which the Insert took off. Moving from first to second line is no longer so dramatic now, so the performer can only try again to emphasize the contrast between the lines, by singing the first line to the *antarā* tune alone or even possibly by enhancing it rhythmically as well, through doubling the speed of delivery. And to infuse new life in the concluding line – or in a single opening line – he is now likely to repeat its lower-register *asthāyī* tune to all the higher-pitched alternatives at his disposal.

EX. 31. High-pitched alternatives replacing *asthāyī* tune following Insert (*Torī sūrat*, from Performance No. 1).
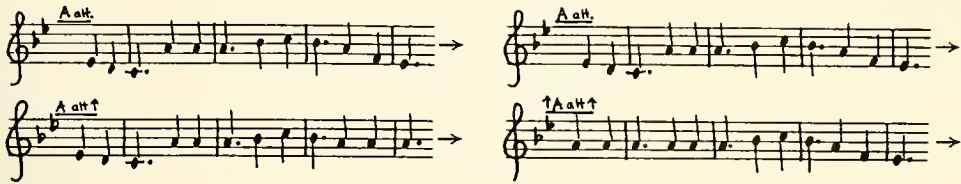
While reiterating a line whose expressive potential has thus been musically exposed, he now keeps a sharp eye on potential offerers, as well as on the leader whose desire to hear the line repeated will have to be respected, even if no direct reward flows from it. Some offerings are now likely to come from the common audience, who often tend to follow behind special listeners in their responses. At this point the lead performer may make his companions do the repeating. His momentary silence means that he is preparing to sing his solo 'opening' of the next verse, for which this prepares them to fall silent instantly.

The performer's concern for good timing here includes the money pick-up arrangement. In the few shrines where the leader provides one of his men for the task the performer has nothing to do with the matter, but in most assemblies it is he who designates one of his singers to look after the transfer of offerings from the leader to the performer. This person must be continually on the alert, presenting himself to the leader as soon as one or several offerings are deposited, so that he may receive them, which he does by respectfully bowing and raising the money to his forehead before taking it to the performer's harmonium. Unless the leader wishes it otherwise, the performer will see to it that money is never left lying in front of the leader (this is also the method followed by the leader's own carrier). Most performers consider this process an appropriate means of reminding the audience of the importance of offerings, but it can also waste precious performance time, at the point when a verse line has yielded all its offerings, and the performer would like to introduce the next line without any distracting commotion. For this reason the pick-up man is always alert, and he swiftly moves in on the offerings as they are made, while the lead performer sees to it that the line is repeated just long enough to see the money reach him; then he immediately proceeds to the next line (see both Performances).

With the exception of an impressive opening statement of a song, it is the second, concluding line of a verse which, most of all, can be expected to generate arousal. In subsequent verses, then, the performer is likely not to waste time reiterating their first line more than a few times. Instead, he may use the musical opportunity offered by the high-register *antarā* tune of the first line to insert one or more melodic improvisations (*tān*) between returns of the verse line.

EX. 32. Melodic improvisation to enhance reiteration of 'antarā' tune (*Chashm-e-maste*)
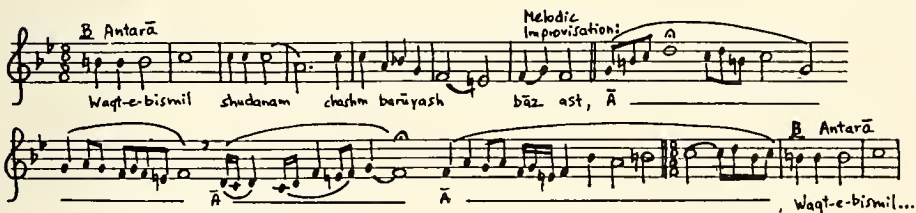
By briefly suspending the continuity of the text message, he emphasizes the intermittent character of the first line, thus increasing anticipation for the second one. This structuring strategy also represents an appeal to the sophistication of the audience, at a moment when their responses do not indicate absorption in the text message. Of course the impact of such a purely musical insertion will not bring offerings directly – for it would not be in keeping with Sufi tenets to reward a tune without words – but the reward will come at the appropriate moment when the connection with the second verse line is made.

On the whole, purely musical devices need to be used with care, for, if a Sufi is absorbed in the meaning of the verse line, he may express disapproval of such an interruption by a signalling gesture or even by a direct verbal statement. Criticism is also likely if the musical insertion is of a popular style designed to appeal to common listeners. On the other hand, a clearly 'classical' choice such as a phrase from a famous raga, or a brief passage using classical solmization syllables (see Table 3), is usually appreciated as a sophisticated enhancement by the leader and his assembly. To an extent, even the incipient arousal of a group of high-status listeners can be enhanced by the judicious addition of musical insertions.

But once any individual listener shows signs of being more strongly moved, this, or any other interruption from the salient text unit, will 'disturb' (*distarb karegā*). Indeed, at such a point even the most appropriate text Insert will only 'sting the aroused devotee greatly' (*wahāṅ to usko girah chhubegī bahut*). This was Meraj's comment about his own thwarted attempt at introducing a *girah* in just such a situation, in Performance No. 2 (see Graph, p. 183).

Whatever the procedure, once the performer has reached the salient concluding line of a verse, he will now do everything he can to increase its effectiveness, while at the same time keeping a sharp eye on the leader and the front-row listeners, though also including the general audience in his focus. As soon as he sees any signs of incipient arousal, such as strong swaying, head shaking or other rhythmic movements, he clinches the reaction by repeating the line, substituting alternative tune versions so as to keep other listeners engaged by musical variety. He is also particularly alert to gestures or signals pointing to a particular text phrase as the source of inspiration; then he immediately proceeds to turn that phrase into his repeat unit. This he does by singing the phrase solo and letting his accompanists complete the line in chorus, so that he can take a breath to repeat the phrase again, followed by the chorus in the same way. This is the 'classical' style of doing multiple repetition, but today many Qawwals simply make the group follow them in the repetition, once they have initiated the salient unit solo, especially when the unit is an entire line.

Other devices he may employ to render repetition more effective are intensifiers, such as extra weight on accented beats by drum or handclaps, clapping 'double' on half-beats, or increasing the tempo very gradually, as employed by Meraj in Performance No. 2 (p. 184). These devices are meant to be used in situations of intense arousal or ecstasy. But a performer may well resort to them when he sees the leader or one or more special listeners showing enthusiasm, hoping that offerings may result. 'Actions', too, may sometimes be used for that purpose, provided, of course, they are not censured by the leader as being too worldly.

Continuous visual reference to the leader enables the performer to be constantly aware of his reactions and avoid his displeasure. There are, however, moments when he is willing to risk that displeasure, for example on seeing an opportunity for a high reward, in the person of

a rich devotee with a particular preference which he would rather satisfy. The reward to be gained may be great, but it is never guaranteed, so that the risk is real.

As the performer moves from one verse to the next, he focusses not only on the internal structuring of the verse but also on larger aspects of song structure such as verse sequencing and song duration. The more conservative performer will sing all the verses of a song, for the traditional Sufi leader expects this and may remind him of any omitted verse, although the order of verses is somewhat flexible. Of course all verses do not have the same arousal potential, but there is a general assumption among performers that any verse can become the vehicle for spiritual blessing and no consistent pattern can be expected. On the other hand, it is clear to performers as well as listeners that verses invoking the link between devotee and saint or spiritual leader (so-called *nisbati* – 'connectional' or 'linking' verses), have a more or less guaranteed appeal which requires an offering response from devotees so as to activate the link element. Such verses are of course never omitted, even if limited time requires the song to be shortened. On the contrary, the performer tries to make the best of them, as did Meraj with the fifth verse of *Muflisānem* which appeals to the saint Nizamuddin by name (Repertoire No. 4, p. 29 and Performance No. 1, p. 155).

In spite of some disclaimers, a performer does single out those verses whose potential impact he knows from experience, aiming to enhance them by such means as multiple repetition with melodic variation, and particularly with what Qawwals call 'encirclement of repetition' (*takrār kā halqā*). In this technique, appropriate fillers – such as saints' titles or exclamations – highlight the transition from one repeat statement to the next one, with filler and text unit contrasted by solo–group responsory (*cf. Torī sūrat*, Ex. 17, and *Batufail*, Ex. 30). Should one or more of his listeners respond more fervently to the statement thus repeated, then a more intense form of multiple repetition is called for. This is usually carried out by simple group repetition, to achieve a consistently high level of sound volume, along with a gradual increase in tempo. If the aroused listener is of some stature, the performer will not spare any effort in catering for his needs. Even if he is not, the rule of continuing the *takrār* repetition must be observed, especially once a state of ecstasy is validated by the leader through his gesture of standing up, thus causing the entire audience to rise, as happened in Performance No. 2.

Up to the point when 'the *mahfil* stands up' to acknowledge ecstasy, there is some freedom of movement for the performer, at least theoretically. He may get away with starting an Insert or moving on to a different text unit – even if it is only the repeat of a preceding line – in order to please more prominent listeners. On the whole, however, the assembly's leader takes seriously any manifestation of arousal – as indeed he must – even if it comes from a low-status or junior listener; the performer therefore had better do likewise. To be scolded or set right by the leader not only affects the performer's standing adversely, it also disturbs the atmosphere of the assembly which in the end is likely to reduce his income from offerings.

Except where he enjoys privileged access or is the only one to sing, a performer is primarily concerned with using his performance time to his best advantage. An insignificant person's ecstatic state can constitute a significant loss of precious time, so that performers heartily approve of some leaders' tactics ensuring that such a person is not allowed to keep the floor, or later to stay in the leader's embrace too long (see Chapter 4, p. 129). This happened during an 'urs assembly (1976) in Khwaja Hasan Sani's own *hujrā*, when an ecstatic adept embraced the

exalted *dīwān* of Ajmer (see Performance No. 1) and was, on the leader's signal, pulled away to be led back toward his seat at the 'lower' end of the audience.

But ultimately the performer himself can do little to manage his time, other than not to waste any where it is in his power to do so. His principal technique to this end is the instant switch from one unit of structure to another, the same technique which he also uses continuously to cater to his listeners' changing needs. The instant he decides on the move he proceeds swiftly not only from one repeat unit to another, but from one completed verse to the next one, and even from song to song without waiting to sing to the end of the preceding unit. Thus it is entirely normal for a performer to end a song without any cadential signal, simply by starting in on the opening line of the next one, often before quite finishing the last line of the previous song. His logic is that a song is to be continued – as is any other message unit in Qawwali – as long as it is serving its function, that is, as long as people are responding to its message or can be expected to do so. But once it ceases to evoke responses it should be dropped instantly in favour of a different, more fortuitous choice. Performers know that the leader will go along with abbreviating a song as long as all the principal verses are sung at least once. Of course this strategy can benefit the performer only if his turn extends to the next song to follow, otherwise he is merely shortening his own performing time. Where he knows that his turn may be cut off by his ending a song, especially if it is the second one, he tries to eliminate any structural clues to finality – such as slowing down or intoning a melodic or rhythmic cadence – so that the assembly leader may not anticipate the impending end and will then allow him to continue the new song, once he has managed to start in on it. This move can take a performer only so far, however, for a simple movement of the leader's hand can send him off the stage even after the start of the new song, as happened to Meraj in a Qawwali Hall assembly (see p. 105 above) with many visiting Qawwals present.

Another method of dealing with an unsuccessful song is to present material more pleasing to the audience within the song itself. This would avoid the danger inherent in terminating it, especially when the 'turn' is known to allow for only one song. The method is to switch from one lengthy Insert to another, emphasizing their presentation and thus minimizing the importance of the song text. Recognized as a salvage operation, such a 'hodge-podge' (*khichṛī*, literally: a dish of rice and lentils mixed together) is disdained by good performers and censured by Sufis, for both uphold the integrity of the song message in its given sequence as one of the fundamentals of Qawwali singing.

Respecting the textual integrity of a song can also invite censure, however, in the event of a leader or spiritual notable not approving of a particular textual version or of a text unit itself. Even when the performer knows his own version to be the standard one, he must then immediately correct his performance by changing words or glossing over the offensive text unit as soon as he is alerted to the demand. This may require some musical manoeuvring, as was carried out by Meraj in Performance No. 2 (p. 186). A performer may resent the 'disturbance' caused by such arbitrary demands, but whether they arise from a Sufi's self-assertion or his spiritual need, he meets them to the best of his ability, as is his task.

Finally, the performer will end a song with a proper musical conclusion, if he is sure of his right to continue singing, or, conversely, if he knows that his departure will be irrevocable after this song. He then takes pride in concluding his song with a standard musical cadence of ending the *asthāyī* tune with a descent to the tonic (see Ex. 16 above). For added finality his drummer may at the same time articulate a thrice repeated rhythmic cadence (*tīyā*) on the

drum (as in *Torī sūrat* which ends Performance No. 1); the same purpose may be served by reducing the tempo of the final cadence (as in *Kachh jagmag* of Performance No. 2), or even of the entire concluding line.

This completes a generalized picture of the performance process, focussing on one complete unit of performance, a song, but placing it within the larger context of a performer's 'turn' and, ultimately, that of an entire Qawwali event. Having thus informed the reader ethnographically how Qawwali music in performance is context-sensitive in a remarkably formal and observable way, the ground is prepared for dealing with the process of performance analytically so as to make sense out of the rule system at work. What has emerged so far is a multi-faceted process in which the performer uses music to express context and also to manipulate it. In decision after decision he responds instantaneously to a multiplicity of contextual variables and articulates his response by means of a multiplicity of musical variables. Clearly this surface diversity is governed by principles or rules which enable the performer to make each musical choice with reference to each particular contextual factor instantly and with consistency. Even more fundamentally, these principles or rules provide the performer with the general criteria which enable him to link context and music in each particular instance.

8 Analysing the Qawwali performance

A   Semantic referents

In this chapter we are finally ready to tackle directly the central question of this study: how to programme Qawwali music in performance by introducing contextual input into the sound rule system. In a sense, all preceding chapters can be considered preliminary to this step; at least they each are indispensable as prerequisites to it, for this step essentially consists of abstraction and simplification, of reducing processes governing complex and diverse variables to analytically manageable dimensions. This of course makes sense only because those variables and processes have been identified first: the structures of music and context have both been explained within their relevant frame of reference, and the process of their interaction has been outlined likewise. 'How variations in the music are generated by variations in the performance situation' (p. xiii) has thus been shown descriptively in the previous chapter. What remains is to systematize the performance dimension by expressing the diverse and particular in terms of the simple and general.

This analysis starts from the premise that the context–music interaction operates on the basis of certain underlying principles which constitute the common denominators linking the musical idiom with the context of performance. Those principles serve as the referents, 'translating' context into music, and in turn expressing context musically. It is by applying them that the Qawwali performer 'plugs' context variables into his performance of the music. These principles or referents, then, provide the key to the way context is evaluated and expressed in music. What this key unlocks is meaning, non-musical meaning. It refers to the context, both in its spiritual and social aspects, and is considered to be manifest in the music by general agreement among performers as well as listeners of Qawwali. Applying this key can therefore explain the basis for the performer's selection of contextual variables, as cues for his selection of musical ones. On the basis of this process of analysis the model of Qawwali music can then be rewritten to include the input from the context via the key of these semantic referents.

The foundation of the entire analytical procedure is ethnographic, which is in keeping with the empirical approach followed throughout the study. But the data here is of necessity generalized; it includes much that is already presented in earlier chapters, as well as much observation and talk with informants. The analytical dimension, unlike the ethnographic one, is arrived at by means of what amounts to an 'etic' or analyst's logic, although based on the application of 'emic' or culture-derived premises. Throughout the chapter, each analytical step and each sub-system of meaning is outlined in tables, separately for context (Tables 30–32, 36, 38, 40) and music (Tables 33, 37, 39), as well as correlated to show the equivalences (Tables 34, 35). The conclusions too are schematized in table form (Tables 41, 42).

The first step in the analysis is to establish two basic premises characterizing the relationship of the Qawwali performance idiom with the Qawwali performance context: (a) the

idiom is semantically capable of being a referent to the context, and – following logically – (b) the idiom can express or manifest the context as well as suggest or motivate it. On the basis of these premises the performance interaction takes place along dimensions that form the link between context and music, and generate the principles which operationalize those links. Seen analytically, it is these operational principles which provide the performer with the criteria of interpretation for his evaluation of contextual factors and, accordingly, for the appropriate selection of musical factors. Put in another way, these criteria of interpretation function as semantic indicators or referents for a 'translation' process taking place between context and music. This process underlies the selection of performance items and it continues to operate throughout the song performance. Its starting point is always the evaluation of the audience and its responses, or the context. Hence my analytical interpretation, too, proceeds from context evaluation to musical expression, and then considers their interaction both ways. Principles and criteria of evaluation are taken up in a sequence which is temporally as well as logically appropriate, starting with those relevant to the structural perspective and proceeding to the actual process of the song performance.

B   The structural perspective: referents of status and identity

Evaluation of context

Two primary referents appear to be crucial to the process of audience assessment and song selection: they are identity and status. As listed in Table 30, each of the two referents generates a set of criteria pertaining to spiritual, socio-economic, and personal attributes. The performer uses these criteria to evaluate the contextual factors and then to select the musical attributes that accord best with his evaluation.

Of the two referents, status is of prime importance analytically, because it provides the performer with an ordering frame for the diversity of contextual variables he encounters, particularly in the audience. The performer is cognizant of all status dimensions; thus they

Table 30 *Referents of Status and Spiritual Identity: Evaluation of Context*

Attributes of audience (in order of importance)	Criteria of status	Criteria of spiritual identity
a) *Spiritual dimension* 1. descent affiliation:	as manifested in: ancestral pedigree	saint, shrine, lineage representation
2. spiritual function:	representational pedigree (seniority) leadership pedigree	spiritual guidance devotion
b) *Socio-economic dimension* 1. patronage/power:	socio-political pedigree	
2. wealth:	economic pedigree	
c) *Personality dimension* 1. personal culture:	cultural level (of sophistication)	stylistic preference
2. age:	(physical) seniority	

help him to arrive at a total status evaluation for the individual listener, based on the relative importance assigned to each status dimension, and comprising a composite of status attributes. Categories of listeners are normally identified in terms of their dominant status dimension, but within each category individual status may generally be enhanced by one or more secondary status attributes. To illustrate, Table 31 identifies the standard *categories* of

Table 31 *Status Identification: Audience Categories* (*cf.* Table 20)


```
I                                        high                        low

II                  spiritual                        worldly

III      saintly descent              personal      power  money    some    some
                                      spirituality                  devotion money

IV   titular or      shrine    descendant   guide  senior   patron  rich man  devotee  young
     outstanding  representative                   devotee                             man
     shrine
     representative
```
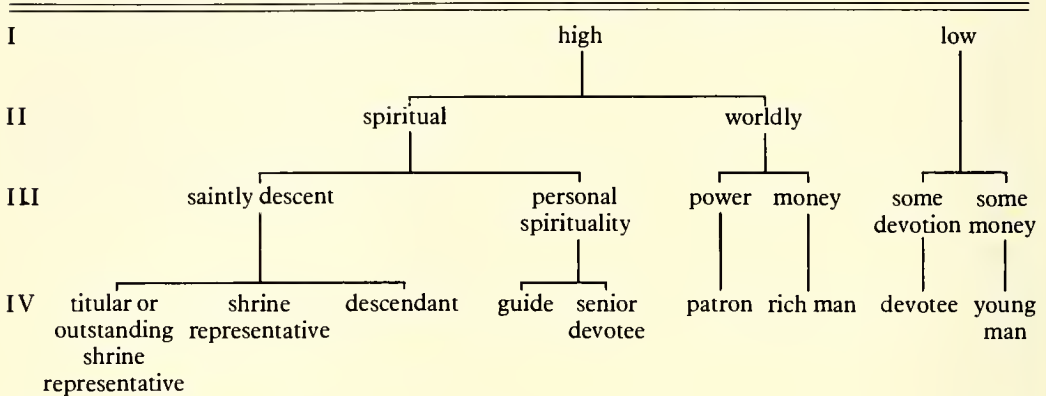
  I = basic status indicator
 II = basic status type
III = status attributes
IV = resulting audience categories
──────→ direction of decreasing status

listeners in Qawwali assemblies, with reference to their primary status dimensions. Table 32, on the other hand, lists *individual* listeners of high status, along with a breakdown of their status attributes. Together, the criteria identifying listeners by status enable the performer to divide them into status categories, as he requires. Depending on the performance decision to be made, this may mean no more than to identify high-status listeners as opposed to those lacking status. Or, conversely, it may mean ranking individual high-status listeners *vis à vis* each other.

Table 32 *Status Identification: Individual Listener*
according to combined status attributes
(in order of decreasing individual status)

Outstanding asset	Primary enhancement	Secondary enhancement
	who is a	and also a
senior saint's rep.	patron	guide
shrine rep.	patron	guide
patron	devotee	rich man
guide	shrine rep.	rich man
rich man	devotee	
descendant	guide (minor)	
senior devotee		

The second operational principle, identity, is of secondary importance analytically, for its function as an ordering device is limited. Only attributes within the spiritual dimension are relevant to the performer for his evaluation of the audience, due, obviously, to the spiritual function of the Qawwali assembly. Analytically speaking, then, the performer's performance evaluation of setting and situation may be summarized as follows:

(a)   *Status evaluation* consists initially of establishing the two principal audience status categories, high and low. At the same time, individual listeners in the high-status category are rated for potential ranking according to the relative status by means of the combined status criteria.

(b)   *Identity evaluation* consists of determining the salient attributes of spiritual identity among high-status listeners. In addition, the stylistic preferences of high-status listeners are ascertained.

The leader of the assembly is of course subjected to the same evaluation procedure. While by definition his overall status is above that of the other listeners, it is relevant to measure his relative spiritual status. What is of prime concern is to assess the features of his spiritual identity.

Fixed setting factors are relevant to the performer mainly in relation to the audience; hence their evaluation ultimately contributes to his audience assessment and is subject to the same criteria of interpretation. Occasion and place are significant in terms of their spiritual identity component, while time and locale indirectly inform the status assessment of the audience.

Expression in music

Having thus reduced the performer's evaluation of setting variables to criteria of status and identity, the next task is to show how these criteria serve as semantic referents for the translation of contextual factors into musical ones. This implies that musical or performance idiom variables can be made subject to these very same criteria. Table 33 shows how the

Table 33 *Status and Identity Referents: Expression in Music*

Attributes of music (in order of importance)	Status criteria	Identification criteria
a) *Text dimension*		
thematic content:		mystical personages
		mystical states
association:		ritual–author
language:	Farsi–Hindi–Urdu	formal–intimate
		foreign–indigenous
style:	sophisticated–popular 'veiled' – 'obvious'	ornate–plain
b) *Music dimension*		
tune:	old–modern	authentic–'composed'
		ritual–author
rhythm:	(serious–popular) 'hard'–easy	
c) *Presentation dimension*		
style:	sophisticated–popular	
elaboration	rhythmic–melodic	textual–musical

principles of status and identity are indeed represented by specific musical dimensions, and include attributes of text, music and presentation. The table lists musical dimensions in order of priority.

In considering first the criteria of status, what becomes apparent immediately is their great number but limited differentiation, that is, all musical dimensions indicative of status basically serve the designation of only two broad status categories: high and low. Taken together, they all add up to characterize, in the extreme, two opposite musical prototypes – one high-status and resembling classical music and poetry, one low-status and resembling popular music – of which these dimensions are the individual components. By varying these components, different intermediary combinations can be obtained to achieve varying proportions of high- or low-status ingredients. The status distinctions suggested by these musical dimensions are in essence socio-economic ones; it is noteworthy that dimensions indicative of spiritual status in particular have a most limited representation in the form of language and style.

As concerns the principle of identity, its principal dimension is spiritual, while the expression of personal identity or 'cultural preference' may operate independently of spiritual identity.

Analytically speaking, then, the performer's musical expression of principles of status and identity may be summarized as follows:

(a)   *Status expression* is achieved on the basis of establishing two principle status levels, high and low, through a variety of narrow musical dimensions. In addition, individual status differentiations can be made manifest by using these dimensions in varying combinations.

(b)   *Identity expression* is centred on the manifestation of spiritual identity through few but widely differentiated musical dimensions. In addition, personal identity or stylistic preferences can be expressed variously across the musical idiom.

The foregoing summary makes it evident that the principles of status and identity apply to each of the two performance domains, context and music. It now remains to show how context and music are connected through the two principles when they are used as semantic referents, first to evaluate the context and then to select the appropriate musical variables to make the evaluation manifest in performance.

Context–music interaction

Tables 34 and 35 summarize how the two semantic referents are applied in principle, based on the identification of relevant indicators within the contextual and the musical domain. To apply each of the referents successfully, the musician is required to have as part of his musical repertoire an understanding of the status and identity attributes contained within the dimensions of the performance *idiom* (as listed in Table 33 and summarized in Tables 34 and 35, under *Identification: music*). Equally, he requires the competence to identify the status and identity of his listeners on the basis of the standard dimensions characterizing Qawwali *audiences* (as listed in Tables 30 and 31, and summarized in Tables 34 and 35 under *Identification: audience*). Overlaps and combinations between these dimensions occur within the audience; these can equally be expressed within the music, so that, theoretically, individual variation, and even contradiction, between listeners can be reflected in the music by means of variable combinations of the relevant dimensions. Furthermore, the musical

Table 34 *Application of Status Referent*

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION
(of status criteria)

Audience
(Performance context)

Music
(Performance idiom)

ancestral pedigree,
representational pedigree, } spiritual status ← → text status { language, style

power, money } worldly status ← dimensions identifying status → music status { tune, rhythm

culture, seniority } personal status ← → presentation status { elaboration, performance style
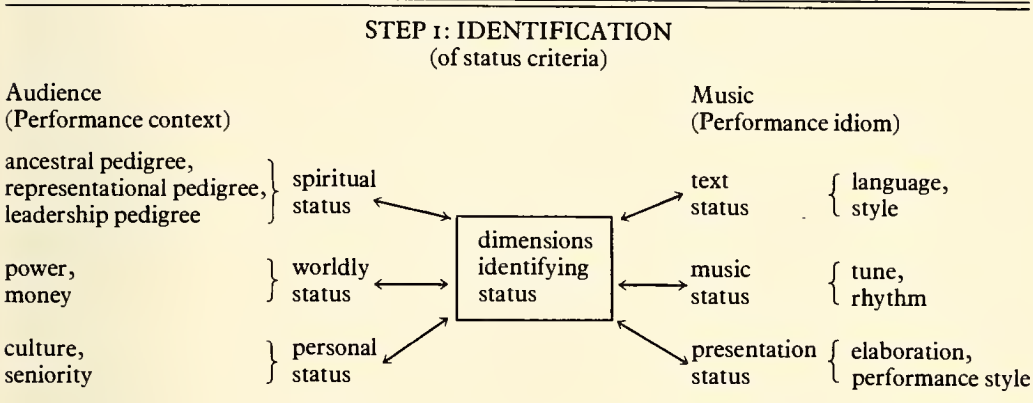
STEP 2: APPLICATION*
(according to status levels)

Categories	Individuals		Text		Music		Presentation	
(reduced from spiritual, worldly and personal status attributes)			language	style	tune	rhythm	elaboration	perf. style
special	high status	HIGH	Farsi Hindi	sophisti- cated 'veiled'	'old' classical	'hard' complex	rhythmic classical	'sober' restrained
		status levels						
common	lower status	LOW	Urdu	simple 'open'	'new' popular	'easy' simple	melodic	exuberant explicit

* Variability of application corresponds with varying individual status in audience (see text).

expression of status and identity need not follow a predictable pattern. Rather, the principle of applying the two semantic referents in performance is a flexible process of combination and selection in accordance with the performer's assessment of the need of the moment. As summarized in Tables 34 and 35, this process may be characterized as follows.

Two overall status categories are ascertained for the audience and these find expression in a number of musical factors. This allows the performer the flexibility to select a combination of attributes signifying one kind of status, while at the same time permitting him the use of musical options with different or even contrary implications. This becomes significant as a tool to accommodate variation among listeners. At this level, general status dimensions enable the performer to rank high-status individuals according to their combined status assets (as schematized in Table 32), so that he can rank or single out individual listeners of high status and cater to them musically. It is by means of the identity referent that the actual context selection of the performance is made, whether on the basis of an entire audience's commitment to an occasion of performance, or on the basis of an outstanding listener's spiritual identity. Here, too, the process is inherently flexible, since the audience dimensions

Table 35 *Application of Identity Referent*

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION
(of identity criteria)

AUDIENCE
(Performance context)

MUSIC
(Performance idiom)

saint, shrine, lineage	} spiritual affiliation			text identity	{ thematic content, association, language
representation, guidance, devotion	} spiritual function	→ dimensions identifying identity ←		music identity	{ tune
stylistic preference	} personal style			presentation identity	{ elaboration (of text)

STEP 2: APPLICATION ACCORDING TO INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY ATTRIBUTES
(see text pp. 212 ff.)

may overlap or occur in any combination, and their musical representation can be varied accordingly, depending on who is to be singled out for identification and with how strong an emphasis.

The discussion so far has established the principle of application for the two semantic referents, status and identity, with reference to the structural perspective of a performance, governing the performer's assessments and decisions up to and including his choice of a song. While these referents of status and identity are the principal criteria the performer applies at the stage of evaluating structural and setting factors, they continue to inform his decisions throughout the process of performance. At the same time, beginning with the performer's consideration of the purely situational aspect of his performance setting, a third operational principle comes into play, referring to the spiritual state of the audience. In other words, his focus now moves to what is the explicit and primary purpose of the Qawwali assembly: spiritual arousal.

C   The process perspective: referent of spiritual state and its intensification

Evaluation of context: spiritual state and its manifestations

At the initial stage of the performance, the audience's spiritual state serves the performer as no more than an auxiliary criterion of evaluation that may lead him to amplify or modify his assessments based on status and identity referents. However, spiritual state, or degree of spiritual arousal, becomes the dominant principle of operation, once the performance is under way; indeed it is this principle that primarily governs the dynamic of the performance process. Two attributes characterize spiritual state and distinguish it in a fundamental way

from both status and identity. First and foremost, spiritual state is experiential and has an immediate temporal dimension, that is, it varies with time throughout a performance – unlike status and identity which remain unchanged. Second, spiritual state is seen as founded in intuitive individual experience, hence it can occur in any listener, regardless of status and identity – and may, but need not, correlate with the structural attributes of status and identity.

There is a further attribute of spiritual state which fundamentally distinguishes it from status and identity and is particularly relevant in the consideration of its evaluation by the performer. Identity and status are structural attributes representing established social facts or shared assumptions. As such, they are characterized by a consistent pattern of outward manifestations. The performer often knows these attributes beforehand, and even if he applies the criteria of status evaluation on the basis of behavioural manifestations, his interpretation is easily verified. On the whole, outer manifestations of status and identity only confirm behaviourally what constitutes structural knowledge for the performer as well as his audience. State of arousal, on the contrary, is entirely individual and situational and thus subject to interpretation on the basis of outward manifestation only. Yet, state of arousal is not behaviour – it is an abstraction inferred from it, and individual manifestations of such states vary widely. Accordingly, while outward manifestation is the only indicator of spiritual state, it is nevertheless not considered primary. Rather, the performer interprets behavioural responses with reference to the range and repertoire of generally accepted expressive conventions (outlined in Chapter 4 and summarized in Tables 24–26). In addition, he needs to evaluate individual differences in behaviour in the light of relevant personal attributes, and recognize their motivation, whether it resides in the individual's spiritual status or identity, or else in his personal idiosyncrasy. But his focus – and hence that of his analytical presentation – is on the listener's state as he perceives it, rather than on its behavioural indicators.

Qawwali performers share the standard Sufi conceptions regarding spiritual arousal and its expressions. Therefore the framework of spiritual states and their outward manifestations is of relevance as a basic interpretative guide for the performer. But the performer also evaluates these standard expressive responses with an eye to individual variation. This is relevant especially for identifying the initial stage of arousal, which is often not manifested as clearly and overtly as the more advanced spiritual states. Indeed, the same raised arm may mean to the performer either a significant signal of incipient arousal or nothing more than a habitual gesture of appreciation. When it comes to the manifestation of more intense spiritual emotion, previous assessments of status and identity are a factor in the performer's evaluation. In congruence with the social norm of restrained self-management governing the assembly leader as well as listeners of elevated status, the performer expects restraint on the free expression of ecstatic abandonment where such high-status listeners are concerned.

The formal offering, too, is evaluated by the performer as an indicator of the *presence* of spiritual arousal; however, its constancy of form – even where it contains an intensification such as prostration – limits it as an indicator of the *degree* of arousal. Furthermore, the performer is quite aware of the social motivation that may underlie an offering. Single responses expressing individual states of arousal form the basic units of assessment for the performer. At the same time he is fully aware that such states and their expression are subject to the dynamic of time and space. Thus in terms of time he sees each single response as representing a point in the continuum of increasing – or decreasing – spiritual arousal, so that

his assessment of every response will be informed by his evaluation of preceding responses. Conversely – and more significantly, from the point of view of strategy – he uses his total assessment of past and present arousal to project ahead, anticipating the direction of spiritual developments, in order to cater to them. The same point applies to the performer's consideration of the spatial dynamic within the assembly. He realizes the impact which both the strong arousal of one listener, and the mild arousal of many, can have on the entire audience. This impact is fairly predictable when it emanates from spiritually superior listeners, since the spiritual content of their arousal is recognized by everyone as a blessing. But the same does not apply to other listeners, especially those of the 'common' category, so that for the impact of their arousal much depends on the general mood of the gathering, and, ultimately, on the validating response of the spiritual leader(s) present. In this context, the collective gesture of standing up when a common listener rises in ecstasy is seen as a formalized validation by the leader, who initiates and terminates the gesture. In general, the performer, while assessing each individual, does so with reference to the audience as a whole, which really means keeping an eye on everyone – no wonder he claims to need an eagle's power of observation.

Built into the assessment of the listener's state is the performer's concern with the dynamic inherent in the state dimension, since it is at the level of process rather than structure that he applies the criterion of spiritual state in the music. Thus he aims at assessing the needs emanating from the spiritual status of the audience. Sufi tenets makes it clear that the primary need inherent in every spiritual state is to realize the arousal potential contained in it, in other words to intensify it to its culmination. Indeed, intensification is the dynamic inherent in spiritual arousal itself, and a continuum of increasing intensity encompasses all stages of arousal. It follows from this that each individual state is always the product of intensification, and thus requires intensification in order to be sustained, as well as to be increased or moved to a higher stage of arousal. Table 36 lists the way the performer assesses spiritual states, as manifested in outward expressions as well as the dynamic he sees inherent in them.

Since it is the aim of the performer – in accordance with Sufi tenets – to bring about this increase by means of the song he is singing, he has to shape his performance of the song in accordance with the principle of intensification. The crucial point is that in this process the music takes on a much more dynamic function than in the application of status and identity criteria. For there the music no more than reflects and reinforces the status and identity of listeners, whereas here the principle of intensification, realized musically, operates not only to reinforce but actually to generate and increase states of arousal.

Expression in music

From the discussion of state assessment it is obvious that, in order to serve its function, Qawwali music must above all express and convey intensification. Since intensification is a process, its musical expression, unlike that of status and identity, can only be conveyed through a process – the process of musical performance itself. Thus it is not musical units or attributes but the principle of structuring such units or attributes which represents intensification musically. This structuring principle is repetition.

That repetition is indeed a primary structuring principle for the Qawwali idiom has already been established in the musical analysis (Chapter 2), followed by much evidence as to how, specifically, repetition with its concomitants expresses and conveys intensification. It re-

Table 36 *Spiritual State Referent: Evaluation of Context* (*cf.* Table 25)

a) *Expressive manifestation* (in order of increasing intensity)	*State assessment*	*State dynamic*
1. none	neutral	→ generate arousal
2. tap, move head, sway, nod, raise arm, verbal expression, exclaim	mildly aroused	→ reinforce/amplify + increase arousal
3. move vehemently, weep, raise arms, shout, prostrate	intensely aroused	→ sustain + increase
4. stand up, walk, move about, dance, fall down, toss about	ecstatic	→ sustain + bring to completion
b) Link manifestations		
1. offering, with possible prostration	any state	→ sustain + increase
2. embrace, with possible offering	ecstatic or intensely aroused	→ sustain + bring to completion

mains here to show in systematic terms how the semantic referent of intensification is applied to Qawwali music through the medium of repetition.

As outlined in Chapter 2, repetition in Qawwali music takes the form of three processes: simple reiteration (*dohrānā*), multiple repetition (*takrār*), and recurrence based on recombination and insertion (*girah lagānā*). All three represent and embody facets of intensification which operate both within and between stages of arousal. All repetition basically works the same way: it intensifies by reimpressing on the listener the same message over and over. As schematized in Table 37, different types and degrees of intensification are represented by three types of musical repetition. To show how they are differentiated requires calling to mind that in Qawwali they operate on a musical idiom which gives primacy to text over music. Thus, reiteration serves to impress the message on the mind (*samjhānā*) by means of simple restatements. Insertion–recurrence serves to make the message explicit by the insertion of an amplifier between recurrent statements. Multiple repetition, finally, is the intensifier *par excellence* in a Qawwali performance, impressing the message fully and continuously.

In relation to the arousal continuum, different types of repetition are associated, more or less loosely, with different stages. Reiteration belongs to the lowest stage, where no or little arousal is present. It also serves the simple, physical clarification of a message when an audience is noisy. Insertion–recurrence generally presupposes that some reiteration has already taken place, and some enthusiasm or mild arousal is present. Multiple repetition, finally, implies intense arousal and even ecstasy.

There are a few secondary and non-structural attributes of the musical idiom which also serve the expression of intensification as related to spiritual states and their management; two are aspects of acoustic presentation and can therefore be employed simultaneously to under-

Table 37 *Spiritual State Referent: Expression in Music*
on basis of intensification principle

Attributes of Music	Criteria of State Intensification
a) *Repetition process dimension* (*cf.* Table 14)	
1. Reiteration, restatements	→ Reinforcement, clarification ⎫ of
2. Insertion–recurrence	→ Amplification, enhancement ⎬ state of arousal
3. Multiple repetition	→ Increase, culmination ⎭
b) *Acoustic presentation dimension*	
1. Accentuation	⎫
2. Acceleration	⎬ Secondary intensification (supplementary to repetition)
3. 'Actions'	⎭

score repetition, particularly multiple repetition. One constitutes what could be called the prototype of repetition – strong rhythmic accentuation in which the existing beat pattern is emphasized by extra heavy drum beats or by more frequent accentuation in the form of drum accents or handclaps (beating or clapping 'double'). As explained in Chapter 2 and outlined in Tables 3 and 6, the Qawwali durational framework already contains these basic ingredients of rhythmic intensification, so that here they need merely to be placed in the context of the performer's intensification strategy.

The second intensifying device which performers use deliberately to make multiple repetition more effective is very gradual acceleration. Both devices are used sparingly, because they retain their effectiveness only in contrast to the unaccented or unaccelerated norms respectively. Thus, performers like to reserve them for high-intensity repetition. Also, these devices not only are not textual, but they can interfere acoustically with the text message; therefore Sufis consider their excessive use inappropriate, if not vulgar, and the aware performer restricts their use accordingly, though he may choose to inspire a common audience with their help.

Finally, there is a non-acoustic as well as non-structural intensifier: the performer's gestures and facial expressions, collectively called 'actions' by performers and Sufis. Their use, even more than that of the other two non-structural intensifiers, is subject to strict constraints by Sufis. Though they may be used judiciously at early stages of arousal in the audience, their excessive use is seen as a distortion of the spiritual message to a personal, human level. Acoustically – or visually – prominent as non-structural intensifiers might appear, they are in fact entirely secondary, since they are essentially subordinate to repetition, the primary musical expression of intensification in Qawwali.

Context–music interaction: intensification and repetition

So far it has been shown that the dynamic principle which underlies the listener's state of arousal is intensification, and that this principle is also expressed musically in the form of

repetition, the principal structuring device of Qawwali music in performance. This makes it possible for the performer to apply the principle of intensification as a semantic referent between audience and music: he uses it to assess the state of his listeners, and accordingly selects an appropriate type of musical intensification. Since this intensification takes the form of repetition, he thereby also structures the song. On the basis of the link, established by the criterion of intensification, between audience arousal and repetition, different types of repetition represent different stages of arousal and constitute an appropriate response to them.

But the performer's strategy consists of more than responding to listeners' states; he is as much concerned with evoking such states. This means that he may in fact use repetition expressing intense arousal before such arousal is actually present, in order to evoke it. As a result, the use of all repetition becomes far more flexible, for it continuously reflects both initiative and response to the states of the audience. This flexibility is greatest at the lowest levels of arousal, for once intense arousal or ecstasy occurs, the rules of Sufism give the performer little choice but to sustain that state by multiple repetition. On the other hand, where little or no arousal is present, he is likely to run the gamut of repetition. Starting with reiteration, he hopes to increase the enthusiasm for a message unit, perhaps by underscoring it with appropriate 'actions'. His next move will be to introduce amplifying text Inserts between recurring statements of the repeat unit, or to float the occasional melodic or rhythmic Insert to impress sophisticated listeners. Most of all, where intense arousal can be anticipated at all, the performer will finish off either reiteration or recurrence after a text Insert with multiple repetition, intensified by rhythmic accents, if appropriate.

No less a motivation for multiple repetition is the performer's hope of getting offerings following an effective reiterated text unit or, even more, an appropriate Insert. Continuing repetition serves to invite and facilitate the mechanics of multiple offerings. Indeed, once offerings are coming, no matter what level of arousal stimulates them, the performer will keep up multiple repetition of the text unit that generated them, hoping for more.

Context–music interaction: repetition and its adjunct, repeat unit identification

For the sake of analytical clarity, intensification has so far been dealt with in isolation, so as to identify it as the principal semantic referent operating between audience and music during the performance process – and also to interpret it in parallel terms to the referents for setting factors (status and identity). However, this does not completely account for the way this referent actually operates in the interaction process between audience and music. While applying the intensification principle to music results in the identification of the appropriate structuring *process*, repetition, it leaves open the question of what *unit* of structure is to be repeated.

As recalled earlier, the process leading to the decision to repeat takes place at the same time as, and with reference to, the song performance, starting as soon as the song is selected and continuing to its end. As outlined in Chapter 2 and summarized in Tables 7 to 17, a Qawwali song performance proceeds on the basis of structural units derived from the text, which are all repeatable. The *performer*, recognizing the need for comprehensibility and immediacy in conveying the Qawwali message, follows a norm of proceeding line by line, restating each line in sequence and then repeating the entire verse. Line segments are repeated to emphasize

special phrases. *Listeners*, in accordance with the function of Qawwali, express states of arousal in response to these units of content, as they hear the performers sing them. Given the immediacy of the listener's response, it is logical for the performer to identify as the repeat unit whatever he is singing at the point when he perceives the response. Normally – and in conformity with the performer's expectation – that unit is a verse line, and it is this verse line the performer proceeds to repeat, occasionally adding a restatement of the entire verse to complete the message.

Following this standard process, then, the performer arrives at the unit of repetition by the simple timing of the listener's response. In analytical terms, this means that by its very occurrence a response expressing arousal identifies the unit of repeat, in addition to signalling the need for repetition as such. The same is the case for the offering response, where the performer will automatically identify and then repeat the same verse during which an offering is first made.

While it is standard procedure, this process of unit identification is nevertheless not invariable for the performer. Given the unpredictable quality and individualized outward expression of spiritual arousal, the performer's standard assumption regarding the correct repeat unit may not correspond to his listener's requirement. To correct his perception – or to confirm it – the performer therefore expands the process of unit identification by monitoring the listener's outward expressions for relevant signals. Such signals may be contained within the range of expressive responses at an implicit level; they also take the form of explicit reference through verbal requests or even commands.

Table 38 presents an overview of these two types of identification signals available to the

Table 38 *Repeat Unit Identification: Evaluation of Context*
with reference to musical message statement

I Expressive response as signal (in standard order of importance)	Signal evaluation
a) *Signalling responses* (utterances)	i.e. *Direct response to message statement*
facial expression, arm/hand movement, exclamation, verbal expression, nodding, symbolizing gestures (*cf.* Table 25) offering	→ approval: 'I like this, hence repeat it.'
(response discontinued	disapproval: 'I don't like this one, hence repeat another one.')
b) *Emotive responses* (utterances)	= *Indirect response to message statement* (through expression of resultant state)
weep, shout, move abruptly, get up, dance, etc.	→ approval: 'I am strongly moved, hence keep repeating.'
(response discontinued	→ disapproval: 'I am not moved now, hence repeat another one.')
II Referential response as signal	= *Direct message*
verbal statement/command	→ request/confirmation: 'Repeat this.' → correction: 'Don't repeat this, repeat that.'

performer, along with the range of their physical manifestation. On one hand there are signals basically expressing the state of arousal, while at the same time referring – directly or indirectly – to the message statement which is sustaining the response. As Table 38 shows, the particular outward manifestation of the general inner state may convey such communicative content over and above expressing a degree of spiritual arousal. During incipient arousal it is through signalling responses, including symbolic gestures, that approval or disapproval of the repeat unit is communicated to the performer. Once a state of intense arousal has been reached, the manifestations of the state are entirely expressive, not referential, so that it is the unambiguous intensity that links the response more clearly to the unit of content. This becomes altogether self-evident at the extreme stage of ecstasy, where repetition of a clearly identified message unit is already presupposed and simply needs to be continued as long as the expressive utterance lasts.

The second category is a direct verbal message of referential communication, which may or may not have any expressive content. Such requests, or assertion of control, are normally limited to listeners with high spiritual status, except where a state of intense arousal gives even a lowly devotee the spiritual justification to assert his wish or need.

The performer monitors all these signals throughout the performance, and realizes them musically in a process which is schematized in Table 39. Analytically speaking, this process of repeat unit identification can be isolated as an independent semantic component in the musician's response to the spiritual state of the audience. But in practical terms, it is integral to actualizing the repetition principle, and therefore subsumed within the semantic referent of intensification.

As in the case of repetition itself, the choice of the repeat unit does not merely translate a listener's needs into musical expression, by means of identifying for repetition the text unit that is affecting him. The performer himself also tries to stimulate such an impact by singling out for repetition song units with a known appeal. How the performer uses both repetition and repeat unit identification 'in reverse' is in fact a major aspect of the interaction process in performance. A systematic consideration of this strategy is therefore in order, before proceeding to analyse the performance in its total context of a multiple audience.

Table 39 *Repeat Unit Identification: Expression in Music*

Signal content (in order of decreasing specificity)	Musical repeat unit identified
a) Referential response:	
– confirm	→ repeat ongoing unit
– request	→ repeat new/suggested unit
– correct	→ repeat new/suggested unit
b) Signalling response:	
– approve	→ repeat ongoing unit
– disapprove	→ try different unit (same couplet, different line, part of line, entire verse)
c) Emotive response:	
– approve	→ repeat ongoing unit
– disapprove	→ return to previous unit, find unit with impact

Intensification and its adjunct, unit identification, which together constitute the semantic referents underlying the process of performance, operate by translating audience states and requirements into musical expression, or, stated more generally, context into music. In turn, the music, by giving expression to those contextual aspects, confirms or intensifies them. Since the musical idiom is semantically capable of such expression, it is equally possible for the performer to generate with it the same semantic content independently, not in response to, but in anticipation of, corresponding audience reactions. Examples of this 'reverse' strategy abound, especially in the form of text unit selections, whether for repetition or for insertion. To the extent that this strategy represents initiative on the performer's side, it is always open to criticism and even censure from the assembly leader, especially when he uses it too obviously for his material objective. If, on the other hand, he hits just the right note, generating enthusiasm, particularly in the spiritual notables present, then he is praised for his ability to perceive correctly the 'colour of the assembly' (*mahfil kā rang dekhnā*). Observation suggests that consistently successful performers take a good deal of initiative of this sort, informed, of course, by a continual assessment of their audience, and tempered by immediate responsiveness to its reaction. This aspect of the Qawwali performance brings the Qawwal in line with any other type of performer whose initiative is ultimately responsible for his success.

D   The performance perspective: referent of selective focus

Evaluation of context

The stage is now set to proceed to the performance, in its total context of a multiple audience with whom the performer interacts over time. Three semantic referents have been identified as to their function and domain, and their inter-relation or intersection has been outlined. All aspects of the context–music relationship have been mapped out in terms of a one-to-one interaction between performer and listener. This procedure is entirely in tune with the individual basis of the Sufi quest as well as its realization. Indeed, even where many listeners are present, the performer *in principle* always interacts with individual members of his audience, even though he is dealing with the entire body. How he copes with this requirement of multiple interaction *in fact*, and what results from it musically, remains to be dealt with in order to complete this analytical consideration of the performance process.

The performer faces an entire audience of individuals who respond to his singing on an individual basis, expressing their respective states of arousal. These, as has been shown, require different types of musical responses – in accord with the basic function of Qawwali: to arouse listeners by serving their diverse and changing needs. The range of needs is essentially the same for all listeners; only they arise at different times during a performance. But what it takes to satisfy the same need may differ between listeners, depending on their particular status and identity as well as their personal preference.

What the performer has at his disposal for responding to this multiplicity of needs is in essence one channel of communication, albeit a composite and structurally very flexible one: the Qawwali musical idiom. The structural flexibility occurs at all levels of the musical idiom, but its prime determinant is the text. True, the musical setting and, to a lesser extent, the performance style can be varied independently of the text, but the application of this musical and presentational flexibility occurs primarily at the point of the song selection. Once a song

is under way, the total constellation of text, music and presentation remains constant, with only a limited scope left for variation in the area of melodic and rhythmic elaboration, or of presentational emphasis. In essence, the performer can only make one musical response at any one point in time, using the structuring options that govern the idiom both as regards text units and their musical equivalents. What these options do permit him is the flexibility to switch between structural units instantly. He can thereby not only accommodate the changing needs of one individual but also respond to the differing needs of several, though doing so in immediate succession rather than simultaneously.

The range and number of alternative options available for use to respond to different listeners in turn is, however, limited, given the structural and stylistic parameters of any one song. In practical terms, this means that at any one time the number of listeners a performer can cater to specifically has to be limited. Clearly, a selection process operates to identify those listeners whose needs are to be given first consideration. Two criteria of assessment are already established which rank the individual listener on a continuum, each of a different sort. One is spiritual status, the other spiritual state of arousal (spiritual identity cannot contribute to this assessment directly, since it is not applied against a continuum that could serve as a ranking scale). The performer uses the two criteria in conjunction with each other to make his selections, in a process that continues throughout the performance.

To begin with, he has already assessed his audience according to general status categories as well as to individual status. On the basis of this categorization, then, the performer individually monitors all special listeners, including of course the leader, while keeping only a casual eye on the common audience. He does this monitoring by applying the criterion of spiritual state, evaluating expressive as well as offering responses in terms of the continuum of increasing arousal. At the same time, the performer is continuously aware of the relative spiritual status position of each listener thus evaluated. The result is a combined state and status assessment according to which he can rank all listeners. This ranking procedure is schematized in Table 40, where numerical values represent the relative rank or degree of priority assigned to each combined state–status category.

It is in relation to these combined state–status categories that the performer then decides on one of the three types of selective focus for his musical response. As Table 40 shows clearly, there is a consistent correlation between status category and type of focus accorded by the performer; the pattern is broken only at the stage of extreme arousal. Then every listener, from leader to common backbencher, is accorded sole attention by the performer. While this represents the stage to be given highest priority, the performer often prefers the less intense stages which allow him to shift his focus between a number of high-status listeners. The obvious reason is economic: they generally result in more earnings. Having to cater to a single person in an ecstatic state may yield definite blessings, but economically it can be risky, especially where a low-status person is in ecstasy.

Expression in music

What effect does the performer's selective focus have on the shape of the song being performed? The only new elements introduced are the simultaneous accommodation of several listeners and the quick shift from one listener to another. Musically, both are handled as successive shifts of focus, as has been mentioned, so that the performer who wishes to

Table 40 *Selective Focus Referent: Evaluation of Context*
based on status and state referents and ranked accordingly

Focus types:

(Collective focus = no individual catering)

Plural focus   = cater to several listeners by turn, equal attention (maximum 5–6, usually no more than 3).

Priority focus   = cater to plural needs but give priority to one.

Single focus   = cater to single listener, disregarding all others (audience usually focussed on single person).

Focus ranking:

Expressed numerically to represent lowest (1) to highest (9) degree of priority assigned to state–status combinations.

STATUS

	Leader, top rep.	Special category	Common category
Neutral	4 priority focus	3 plural focus	1 collective focus
Incipient arousal	4 priority focus	3 plural focus	1 collective focus
Intense arousal	6 single focus	5 priority focus	2 plural focus
Ecstasy	9 single focus	8 single focus	7 single focus

satisfy the needs of more than one listener at a time will do so by repeating or emphasizing the musical units desired by each in close alternation. Shifts in the selective focus itself add to the flexibility of musical structuring, which is already serving the changing needs of the individual listener. In sum, what is added by the multiple audience dimension is the motivation for more flexibility, simply because more factors are thereby identified and isolated. For the performer, this means making more choices, but within the basic range of options already established to deal with the individual listener. Hence, the effect of the selective focus dimension on the musical performance can only be seen in conjunction with that of the other criteria of audience evaluation.

Context–music interaction

The referent of selective focus adds a greatly diversifying dimension to the entire interaction process in the Qawwali performance, which comes into play as soon as a song has started. It is this referent which introduces into the music – and in return effects upon the listeners in the

audience – the dynamic that always obtains in the Sufi assembly between the audience as a group and the listener as an individual. Equally important, the selective focus principle enables the performer to negotiate musically between individual listeners with divergent needs that cannot be expressed simultaneously. At the same time, this principle does not add substantially to the meaning of Qawwali music in performance; it is in essence operational. But it is important none the less: a function of the highly formal, yet highly individualized character of Sufi practice.

E   Summary: the total process

This completes the analytical reduction of the context–music interaction process. Four salient principles have been shown to operate as semantic referents, each used by the performer to link context evaluation with musical expression. Individual referents have also been considered in relation to each other: in the case of the referents of spiritual state and selective focus, where this relationship is particularly relevant, the operation of one has been plotted in conjunction with the other (Table 40). What happens in actual fact, is of course a simultaneous interplay of all four referents, through which context and music are linked in kaleidoscopically varying constellations. These, however, all emanate logically from the performer's application of each referent to both context and music, a process that only systematic analysis can do justice to.

The results of this analysis should now be considered from the perspective of the music, so that they can be put to their intended use, namely to explain – literally and specifically – how Qawwali music is affected by context. This change of perspective is best represented graphically, in the form of tables. Tables 41 and 42 show at two levels how the process of structuring Qawwali music in performance is affected by the context, by means of the four semantic referents and their specific operation, as explained earlier in this chapter. Table 41 presents a model of the performance *idiom*, showing how individual features are constrained by means of the four semantic referents. In Table 42 the performance *process* is schematized, showing how the same contextual input – via the semantic referents – affects the shape of a song unfolding in performance.
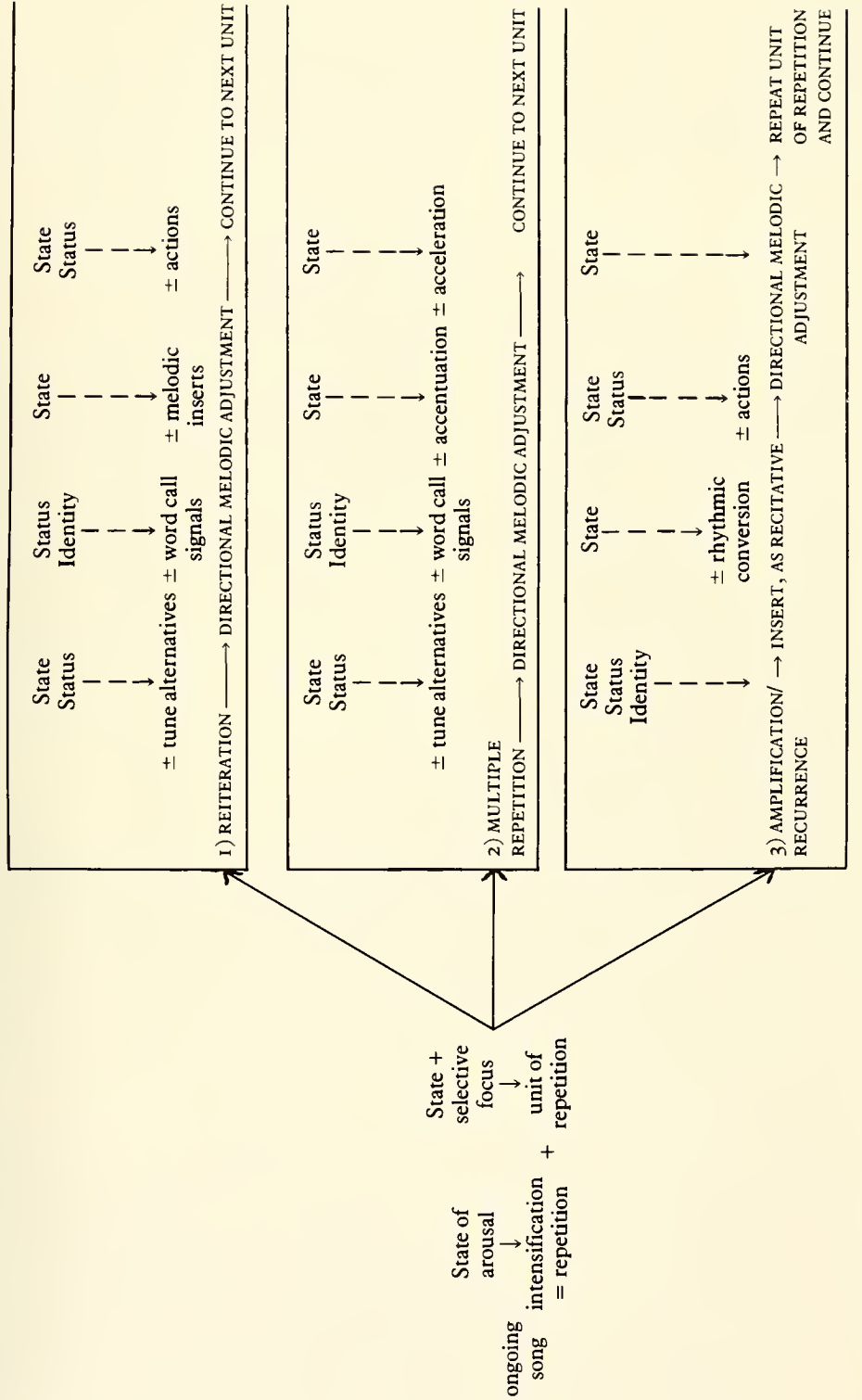
The visual summary contained in these tables, backed up by the foregoing analysis and the entire preceding investigation of the Qawwali performance process, should sufficiently explain and illustrate 'how Qawwali is put together into an actual musical sequence' as required in Chapter 2 (p. 75). Both tables together contain the gist of the answer which this analysis has been able to provide to the question posed at the outset (p. 5): how Qawwali, the music, articulates with Qawwali, its context of performance.

Table 41 *Qawwali Performance Model: Context Input Summarized*
'Qawwali music varies according to context'

	Text dimension	Music dimension	Musical presentation
Choice of Prelude, Introductory Verse and Song	*language varies*: 1) acc. to *status* *style varies*: 1) acc. to *status* *content varies*: 1) acc. to *identity* 2) acc. to *state* *association* varies: 1) acc. to *identity* 2) acc. to *state*	*tune type varies*: 1) acc. to *status* *rhythm type varies*: 1) acc. to *status*	*performance style varies*: 1) acc. to *status*
Sequencing of Song	*type of repetition varies*: 1) acc. to *state* (observed or desired) 2) acc. to *selective focus* *unit of repetition varies*: 1) acc. to *state* (observed or desired) 2) acc. to *selective focus* *insert varies*: 1) acc. to *state* (observed or desired) 2) acc. to *status* 3) acc. to *identity* *word call signals vary*: 1) acc. to *status* 2) acc. to *identity*	*type of repetition varies*: 1) acc. to *state* (observed or desired) 2) acc. to *selective focus* *unit of repetition varies*: 1) acc. to *state* (observed or desired) 2) acc. to *selective focus* *insert–melodic varies*: 1) acc. to *status* *elaboration varies*: 1) acc. to *status* Musical presentation	*accentuation varies*: 1) acc. to *state* *acceleration varies*: 1) acc. to *state* *actions vary*: 1) acc. to *state* 2) acc. to *status*

Table 42 *Qawwali Performance Model: Sequencing Process Summarized.*
'Qawwali music varies according to context'

ongoing song

State of arousal → intensification = repetition

State + selective focus → unit of repetition

1) REITERATION ——→ DIRECTIONAL MELODIC ADJUSTMENT ——→ CONTINUE TO NEXT UNIT

± tune alternatives   ± word call signals   ± melodic inserts   ± actions

State Status —→   Status Identity —→   State —→   State Status —→

2) MULTIPLE REPETITION ——→ DIRECTIONAL MELODIC ADJUSTMENT ——→ CONTINUE TO NEXT UNIT

± tune alternatives   ± word call signals   ± accentuation   ± acceleration

State Status —→   Status Identity —→   State —→   State —→

3) AMPLIFICATION/ RECURRENCE —→ INSERT, AS RECITATIVE —→ DIRECTIONAL MELODIC ADJUSTMENT —→ REPEAT UNIT OF REPETITION AND CONTINUE

± rhythmic conversion   ± actions

State Status Identity —→   State —→   State Status —→   State —→

Conclusion

A   Returning to the basic questions about Qawwali

The analytical journey is complete – have the questions been answered? To account for the unique musical character of the Qawwali genre and the flexibility of its structure, this musical structure has been explored and its norms established, and the performance options have been laid out (Part I). To account for the rules of the Qawwali ritual and their highly variable application, the Qawwali occasion has been set in its Sufi background and mapped out, showing both constraints and scope for individual expression, as they relate to *sama'* music (Part II). Finally, to account for the total rôle of the music in the Qawwali performance, the impact of Qawwali music and Qawwali context upon each other, the interaction between musician and listeners has been charted, with the musician at the centre, and the semantic content of the music has been identified (Part III). This semantic content, the meaning of Qawwali music, is at once specific and general. General not in the sense of vague, but in the sense of wide-ranging, encompassing a number of different, even contrasting dimensions, each of which is quite clearly definable. To begin with, Qawwali music articulates the ideology of Sufism and conveys the meaning of both its structure and its dynamic. That meaning is built into the very structure of Qawwali music; furthermore, that meaning provides the framework and motivates the dynamic for the performance of this music. This is the most clearly manifest and thus the most easily accessible dimension of Qawwali.

At the same time, Qawwali music articulates the social reality of Sufism. This dimension finds its main articulation where social reality becomes manifest – in the Qawwali performance; indeed Qawwali music in performance is permeated with social meaning at various levels, both manifest, where congruent, and latent, where contradictory with Sufi ideology. Altogether, the music thus expresses the relationships that obtain between all those who share in the musical communication, primarily between performers and listeners, but also very much between listeners.

Two further dimensions of meaning are thereby introduced, which cut across the two already mentioned: Qawwali music conveys to its listeners affirmation of traditional structures, whether ideological or social. It does so by its very dependence on those structures for successful articulation in performance. But there is no doubt that the same music also concurrently articulates, and even promotes, individual self-assertion. Made possible by the respect Sufi ideology accords to individual spiritual experience, this self-assertion (of performer or listener) may even transcend the confines of traditional structures, as long as this happens within the context of the Qawwali event, and is guided by the message of Qawwali music. This message then contains within it a meaning contradictory to its own contextual framework. Does this meaning endow Qawwali music with the capacity to act as a medium of change, with the potential to transform traditional structures even as it serves to articulate

them? To understand how facets of meaning can thus co-exist in the musical utterance of Qawwali, and to assess the impact of such an utterance – that is, the social rôle of Qawwali music – requires a review of the musical code itself and of those in whose hands it becomes a bearer of meaning, the music-makers.

B   Musical code and music-maker

Qawwali music has been established as having musical features which contain contextually derived meaning. However, these features clearly do not make up Qawwali music in perform-ance. Considering the musical code of Qawwali in its totality, the context only accounts for a limited number of elements in the performance idiom of Qawwali. But these elements may safely be said to carry referential meaning, and it is these elements which the performer uses to speak to his audience. The nature of his communication is directly linked to the nature of these meaning-carrying musical features themselves.

Two characteristics stand out for the entire inventory of contextually significant musical features of Qawwali. One, pertaining to the individual musical feature, is the limited range of specific meaning options assigned to each individual feature. More often than not, there are only two such options or alternatives – for example, a complex *vs.* a simple musical metre conveying high *vs.* low status. The second characteristic pertains to the structuring of those features. What seems to be significant here is the presence of more than one meaning variable operating simultaneously – for example, metre and melody – a natural consequence of the fact that among these variables are the various components which together make up Qawwali music. What this implies is that Qawwali music can and does carry meaningful communica-tion at several levels at once, each level being to some extent capable of independent articulation. By thus making available a number of simultaneous meaning channels, the Qawwali musical code makes it possible to convey a range of intensity by uttering a single meaning through any number of channels, the maximum being reached when all channels 'say the same thing'. On the other hand, the Qawwali musical code makes it possible to convey a range of different or divergent meanings, simply by uttering each meaning through a different channel. While both the number and the range of these individual meaning variables may be limited, the collective range of meaning that can be contained in a single musical utterance of Qawwali is considerable as to both intensity and multiple specificity, as has been demonstrated in detail.

Clearly, it is in the nature of the Qawwali musical code to articulate different meaning structures simultaneously, and also to convey a range of intensity which can culminate in the total dominance of one single message (as happens during ecstasy). Indeed, a consideration of the Qawwali code from the perspective of its context, the Qawwali assembly, suggests that a relation of equivalence obtains between the nature of the musical code and the nature of the contextual meaning it serves to convey. This suggestion is reinforced at another level by the observation that the very musical features which exhibit such equivalence, that is the context-linked traits of the Qawwali musical code, are also the ones that render Qawwali distinct from other closely related musical codes in the Indo-Pakistani region.

Looking at the Qawwali code now from the perspective of its user and indeed its creator, the Qawwal, highlights another code–context connection noted earlier. Out of the total musical inventory of Qawwali only a limited number of features with a limited degree of

complexity can be invested with contextual meaning; likewise, there is also a limitation on purely musical expansion in Qawwali, even where a Qawwal is keen and musically capable. The fact is that the limitations inherent in the traditional Qawwali code correspond perfectly to the limited rôle which the Qawwal, its maker, actually plays in shaping the traditional context of performance, the Qawwali event dealt with in this study. Here the most prominent and complex among the contextually significant features of the Qawwali code, its variable structure, is controlled ultimately not by the musician but by the listener, although indirectly. The fundamental question that arises is whether the type and number of significant musical features in Qawwali may in fact be related to the type of social relations that govern the participants, and to the amount of musical message the performer has it in his power to transmit, regardless of his musical capacity. That traditional Qawwals do in fact expand their musical idiom under changed performing conditions can be seen in the modern 'concert' Qawwali of Ghulam Farid Sabri and Aziz Warsi.

Has it then, in fact, been a fallacious Western premise of this analysis to focus on the artist as the agent of musical creativity and to consider him the catalyst of the musical event, since at the surface he does generate the stimulus or dynamic for the audience to respond? After all, in Qawwali it becomes clear, once the interaction between them is analysed from the perspective of the socio-economic structure, that the artist's musical choices are largely predicated on what he perceives to be the audience's will.

Social dependence thus means musical dependence. What are the implications of this dependence on the decision to build the analysis of Qawwali around the musician? Since he is both the exclusive maker of the music and the perceiver of the audience responses, focussing on the musician and his strategy of performance has certainly provided a key to dealing with the music–context relationship in an analytically clean way. Validating the decision to build the analysis on the performer by putting him 'in perspective' socio-culturally, however, is ultimately no more than an operational choice. There still remains the more fundamental question of whether any single vantage point can generate knowledge that is more than a point of view, predicated on the expectations that originate with that vantage point; whether indeed the knowledge of a musical event – or any event – must not be derived from a view in the round; whether such a view is epistemologically possible; and most important, whether the dynamic behind human action, even that of one individual, can be grasped across cultural, social and intellectual boundaries that remain real in practice just as they may be accounted for analytically.

My personal answer to all this is – as it has been throughout this endeavour – to complement analysis with analogy, the analogy of experience. From my own perspective as another music-maker – albeit in very different professional music-making contexts – the dependence of the Qawwal does come across as shocking, and particularly obvious, because it is so immediately perceivable musically. At a fundamental level, however, this dependence appears to be equal in kind – though different in degree and manner – to the facts of life that face the creative endeavours of professional performers of any music. Within his given limits, the Qawwali performer, like his counterparts elsewhere, exercises creativity, asserts his musical personality and, what is most important, attempts to shape his context to his own purposes.

What is special about Qawwali is the fact that the Qawwali performance idiom and performance context create the conditions for such attempts to take place in the immediacy of

the performance event, by means of direct musical expression. They are thus immediately audible and thereby highly perceptible, as well as subject to immediate modification by patrons, which in turn results in musically audible compliance. As a result, contextual constraints become much more than general factors affecting a musician's creativity generally – they become themselves the very subject of his musical utterance. Indeed, issues of spiritual and socio-economic priority, of dominance and submission, of hierarchical order and individual assertion, of conformity and creativity, are being negotiated audibly, in the language of music, throughout a Qawwali performance. Since the Qawwal is the only one who 'speaks' this language, he is in effect charged with being the sole mouthpiece for all that is to be conveyed in the Qawwali. This is why he 'speaks' musically not only for himself, but for all his listeners, articulating, in structure and dynamic, the multiplicity of relationships between all participants including himself.

Clearly, this responsibility invests the Qawwali musician with much inherent power over his audience, which is all the greater because, in order to fulfil his musical task, he must be able to wield that power uninterruptedly. Since the entire performance process is predicated upon a continuous musical communication, direct interference with the Qawwal's music-making would be counter-productive. For, unlike spoken communication, music is not normally subject to correction by anyone other than the musician. Anyone else can at most interrupt it, a corrective technique which, as has been seen, is used in Qawwali only in extreme situations, because it invariably has a distinctly negative effect upon the entire performance. The only way to control the Qawwal's musical power over his audience is to give his audience religiously legitimized social and economic power over *him*. Made dependent on his audience in a real way, he can then be controlled in performance through the presence of a strong authority structure and through strict rules of censure for defying it – both of which are realities facing any Qawwali performer, as this study has amply shown.

What suggests itself is that the amount of control imposed upon the musician here is in direct proportion to the amount of power invested in the musical communication. Indeed, this may well be the answer to the apparent paradox of Qawwali, wherein a totally insignificant and powerless musician is put in total charge of a profoundly significant and highly potent musical communication.

C   Qawwali and ethnomusicological analysis

The entire process of developing an understanding of Qawwali rests on the application of a model for analysing music in performance. The model introduces the dimension of performance into the analysis of musical sound, with the specific aim of demonstrating how the context of performance affects the music being performed. For this purpose an analytical approach was developed on the basis of a theoretical framework encompassing both musicology and anthropology. This essentially anthropological approach was then applied to the Qawwali, focussing on the idiom and context of performance and arriving at an integrated analysis of the two in the performance process. Demonstrating the relevance of the contextual dimension to the programming of this process, this analysis set forth a procedure for incorporating contextual variables into the analysis of musical sound. By itself, this represents not much more than a formal expansion of the musicological approach, as long as such variables pertain to musical structure. This is shown by the use of functional variables in the

analysis of distinctive features of the Qawwali musical structure. However, when contextual input is introduced into an analysis of musical sound to account for process, it links the music with the context at every moment of its creation in performance. Because there is variability in the contextual cues as well as in the musical choices made in response, the contextual input can only be represented in terms of the flexible principles that govern this variability at each end. The basis on which these principles operate is semantic.

It is at this point that meaning enters the analysis of music, for it is meaning that puts consistency into the selection and correlation of variables, contextual and musical. As stated, the process whereby a performer makes musical choices on the basis of contextual clues is a process of translation; he is translating meaning. And the meaning, as clearly emerges from the Qawwali analysis, is essentially non-musical, perceived by the performer in the context of performance, and expressed, or responded to, in the musical performance. To understand this translation process is to know the meaning system, at the level of both context and music. Obviously, this goes beyond the traditional scope of music analysis (although clues to meaning in music can be found in systems of musical aesthetics where they apply – in Qawwali they do not). The fact is that the semantic content, even that of music, appears to be found outside music, for the dynamic that ultimately motivates the context-to-music input can only be understood with reference to the socio-cultural framework of which the musical tradition – and the actors in it – are a part. This is why what is essentially a music analysis has had to delve so extensively into the contextual and background dimensions, for it is within the framework of these dimensions that the music of Qawwali communicates ideological and social meaning. It is on this basis alone that one can hope to understand what Qawwali music-making is: how the Qawwal uses his musical language to speak – or rather, to sing – to his audience, what he says with it, and why he says it.

Seen as a carrier of referential meaning, the Qawwali idiom reveals communicative properties that appear to be particular to music: the presence of many meaning variables operating simultaneously with few meaning options for each variable, resulting in a meaning structure that extends from multiple messages to a single message intensified through multiplication. That those properties are not unique to Qawwali music is obvious; that they serve a similar communication function elsewhere is not. None the less the fact that a fairly clear connection between sound, context and meaning has emerged for Qawwali raises the question of whether the same analytical approach could reveal such connections in other musical idioms. The most appropriate starting point for testing such a claim would be other musical performance traditions within the Indo-Pakistani culture area. In addition to Qawwali, this area abounds in a great variety of clearly defined contexts for musical performance, which form part of the 'cultural performance' tradition central to social and cultural life (Singer 1972), and which share with Qawwali features of both musical and socio-economic structure. On this basis the Qawwali analysis could serve as a pilot study, if not a prototype, for the analysis of other Indian and Pakistani performance traditions.

From the specific perspective of Indic musicology, I visualize that further applications of this contextual approach could contribute directly toward refining the concept of an Indic music area, with its related musical idioms – analogous with the existing concept of an Indic language area (Emenau 1956). Across Northern India and Pakistan a basic musical framework underlies two supra-regional musical languages, classical and popular music, as well as a number of regional, communal or functional musical dialects, including Qawwali

and many others. The prospect of analysing these idioms on the basis of context-related features, and thus accounting for the musical differences between them, is a promising one for a truly Indic ethnomusicology.

Lastly and inevitably, the question arises as to whether this ethnomusicological analysis of Qawwali – a particular musical performance tradition – is of relevance to the larger ethnomusicological quest for understanding musical meaning. From my vantage point the vivid, immediate and very audible way in which the Qawwali musical discourse expresses and connects the abstract with the concrete, the emotional with the social, and the normative with the idiosyncratic – all this not only shows the range of semantic possibilities inherent in a musical structure, but also points unequivocally to the musical process as the dynamic *locus* where musical meaning is articulated and makes its unique impact.

Notes

1 This *sama'* assembly is the Chilla Mahfil, analysed in Chapter Six (Performance No. 1) and the two songs, *Muflisānem* and *Torī sūrat*, are transcribed in Chapter One (Repertoire Nos. 4 and 3).

2 This assembly is the Hujra Mahfil, analysed in part in Chapter Six (Performance No. 2).

3 Fruitful interaction should not obscure the fact that Western and Indian scholars continue to operate – albeit not always overtly – from within their respective frameworks of musical conceptions. This of course touches on a more fundamental issue: the rôle of the analyst's own cultural categories and sensibilities *vis à vis* not only his subject of study but also the analytical framework he applies to it, and the need for him to clarify his own assumptions.

4 Lines 2–6 are composed of Farsi words and syllables forming part of a Sufi 'vocabulary' of spiritual expression, which has been out of use for some time and remains only partly intelligible today. The textual meaning of these lines is in no way emphasized in the Qawwali usage of today. (For a brief treatment of this Farsi vocabulary as used in the *tarānā* musical genre see Khan Amir 1966.)

5 Clothing covering a woman's head and chest, symbolizing the self, which, in mystical devotion, becomes immersed in the Beloved (coloured by Him).

6 The spiritual guide of Nizamuddin Auliya (see Table 18).

7 The bride's hardship here symbolizes the Sufi's struggles of the world.

8 Qutab Sahib is the spiritual guide of Baba Farid, also known as Ganj-e-Shakar (see Note 6); the wedding symbolizes spiritual union, in which Khusrau, the poet, is represented as the bride and Nizamuddin Auliya as the groom.

9 *'Id-ul-fitr*, the most joyous of Islamic festivals, marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and starts on the sighting of the new moon.

10 In the *sama'* traditions of certain Sufi *silsilās* (spiritual lineages) the *Masnavī* is always performed as a recitative, without any drumming (for example Kakori).

11 Here the *chundar* (see Note 5) suggests that the dead saint is now united with God, as is a bride. This translation is no more than a simple rendition, and in no way reflects the depth of associational meanings inherent in each of the verses. The last verse, for example, is based on a famous *dohā* of the fifteenth-century mystical poet Kabir.

12 For example the Urdu *ghazal*: *Us ne kahā hastī terī, maiṅ ne kahā jalwā terā.*

13 These are among the legendary qualities of Hazrat Ali.

14 For distinguishing features of Northern versus Southern Indian music, see Powers 1970.

15 A principle common to Northern Indian and Pakistani music generally, see Jairazbhoy 1971, pp. 120ff., and Qureshi 1981, p. 23.

16 A comprehensive discussion of the rôle of drumming in Hindustani music is found in Steward (1974), including some reference to *thekās* used in Qawwali and played on the *dholak*.

17 Ironically as well as appropriately for Qawwali, the harmonium was introduced into India by European missionaries. Appreciated as early as the seventeenth century (Fryer 1909, Vol. 2, p. 103), the instrument is used to accompany all light classical singing, despite continuing resistance from purists, who rightly uphold the musical superiority of classical *sārangī* accompaniment (see Deshpande and Ratajankar 1970).

18 In the sense of 'concluding portion', but *not* implying finality as the term suggests in its standard application to Western music.

19 This is manifested in a number of popular Qawwali recordings, for example Ghulam Farid Sabri,

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Maqbool Ahmed Sabri Qawwal and Party, Angel LKDA 20050, or Bahauddin Qawwal and Party, Angel LKDA 20021.

20 The double share for the leader is a relatively recent practice running counter to the traditional *brādrī* rule of equal shares, a development regretted but practised by all Nizamuddin Qawwals and by other hereditary Qawwali groups as well.

21 A standard formulation of this belief is contained in the *hawā*, an archaic Qawwali verse in Farsi attributed to Amir Khusrau.

22 A parallel idiom is *darwesh aur ra'usa* (*darwesh*, religious ascetic, derwish; *ra'usa*, plural of *ra'is*, person of great status and wealth).

23 The one well-known exception to this was an unusual Qawwal whose personal religious interpretations in performance earned him the title *wā'iz* (preacher, religious interpreter), while to his name was added the epithet Sufi, hence Sufi Abdur Rahman. Both title and epithet indicate an exception confirming the rule.

24 Muslim tombs are always oriented toward the Kaaba: the body, lying on its back, has the face turned to the right, so as to face in the direction of Mekka. The tomb itself is aligned with the body; and the entrance opening is placed at the foot end. In India, then, all tombs open toward the South, and have a North–South orientation, usually with a mosque to their West.

25 There is a small number of ritually used hymns that customarily follow the obligatory ones on special ritual occasions, principally the anniversary of a saint. Prominent examples among these are a second Qaul, also in Arabic (*Lā tamāfi*), as well as some Persian and Hindi songs (for example the Persian *ghazal Bakhūbī*, or the Hindi songs *Āj badhāvā* and *Āj tonā*, all for Amir Khusrau and Nizamuddin Auliya) which may also be heard in other contexts.

26 Occasionally, an offering is also made for the specific purpose of diverting possible evil from the sheikh. Such a propitiatory offering (*sadqā*) is a traditional Indo-Muslim practice and includes a standard gesture of circling the offering money above the head of the recipient.

27 On 20 February 1983, Sufi Abdul Karim Sumar died during the *'urs* assembly of Baba Ahmad Shah in Karachi, during the recital of a verse by Jami (as reported in the newspapers, Dawn, 21 Feb. 1983, and Nawae Waqt, 22 Feb. and 3 March 1983). Maulana Muhammad Husain of Allahabad died likewise in Ajmer about 60 years ago, on a famous verse by the Chishti saint Abdul Quddus Gangohi (Ajoo, 1983).

28 This, at Nizamuddin Auliya and other shrines, appropriately gets to benefit the entire group of shrine performers, since they sing the first song collectively and all share equally in its 'take'.

Qawwali musical vocabulary

Terms represent Qawwali musicians' usage unless otherwise noted.

actions   'actions', gestures by the lead singer during his performance to reinforce the textual meaning of the song; not considered appropriate for spiritual music

ājkal kī dhun   'tune of nowadays', tune reflecting popular taste

ālāp   a brief introductory outline of a raga in free rhythm and without text; used to preface special songs like the *basant* song *Phul rahi sarson*

ʿam dhun   'common tune' (see *ʿam* in Glossary)

ʿam fahm   'commonly intelligible, popular'; applied to Qawwali songs catering to untutored, common audiences

ang   regional or genre style (for example, *Panjabi ang*)

antarā   'intervening, intermittent' section of Qawwali melodic setting, with upper register and upper tonic or fifth emphasis; standard term in classical music not commonly used by Qawwals

asthāyī   'staying', principle section of Qawwali melodic setting, with lower register and tonic emphasis; standard term in classical music not commonly used by Qawwals

bāgeshrī   raga used occasionally in Qawwali

bahār   raga used occasionally in Qawwali

bājā   'instrument'; standard term for the portable harmonium used for melodic accompaniment and to play the instrumental prelude in Qawwali, traditionally played by the lead singer

band   a verse of more than two lines, usually from a longer poem; in Qawwali a common text unit for Inserted Verses

band samaʿ   'closed' or exclusive performance of a special song repertoire without the usual instrumental accompaniment

bandish   melodic 'setting' (see also *ṭheke kī bandish*)

baṛhānā   'to extend' or amplify a song unit, mainly by the insertion of additional material

bārī kā gānā   'singing by turn' so that individual performing groups follow one another during a Qawwali assembly (syn: *pārṭī ka gānā*)

basant   'spring festival' and its performance ritual; specifically the special songs and ragas associated with this festival at the Nizamuddin shrine

bāzārī gāne   'songs of the bazar'; somewhat derogatory term for the category of popular song genres (also: *filmī gāne*)

besur   'off-pitch', out of tune

bharī hūī āwāz   'full, big voice'; open-throated voice quality appropriate for Qawwali singing

bhāyī   brother

bol 'something said, utterance'; salient word phrase of Qawwali song, also: smallest repeatable text unit (Qawwals do not usually extend the meaning of this term to musical phrases and drum patterns, as do classical musicians)

bol samjhānā 'to make the utterance understood': to convey, through musical means, the meaning of a salient text phrase in a Qawwali song

bolnā 'to speak, to say'; in Qawwali: to sing, referring to particular facets of musical structure (see *ūpar bolnā*, *nīche bolnā*, *ʿulā bolnā*, *sānī bolnā*)

chāchar metric pattern of 14 pulses, used infrequently in Qawwali

chāl 'gait'; type and pace of rhythmic setting of a song

chalat phirat 'moving around' melodically; brief melodic improvisation

chaṛhā 'raised' scale degree

chaukī a performing group of Qawwals named after the leader or his ancestor

chhoṛnā 'to leave out' a song unit (usually an unrewarding text unit)

chīz 'item' or unit of performance, piece; a complete Qawwali song (without adjunct items); also specifically applied to Hindi songs

chuṭkī se 'with the fingers', fingered drum strokes, as is standard in *tabla* technique

dādrā musical metre of six pulses (3 + 3), much used in Qawwali; also light classical secular vocal genre set to the *dādrā* metre

desī gānā 'song of the country, local song'; traditional term for folk song category

dhaivat sixth degree of the tonal gamut (the abbreviation *dhā* is rarely used among Qawwals)

ḍholak barrel-shaped double-headed wooden drum in standard use for Qawwali; also common in folk music

dhun 'tune', usually applied to tunes of contemporary, popular Qawwali songs

dhurpad genre of Hindustani classical music

dohā 'couplet' in Hindi or Sanskrit, with a common metre and rhyme and containing a complete poetic statement; in Qawwali used in Introductory and Inserted Verses

dohrānā to repeat, reiterate

ektāl metric pattern of 12 pulses, used infrequently in Qawwali

filmī gānā 'film song' category of popular song genres (which are dominated by film song recordings)

filmī qawwālī 'film Qawwali', popularized and secularized Qawwali genre initially developed in film music

gānā 'to sing, singing, song'; general musical category comprising vocal genres with instrumental accompaniment

gānā bajānā 'singing and playing'; standard traditional term for music

gandhār third degree of the tonal gamut (the abbreviation *gā* is rarely used by Qawwals)

ghazal light classical vocal genre based on the *ghazal* poem: a set of couplets in Farsi or Urdu linked by a common poetic metre and a continuous rhyme scheme; the term is also applied to Qawwali song based on *ghazal* poems

girah 'knot'; Inserted Verse in Qawwali: a verse or verses with a thematic link to a passage of the song text is inserted into the song and sung in recitative

halkā 'light', not serious; applied to light and light classical musical genres

hamd poem in praise of God, normally in Farsi or Urdu

hāṛd 'hard, difficult', applied to slow-moving, asymmetrical metric settings, also to serious old Qawwali tunes

hawā   archaic Sufi song in Farsi said to be composed by Amir Khusrau

Hindustānī gānā   Northern version of Indic musical language, comprising Northern India and Pakistan; this term is not used in Pakistan

jhaptāl   metric pattern of ten pulses (2-3-2-3) used infrequently in Qawwali

kāfī   raga used occasionally in Qawwali

kaharvā   metric pattern of eight pulses (4-4) most common in Qawwali as well as in popular song and some light classical genres

karnāṭaka   Southern Indian version of Indic musical language

khās tarz, dhun   'special, sophisticated tune'

khayāl   genre of classical music

khichṛī   'a dish of rice and lentils mixed together'; a medley or hodge-podge of Inserted Verses obscuring the Qawwali song proper

klās kī āwāz (from '*klāsikī*', or 'classical')   strongly modulated, melodious but tight-throated voice quality, not appropriate for Qawwali singing

lai   measured rhythm; also occasionally: rhythm

lai kā halqā   'encirclement of rhythm'; continuous reinforcement of rhythmic pattern in *takrār* repetition

lok gīt   'folk song', a recently introduced term for this song category, not normally used by Qawwals

lorī   'lullaby', a folk song genre

marsiyākhwānī   genre of Muslim religious chant oriented to the drama of Husain at Karbala

madhyam   fourth degree of the tonal gamut (the abbreviation *mā* is hardly used by Qawwals)

makhsūs tarz   'special, sophisticated tune' (syn. with *khās dhun*)

manqabat   poem in praise of great religious personages, especially Sufi saints

masnavī   Farsi poetic genre of an extended poem in rhyming couplets; among Sufis: the major poetic work in this form by Jalaluddin Rumi and its musical setting

mātrā   'pulse, count'; standard durational unit of a musical metre

mel karnā   'to mix together', to harmonize parts: informal expression referring to the musical connection between Qawwali song sections

main ādmī   'main man', lead singer of a Qawwali performing group

misraʿ   verse line (see also *misraʿ ʿula, sānī misraʿ*)

misraʿ kholnā   'to open the (salient concluding) verse line'; musical procedure in Qawwali: to 'set up' the salient, concluding statement contained in the second line of a couplet, by effectively connecting the opening statement of the first line to the concluding statement of the second

misraʿ ʿula   'first verse line'; especially the opening line of a couplet or its tune section (*antarā*)

moṭī āwāz   'large (low-pitched) voice', often equated with *bharī huī āwāz*, and considered appropriate for Qawwali singing

mukhṛā   'face'; opening and refrain line in a Hindi Qawwali song, as well as its musical setting, which is equivalent to the *asthāyī*

murkī   melodic 'turn' circumscribing a pitch

mushtar kā gānā   'mixed singing', communal singing in which any member of the community of shrine musicians has a right and duty to participate

naghmā   'melody, song'; Instrumental Prelude in Qawwali, usually based on a tune derived from the *zikr* 'Allāhū'

naghmā-e-Quddūsī 'Quddusi's melody', the traditional Sufi *naghmā*, said to originate at the shrine of Abdul Quddus Gangohi

nasheb-o-farāz 'the up and down' of the gathering, including all audience responses to which the Qawwals need to orient their performance

naʿt poem in praise of Prophet Muhammad

natkhwānī genre of religious chanting oriented to the Prophet Muhammad

nīche 'low', the lower register or tetrachord of the tonal gamut

nīche bolnā 'to sing (lit. speak) low', to expose the lower register of the gamut

nihāt seventh degree of the tonal gamut (the abbreviation *nī* is rarely used by Qawwals)

pakkā gānā 'mature (lit. cooked, ripe) singing', traditional term for classical music

palṭī melodic 'turn' circumscribing a pitch, used especially in *phailāo*

pancham fifth degree of the tonal gamut, particularly the fifth pitch or pitch area above the lower tonic (the abbreviation *pā* is hardly used by Qawwals)

panchāyatī gānā 'communal singing', equivalent to *mushtar kā gānā*

panchāyatī gāne 'communal songs', the ritual Qawwali songs that are sung communally, mainly *Qaul* and *Rang*

paṛhnā 'to recite, read or chant'; category comprising focal genres without instrumental accompaniment; in Qawwali the term is also applied to the recitative portions (*girah*, *rubaʿī*)

pārṭī Qawwali performing 'party', headed by a lead singer (or possibly two); modern equivalent of *chaukī*

pārṭī kā gānā 'party singing', each performing party singing in turn

pashto metric pattern of seven pulses (3 + 4), standard for traditional Qawwali songs

pattern dhun 'pattern tune' for a particular poetic metre, such as the *masnavī*

phailāo 'spreading out' melodically, melodic expansion

purānī dhun, tarz 'old', venerable tune of Qawwali

qata four-line epigrammatic poetic form of Urdu and Farsi, nearly identical wth the *rubaʿī* form and thus not identified separately by Qawwals; it is commonly used in the Introductory Verse in Qawwali

qaul 'saying'; the basic ritual song of Sufism obligatory as the Qawwali occasion's opening or closing hymn; the text is based on a saying of Prophet Muhammad; several less important hymns are also called *qaul*

qawwālī kā ṭhekā metric pattern of eight pulses (4 + 4) equivalent to *kaharvā* except for specific drum patterning

rāga 'raga', consistent systematized melodic pattern

rang 'colour'; the second principal ritual hymn sung at Nizamuddin Auliya, always sung after *qaul*; it celebrates the saint's spiritual guidance (colouring) of his disciple Amir Khusrau

rhythm 'rhythm', measured rhythm; term used occasionally in place of *lai*

rikhab second degree of the tonal gamut (the abbreviation *rē* is hardly used by Qawwals)

rubaʿī literally 'quatrain', epigrammatic four-line poetic form in Farsi and Urdu; in Qawwali this term signifies the Introductory Verse in recitative preceding a Qawwali song, often, but not necessarily, based on a *rubaʿī* poem (see *qata, dohā, band*)

rūpak metric pattern of seven pulses (3 + 4), in Qawwali played as equivalent to *pashto*

sahal 'easy, simple'; applied to symmetrical metric patterns in Qawwali, also to song tunes of a popular type

sam initial stressed pulse in a metric pattern; a concept applied in Qawwali only to extended metric patterns

sānī bolnā 'saying it as second', singing a verse line to the tune section of the second, concluding line of a couplet (the *asthāyī*)

sānī misraʿ 'second verse line', normally the concluding line of a couplet or its tune section (the *asthāyī*)

sargam sol-fa or solmization passage

sargam kī āṛ rapid passage 'across' the gamut

sāthī 'companion', vocal or instrumental accompanist in a Qawwali performing group

shādī kā gānā 'wedding song', ubiquitous genre of folk song

shāhānā raga used occasionally in Qawwali

sheʿr 'couplet', literally the strophic unit of the *ghazal* poem, but in Qawwali the term is applied to all two-line verses

shudh kalyān raga used occasionally in Qawwali

sozkhwānī genre of religious chanting oriented to the tragedy of Imam Husain at Karbala

sur 'pitch, tone (comprising the seven degrees of the gamut)', also: tonic (specifically the lower tonic)

sur meṅ 'in pitch', in tune, with correct pitch

surīlā 'melodious', a melody-oriented singing style, in Qawwali appreciated within limits

surīlī āwāz melodious voice, often equated with *klās kī āwāz*

tabla paired drum in standard use for classical music as well as light classical and popular genres

takrār incessant or multiple repetition

takrār ka halqā 'encirclement of repetition'; multiple repetition enhanced by responsory and exclamatory fillers

tāl 'clap', on stressed pulse (Qawwals do not use this term synonymously with *thekā*, as do classical musicians)

tālī 'clapping', handclapping

tālīm 'education, training'; musical training imparted by an expert

tān melodic passage, improvisational phrase used mainly in *phailāo*

ṭappā light classical vocal genre

tarānā genre of classical music also used occasionally in Qawwali since the text derives from Sufi invocations in Farsi

tarz traditional, old tune

tāzmīn a poem incorporating and elucidating famous verses; in Qawwali *tāzmīn* are built around Sufi classics in Farsi

ṭhāp 'slap, clap', an accented drum beat

ṭhāp se 'with slaps', open-hand or flat-hand drum strokes, standard in *ḍholak* technique

ṭhāṭ melodic setting or tune, implying internal motivic consistency

ṭhekā musical metre, rhythmic cycle

ṭheke kī bandish metrical setting, that is, drum pattern

ṭheṭ 'typical', characteristic for Qawwali musical style (for example, *qawwālī kī ṭheṭ dhun*, a typical Qawwali tune)

thumrī light classical genre with Hindi text; term used occasionally to identify a Hindi Qawwali song of similar format

tīntāl metric pattern of sixteen pulses used infrequently in Qawwali

ṭīp 'high pitch'; upper tonic or upper tonic pitch area

tīyā rhythmic cadence consisting of a drum pattern stated thrice

tukbandī 'putting verses together (indiscriminately)'; a string-along of Verse Inserts inappropriately connected with the text of the Qawwali song

ʿulā bolnā 'saying it as first'; singing a verse line to the tune section of the first, opening line of a couplet (the *antarā*)

ūpar 'high', the upper register or tetrachord of the tonal gamut

ūpar bolnā 'to sing (lit. speak) high', to expose the upper register of the gamut

uṛānā to 'snatch' or pick up new Qawwali tunes and songs from other singers

utrā 'lowered' scale degree

waqfā pause

wazan 'weight', rhythmic pattern of poem in a Qawwali song

zamīn 'foundation, ground'; poetic metre of a Qawwali song text

zarb 'beat', accent, rhythmic stress; also used for heart beat among Sufis and Qawwals

Glossary

Terms represent Indo-Pakistani Sufi usage and pronunciation, even where original Arabic or Farsi meanings may differ.

achchhī āwāz   pleasing musical sound, voice

'adab   formalized code of proper conduct

ālā darje kī kaifiyat   ecstasy of an elevated stage

Ali   son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad, titular head of all Sufi lineages

Allāhū   'God Is'; favoured zikr phrase among Sufis

'am   'common, ordinary', also implies social category lacking status or privileges

Amīr Khusrau   great thirteenth-century Sufi poet, historian and most beloved disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya; his tomb is adjacent to the saint's

ashrāf (pl. of *sharīf*)   'nobles'; the noble or well-born class of Indo-Muslim society, usually tracing descent from outside the Indian subcontinent

auliyā (pl. of *walī*)   'friends, favourites (of God)', that is Sufi saints; used both as a collective term and as a title (for example Nizamuddin Auliya)

āwāz nikālnā   'to exclaim'; Sufi response to hearing Qawwali

Bābā Farīd   respectful term of reference and address for the saint Fariduddin Ganj-e-Shakar, spiritual guide of Nizamuddin Auliya

bai'at   'vow of allegiance', bond of spiritual allegiance and discipleship between a *murīd* and his *pīr*

bārī   'turn' to collect shrine offerings which are shared by the descendants of a saint

bārīdār   'holder of a turn' to collect shrine offerings

barkat   blessing, (divine) benefice

basant   'spring festival', one of the annual rituals at Nizamuddin Auliya (see Qawwali Musical Vocabulary)

bastī   village, settlement

behāl   'out of (one's normal) condition', out of control; lost in ecstasy

behoshī   unconscious state

bekhud   'beside oneself' in ecstatic arousal

brādrī   'community of brothers', endogamous patrilineal community usually sharing a hereditary service profession

buzurg   'venerable, senior person', familial or spiritual senior, hence spiritual guide, saint

buzurgān-e-dīn   'the venerable elders of religion', the panoply of Sufi saints

chīkh   a shout

chillā   forty days' retreat spent in fasting and prayer; also: the location where a saint practised *chillā*

Chillā Bābā Farīd   the structure attached to Humayan's tomb in Delhi, where the saint Fariddudin Ganj-e-Shakar practised *chillā*

darbār 'court' of king or saint

darbār-e-auliyā 'royal court of saints', a term also applied to the Qawwali assembly

dargah Sufi shrine, built around the tomb of a saint

darje (pl. of *darjā*) 'degrees, stages' of mystical arousal, spiritual progress

darwesh (also: *durwesh*) 'mystic', used collectively for members of the Sufi community

Ḍāsnewāle 'people from Dasna': Tan Ras Khan's lineage of the Qawwal Bachche, including Meraj Ahmad and Aziz Warsi

dīwān title of the *sajjādānashīn* of the saint Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti

do zānū kneeling position prescribed for Muslim prayer, and proper for attending Qawwali

duʿā intercessionary, non-ritual prayer

faiz blessing

Farīduddin Ganj-e-Shakar major thirteenth-century saint of the Chishti order in India, spiritual guide of Nizamuddin Auliya

fātehā recitation of the opening chapter of the Koran (*sūra-e-fātehā*) and prayer offered to the dead, including Sufi saints

firāq separation

fuqarā (pl. of *faqīr*) 'mendicants', members of the Sufi community; term used collectively for Qawwali participants of spiritual eminence (contrasted with *umarā*)

gaḍḍī 'throne' (lit. sitting cushion): sitting place of the spiritual leader of a Qawwali assembly

gaḍḍīnashīn 'the one seated on the throne', official successor to spiritual leadership among the *khuddām* of Muinuddin Chishti's shrine at Ajmer

galā milnā 'to embrace' the sheikh or another Sufi during ecstatic arousal

galdaouī long scarf

gharānā artistic lineage

ghinā song music

giriā 'weeping' (syn. with *riqqat*); manifestation of strong arousal

hadīs 'tradition'; saying or action of Prophet Muhammad based on the authority of a chain of transmitters

hāl '(transported) condition', God-given state of spiritual exhilaration, ecstatic state

hāl ānā to be transported, get into an ecstatic state

hāl khelnā to act out an ecstatic state (somewhat derogatory)

halkī kaifiyat 'light state of ecstasy', initial state of spiritual arousal

halqa-e-zikr circle or gathering for *zikr* recitation

hamd song theme in praise of God

harkat movement or action revealing spiritual arousal

hāth batānā to gesture or raise an arm or hand, expressing enthusiasm when listening to Qawwali

hāth uṭhānā to raise an arm high, indicating strong exhilaration

hazrat term of address denoting spiritual authority

hūhā noise, cry, expressing spiritual arousal (onomat., hence somewhat derogatory)

hujrā cell or room attached to a shrine or mosque; the abode of a Sufi sheikh

ʿid (al-fitr) most joyous Muslim festival heralding the end of the Fasting Month of Ramadan

ʿishq love

Jalāluddīn Rūmī   universally venerated Perso-Turkic Sufi saint and poet, founder of the
    Mevlevi order in Konya, Turkey, and composer of the *masnavi* (see Qawwali
    Musical Vocabulary)

jārī honā   'to flow, to come into operation'; used to refer to the process of spiritual arousal

jhūmnā   'to sway', expressing mild spiritual arousal

kaifiyat   general term for mystical arousal and exhilaration; also: state of ecstasy

kaif   'delight, pleasure', initial state of spiritual arousal

kaifiyat tārī honā   'to be overcome by delight'

kajkulah   'tilted cap' symbolizing the Beloved in Farsi mystical poetry

Kākorī (Sharīf)   major Sufi shrine of the Qadri order near Lucknow

khalīfā   'successor, deputy'; in Sufism the head of a spiritual lineage

khāndān   family groups

kharā honā   'to stand up' indicating strong spiritual arousal

khās   'special, sophisticated', also implies social category characterized by status and pri-
    vileges

khatam   death commemoration ritual, syn. with *qul*

khilāfat   'deputyship'; in Sufism the authority to act as a spiritual guide, conferred on a Sufi
    by his own spiritual guide

khirqā   long cloak

khuddām (pl. of *khādim*)   'servants', the community of hereditary guardians and spiritual
    guides at the shrine of Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer

loṭnā   'to toss, roll about' in a transported state during Qawwali

Mahbūb-e-Ilāhī   'the Beloved of God', respectful term of reference and address for the saint
    Nizamuddin Auliya

mahfil-e-samaʿ   'gathering, assembly for listening (to spiritual music)'; formal Sufi term for
    Qawwali assembly

manqabat   song theme in praise of saints

maqām (sing. of *maqāmāt*)   'stage' of spiritual attainment

maqtaʿ   last couplet of a poem

mashāikh (pl. of *sheikh*)   'Sufi spiritual guides', term used collectively for Sufis (contrasted
    with Qawwals)

matlaʿ   first couplet of a poem

Maulānā Rūm   respectful term of address and reference for the saint Jalaluddin Rumi

maurūsī   'hereditary'; among Sufis the term refers mainly to rights and privileges associated
    with shrine affiliation

melā   'fair' accompanying a major saint's anniversary

mīr-e-mahfil   'chief of the gathering', leader of the Qawwali assembly

mohtād   token payments

murīd   disciple of a Sufi guide (*pīr*)

mushaʿira   'poetic symposium'

namāz   Muslim ritual prayer performed five times a day according to prescribed rules

naʿt   song theme in praise of the Prophet

nazr (also: *nazar*   'offering' to a (spiritual) superior as a token of submission and allegiance,
    also implying expectation of benefice; the formal offering in the Qawwali assembly
    (see *nazrānā*)

nazrānā   syn. with *nazr*, but usage is generally limited to the Sufi community

nisbat   'link, tie' with a Sufi figure or symbol

nisbatī   containing a link or tie with a Sufi figure or symbol (for example poetry)

Nizāmī   title indicating membership of Nizamuddin Auliya's spiritual lineage, either by familial or spiritual descent or affiliation

Nizāmuddīn Auliyā   major thirteenth-century saint and leader of the Chishti order in India, fourth in succession after founder Muinuddin Chishti; his shrine in Delhi is also referred to by his name

panch   body of elders governing a *brādrī*

pīr   Sufi spiritual guide, master

pīrbhāyī   '*pīr*-brother(s)', disciple(s) of one *pīr*

pīrzādā   'son of a *pīr*', familial descendant of a *pīr* or saint

qāfia   consistent rhyme syllable

qalb   heart (the seat of emotions)

qatā   classical short form of Sufi poetry

qaul   saying, statement attributed to a religious authority, especially to Prophet Muhammad

Qawwāl   performer(s) of Qawwali, usually member of a hereditary professional group attached to a particular Sufi order and shrine

Qawwāl Bachche   'the (original) Qawwal offspring', claiming descent from Amir Khusrau and identified by four towns of origin near Delhi

Qawwālī   Indo-Pakistani Sufi music; a group song genre of Hindustani light classical music set to mystical poetry in Farsi, Urdu and Hindi and performed in Sufi assemblies for the purpose of arousing mystical emotion. Also: assembly where Qawwali is performed

qir'at   Koranic cantillation

qul   death commemoration ritual, syn. with <u>khatam</u>

radīf   repeated monorhyme

ra'is   person of great status and wealth

raqs   'dance' of ecstasy

rindānā   ecstatic experience

riqqat   'state of being moved to tears', ecstatic weeping

riqqat tārī honā   to be overcome with ecstatic weeping

ronā   'to weep, to cry'

rūhānī   'spiritual, pertaining to the soul'

rūhānī taraqqī   'spiritual advancement', intense spiritual experience

Rūmī   (see *Jālālūddīn Rūmī*)

sādhe din   'plain, ordinary days' at a shrine, that is, without ritual requirement for Qawwali singing

sadqā   propitiatory offering to avert evil

sāfā   turban

sajdā   'prostration', bowing the head while kneeling as in ritual prayer (*namāz*)

sajjādanashīn   'the one seated on the prayer carpet'; official successor to a saint's shrine, and, by implication, to the saint himself, normally a familial descendant

sama'   'listening, audition', the Sufi practice of listening to spiritual music; the performance of Sufi music

sar chaukī 'head performing group' of Qawwals at a shrine

shāgird peshā service professionals, menials

sharīf 'exalted, eminent'; among Sufis a title of respect added to the location of a saint's shrine (for example Ajmer Sharif)

sheikh Sufi spiritual leader, having spiritual authority, spiritual guide; also used as epithet with a saint's name

sheikh se milnā 'to meet the sheikh', to link up with the sheikh in the Sufi assembly, normally by means of a formal offering

shijrā 'genealogy' of Sufi spiritual descent line

silsilā 'chain' (abstr.), in Sufism 'chain' of spiritual descent or affiliation

sohbat 'society, association'; among Sufis attending or partaking in the society of spiritual superiors

sunnewāle audience

sūra chapter of the Koran

ta'alluq 'connection', spiritual bond, linkage

tabarruk 'blessed substance', food offering blessed and dedicated to a saint and then distributed publicly

takrīk-e-qalb the power to stir the soul

tarīqa(t) 'the mystical Way'; also: a particular school or order of Sufism

tauhīd the unity of God

tāwīz amulets

umarā (pl. of *amīr*) 'wealthy personages', used collectively for Qawwali participants of worldly eminence (contrasted with *fuqarā*)

'urs 'wedding', the celebration of a saint's final union with God on his death anniversary; a saint's death day

wajd 'rapture, trance', ecstasy

wakīl 'advocate', saint's descendant acting as spiritual advocate or agent for Sufi devotees

wisāl 'union', a mystic's final union with God; death in ecstasy

zalīl lowly

zāt 'class, caste', hereditary status category comprising both Muslim class and Hindu caste

zikr 'remembering'; the rhythmic repetition of God's name or a short phrase in his praise, in Arabic (for example *Allāhū, lā ilāhā ilallāh*)

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Ajmer Islam Husain Ajmerwale
Delhi Meraj Ahmad Nizami, Bulbul-e-Chishti
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Muhammad Hayat, Sangeet Ragi
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Rafiq Ahmad Nizami
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Afzal Iqbal Sabri, Hind Ragi (of Deoband)
Fatehpur Skiri
Anwar Qawwal Bachcha (of Firozabad)
Nur Muhammad Qawwal (Dargah Sheikh Salim Chishti)
Hyderabad
Aziz Ahmad Khan Warsi (Qawwal Bachche)
Iqbal Husain Khan
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Jamal Ahmad
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Raziuddin Khan
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Pyare Khan   } (Qawwal Bachche)
Faruq Ahmad Nizami
Iftekhar Ahmad Nizami
Ghulam Farid Sabri
Madan Qawwal
Lucknow
Musharraf Husain   } (Dargah Shah Mina and Kakori)
Agghan Qawwal

Sheikhs and Pirzadas

Ajmer	Syed Haleem Chishti, Gaddinashin	
	Syed Fazlul Matin, Gaddinashin	
	Syed Asrar Ahmad, Mutawalli	(Dargah Khwaja Sahib)
	Zainul Abedin, Diwan	
	Syed Iftekhar Ali	
	Sheikh Ejaz Ahmad	

Ajmer Syed Haleem Chishti, Gaddinashin
Syed Fazlul Matin, Gaddinashin
Syed Asrar Ahmad, Mutawalli
Zainul Abedin, Diwan (Dargah Khwaja Sahib)
Syed Iftekhar Ali
Sheikh Ejaz Ahmad

Delhi Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami, Sajjadanashin
Pir Zamin Nizami Syed Bukhari, Sajjadanashin
Syed Safdar Ali Nizami, Sajjadanashin
Pir Zahur Hasan Nizami (Dargah Nizamuddin Auliya)
Muhammad Mian Nizami
Khwaja Nisar Ali Nizami
Ahmad Mian, Sajjadanashin (Abdus Salam)
Miskin Shah Nizami
Hafiz Saeed Nizami
Muhammad Yahya Nizami
Mustahsan Faruqi, Sajjadanashin (Sheikh Kalimullah)
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Fatehpur Sikri
Khurshid Alim, Sajjadanashin
Rais Mian, Sajjadanashin (Dargah Sheikh Salim Chishti)

Gulbarga
Syed Shah Muhammad Muhammad al Husaini, Sajjadanashin
Syed Shah Khusro Husaini, Sajjadanashin (Dargah Khwaja Bandanawaz)
Syed Asadullah
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Hyderabad
Syed Shah Qutabuddin Husaini, Sajjadanashin (Shah Khamosh)
Syed Shah Asrar Husain Razvi, Sajjadanashin
Syed Kamil Shatari, Sajjadanashin (late)

Kakori
Syed Mujtaba Hyder, Sajjadanashin

Karachi
Baba Zahin Shah Taji Sajjadanashin (Yusuf Shah)
Syed Abdul Hamid Badayuni

Lucknow
Syed Maulana Zafar Ali Qadri, Sajjadanashin (Khairabad)
Sheikh Muhammad Shahid Ali Minai (Shah Mina)

Devotees and Experts

Ajmer   Mahmud Ali Khan, Nazim
Delhi   Shabi Ahmad
         Dr Ausaf Ali
         Prof. Masud Husain Khan
         Prof. Zia-ul-Hasan Faruqi
         Allama Akhlaq Husain
         Allama Anwar Sabri
         Prof. Khwaja Ahmad Faruqi
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         Muhiuddin Hasan
         Abdur Rahim Rangrez
         Osama Talha
         Ms Parveen Talha
         Mrs Siddiqa Khatoon Qureshi

Musical sources

Qawwal Parties Recorded in Sama' *Assemblies*

Ajmer   Islam Husain Ajmerwale
         Babban
Delhi   Meraj Ahmad Iqbal Ahmad Nizami   ⎫
         Nasiruddin Khan (Gore Khan)   │
         Inam Ahmad   │
         Muhammad Hayat   │
         Mahmud Nizami   │
         Farid Ahmad Nizami   ⎬ (Qawwal Bachche)
         Chand Nizami   │
         Ghulam Husain   │
         Ghulam Sabir   │
         Aziz Ahmad Khan Warsi (of Hyderabad)   ⎭
         Afzal Iqbal (Deoband)
         Akhlaq Husain
         Akhlas Muzaffar
         Akhtar Sabri
         Ali Muhammad Nyazi
         Iftekhar Amrohvi (Amroha)
         Aslam Sabri
         Faqir Muhammad (Maliarkotla)
         Hafiz Jamal (Kanpur)
         Hina
         Kallan
         Kallu Allahrakhawale
         Muhammad Ahmad (Rampur)
         Muhammad Saleem (Maliarkotla)
         Rahmat
         Raj Babu
         Samar Nizami
         Shamshad Irshad
         Shamshad Muzaffarnagar
         Shehzad Nizami
         Yamin Sabri (Deoband)
Fatehpur Sikri
         Aliya Agrewale
         Anwar Bachcha
         Aziz Marerewale
         Banne
         Chiku Mastana
         Dulare

Habib Islam
Khwaja Khanun
Majid Jaipurwale
Nazir Agrewale
Muhammad
Rafiq Bulandshahrwale
Wazir Dost
Zaki Ajmeri

Gulbarga

Abdul Hamid
Abdur Rahim
Farid Ali
Ghani
Hamad
Iqbal Husain (Hyderabad)
Muhammad Ahmad
Muhammad Yasin
Shahid
Shaukat Nazan
Sheikh Junaid
Zahir Husain

Hyderabad

Wasiuzzaman

Kakori

Afsar (Khairabad)
Agghan
Ali Waris
Azimullah
Jaffar Husain
Kalam
Muhammed Umar
Muhammed Zahir Khan (Malihabad)
Murli (Shahjahanpur)
Nusrat
Rais
Sarvar Husain
Zubair

Karachi

Manzur Niyazi
Bahauddin Qutubuddin
Raziuddin Khan   } (Qawwal Bachche)
Faruq Ahmad Nizami
Iftekhar Ahmad Nizami
Anwar
Bakhshi Salamat
Bashir Ahmad
Ghulam Farid Maqbool Ahmad Sabri
Kallan
Madan
Muhammad Ali Afridi
Tuti

Lucknow
>
> Aghghan
> Asif Ali
> Faruq
> Patrick Qawwal
> Rajju
> Sarvar Husain

Other Recordings of Qawwal Parties

> Abdur Rahman Kanchwala
> Alli (Lucknow)
> Ahmad Azad (Karachi)
> Ismail Azad (Karachi)
> Aziz Mian
> Aziz Nazan
> Shakila Bano
> Haji Fayyaz (Karachi)
> Jaffar Husain (Badayun)
> Kausar Jabin (Lahore)
> Mubarak (Bareilly)
> Mubarak Ali-Fateh Ali (Lahore)
> Muhammad Husain Warsi (Karachi)
> Muhammad Siddiq (Lahore)
> Muin Niyazi
> Habib Painter
> Alaf Din Pathan (Lahore)
> Waiz Qawwal (Hyderabad)
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"This book is a ground breaking study of cultural performance. Specifically it is about *Qawwali,* conventionally understood as the music of Sufism in South Asia. One of the most highly regarded scholars in ethnomusicology, Regula Qureshi comes with a unique set of tools to bear on this study. An anthropologist who has conservatory credentials in Western music, many years in training in Indian music, and complete fluency in Urdu, Qureshi conducted extensive fieldwork for this study in both Pakistan and India, visiting a number of important shrines, and recording numerous *Qawwali* performances, lessons, interviews and conversations. . . . This work is a genuine *tour de force*: it is lucid, thorough, and compelling. It is, in my view, a model very much to be emulated for the study of cultural performances."
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REGULA BURCKHARDT QURESHI is professor of music at the University of Alberta. Her publications include *The Muslim Community in North America* and *Muslim Families in North America.*

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