

POETRY IN SUFI PRACTICE
PATRONS, POETS AND PERFORMERS IN SOUTH ASIAN SUFISM FROM
THIRTEENTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT

MIKKO VIITAMÄKI

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Mikko Viitamäki

*Poetry in Sufi Practice. Patrons, Poets and Performers in South Asian Sufism from
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ABSTRACT

This study discusses poetic communication in the context of *mahfil-i samāʿ* (an assembly of listening to sung poetry) among South Asian Sufis. Drawing from both textual and ethnographic materials, the study explores the relationship between Sufi practice, poetic expression and musical performance. It presents a context-sensitive reading of a multilingual (Persian, Hindi, Urdu) poetic corpus that takes into account its literary characteristics, the framework of Sufi practice, as well as the various techniques the musicians called qawwals utilize in conveying the meaning of a poetic text.

The study comprises three parts that are distinguished by their sources and methodological approaches. The first part discusses the dynamics of *samāʿ* as a meditative and ecstatic Sufi practice, and it is based on close reading of textual sources in Arabic, Persian and Urdu written between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries. Throughout these texts, the authors have characterized *samāʿ* as a spiritual practice whose transformative effect is sudden, even violent.

The second part examines twentieth-century anthologies of qawwali poetry and shows the extreme fluidity of the poetic repertoires; the performers are fairly free to choose the texts they sing as long as the desired effect is brought about in the listeners.

The study of poetry in *samāʿ*, however, is bound to remain suggestive if it is solely based on textual sources. Each performance of a poetic text is uniquely shaped in the interaction between the listeners and singers. For this reason, the third part of the study covers an ethnographic analysis of four *samāʿ* assemblies that took place in Delhi and Hyderabad. While the focus is on the poetic text, the analysis takes into account the physical settings of the occasions, the hierarchies that regulate the interaction of the participants, as well as the economics involved.

The analysis reveals how qawwals continuously alternate between musical and poetic tension and release during *mahfil-i samāʿ*. In this manner, they intensify the listeners' feelings and emotions, which are then ideally integrated into the spiritual practice of each participant. Furthermore, the impassioned poetry that addresses God as the beloved also constitutes a significant religious discourse that complements the more systematic approach found in Islamic theological and legal prose writings.

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Key to transliteration

آ (ء)	ʾ (ʾā)	ژ	r	گ	g
ب	b	ز	z	ل	l
پ	p	ژ	zh	م	m
ت	t	س	s	ن	n
ٹ	ṭ	ش	sh	ں	ñ
ث	ṯ (th in Arabic)	ص	ṣ	و	v, ū, o, au (w in Arabic)
ج	j	ض	ḏ (ḏ in Arabic)	ه	h
چ	c	ط	ṭ	ھ	h
ح	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ی	y, ī
خ	<u>kh</u>	ع	ʿ	ے	e, ai
د	d	غ	<u>gh</u>	َ (zabar)	a
ڈ	ḏ	ف	f	ِ (zer)	i
ذ	<u>dh</u> (dh in Arabic)	ق	q	ُ (pesh)	u
ر	r	ک	k		

Place names are transliterated without diacritical marks, and the English-language spellings are preserved. Names of persons from the modern period are generally written consistent with their or their organization's conventions. Terms used in quotations are reproduced as they appear in the original source.

INTRODUCTION

This study discusses poetic communication in the context of *samāʿ* among South Asian Sufis. Drawing from both textual and ethnographic materials, my work explores the mutual relationship of poetic expression, Sufi practice and musical performance. Instead of theoretical dimensions, metaphysical speculations or mystical experiences, the focus is on the practical dynamics of *samāʿ*. I aim at presenting a context-sensitive reading of poems, which takes into account their literary characteristics, the framework of Sufi practice where they are employed, as well as the various techniques utilized in constructing their meaning during the musical performance. This approach complements the literary analysis that concentrates on poetic language, images and writing context, as well as the religious analysis that focuses on the doctrinal import of the texts.

Literally, the Arabic word *samāʿ* means 'listening'. Elaborating on its role in the Sufi practice, Bruce B. Lawrence defines it as 'hearing chanted verses (with or without accompanying instruments) in the company of others also seeking to participate in a dynamic dialogue between a human lover and the divine beloved.'¹ The definition captures many characteristic traits of the practice: poetry is given more weight than music, *samāʿ* is usually a collective occasion and the aim is something greater than the music and poetry in themselves. In *samāʿ*, music and poetry have an instrumental value, yet their aesthetic and entertaining dimensions are also significant. An exclusive emphasis on the spiritual nature of the practice may cause one to ignore the relevance of these other dimensions; the fact is that not all listeners attend *samāʿ* because of spiritual pursuits. Sometimes beautiful poetry and music may just remain that and nothing more. For this reason, *samāʿ* is perhaps best defined as deep or absorbed listening, which may lead to achieving spiritual goals, but which may as well produce only a pleasant aesthetic experience. It is also important to note that this listening does not denote passive receiving. On the contrary, the listeners have an active role in shaping the musical performances during *samāʿ*.

It is significant that although *samāʿ* is a religious practice, its main elements, poetry and music, are not unambiguously so. When contemporary Indian Sufis talk about poetry in the context of *samāʿ*, they use the term *kalām*. It simply means speech, discourse or anything said, but it evokes religious associations because it features in phrases like *kalām allāh* ('God's speech') or *kalām-i mājid* ('glorious speech'), both referring to the Koran. The Sufis juxtapose the term *kalām* with the term *shāʿirī* that denotes the secular poetry and poet's craft. This distinction notwithstanding, much of the poetry performed in *samāʿ* has been written by poets whose links with Sufism have

¹ Lawrence 1983: 72.

been tenuous at best. It is ultimately the context of the Sufi practice that turns the texts into *kalām* that carries divine meanings.

The same applies to the musical element. In contemporary India and Pakistan, one particular musical genre, qawwali (*qawwālī*), has become so intimately associated with *samāʿ* that Urdu and Hindi speakers frequently use the words interchangeably to denote both the musical genre and the performance occasion. This approach characterizes both colloquial and literary contexts. For example, a recent Urdu translation of Ibn Taimiyyah's (d. 1328) Arabic treatise *Al-samāʿ wa'l-raqṣ* ('Listening and dance') was simply entitled *Qawwālī*.² However, qawwali is not performed exclusively in *samāʿ*, but also on concert stages, recordings and in films, where its association with Sufism or religion becomes flimsy. The seemingly incompatible performance contexts have led a number of scholars to flatly distinguish between authentic Sufi music and its commercial counterparts. Regula Burckhardt Qureshi states, on the first page of her seminal study *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context, and Meaning in Qawwali*, that her study does not pursue qawwali adapted for entertainment, but 'the authentic spiritual song that transports the mystic toward union with God.'³ According to her, the Sufis hold that the spiritual achievements should be the only aim of qawwali, while musical and poetical novelties are only directed to the popular audience.⁴ Qamar-ul Huda, in turn, states that '[f]or Sufi disciples ... Qawwali music is not entertainment; rather the music is purely devotional, deeply intimate, and critically important to the journey of spiritual nourishment.'⁵ Such an approach leads to a neglect of the dynamism and openness of *samāʿ* that can accommodate different musical approaches; there is not necessarily a radical difference between the music heard in *samāʿ* assemblies, on the one hand, and on popular recordings, on the other. The same song can appeal to both the world music audience and the Sufi disciples of an Indian brotherhood. When this approach becomes a premise for a research instead of an empirical observation, it may contribute to missing the immense significance musical and poetical novelty has in *samāʿ*.

Since it is the context that ultimately transforms poetry and music into tools of spiritual practice, an assembly of absorbed listening (*mahfil-i samāʿ* or *majlis-i samāʿ*) is in the focus of this work, both in the case of textual and ethnographic material. Focusing on poetic communication in this context arises from the centrality of poetry to the practice. Musical knowledge, essentially, is part of the performers' trade. While the listeners react to music instinctively, they are seldom intimately enough acquainted with musical knowledge and terminology to be able to discuss it in an analytical manner. The religious knowledge, on the other hand, belongs essentially to the listeners. The performers require a certain amount of it in order to sing in a manner that reson-

2 See Ibn Taimiyyah, *Al-samāʿ wa'l-raqṣ: Urdū tarjumah mussammā bi-qawwālī*.

3 Qureshi 2006: 1.

4 Qureshi 1993b: 121–122

5 Huda 2007: 681.

ates with the listeners' religious worldview. However, it is the Sufi master and his disciples who are adepts in it. Poetical knowledge, on the other hand, is something that both the performers and listeners share. The performers master a vast range of diverse poetic texts, but this applies to a number of listeners as well. Furthermore, the latter habitually relate their experiences during *samā'* to poetry instead of music. This accords with Joyce Burckhalter Flueckiger's observation from Hyderabad that poetry is essentially what the listeners discuss when they discuss *samā'*.⁶

This makes poetry the field, where the communication and interaction between the performers and listeners takes place. The poetic text acquires its final shape through this communication. The text a poet has written is seldom sung in the form in which it appears in literary anthologies. Instead, the performers closely monitor the reactions of the listeners – who also act as their patrons – and strive to sing in a manner that takes their tastes and needs into consideration and, potentially, leads to a spiritual experience.

Balancing between mysticism and tradition

Sufi practices and meditative techniques remain a relatively unexplored field of study. Echoing the early Orientalist scholarship, specialists of Islamic studies have until recently tended to characterize Sufism as Islamic mysticism. They have perceived the individual experiences of a mystic and his personal quest for God as the essence of Sufism. In the words of J.T.P. de Bruijn, Sufis were people 'who kept themselves remote from the world cultivating their inner souls and striving after a personal, rather than a collective conformity to the will of God.'⁷ Since they have perceived the individual experience as the essence of mysticism, scholars have tended to neglect the often collective means to attain that experience. Instead, they have concentrated on studying abstract metaphysical speculation and poetic expressions of mystical experiences on the basis of texts that seldom discuss the practical aspects of Sufism. Moreover, the minute codification of a vast range of practices and techniques began only with the appearance of Sufi brotherhoods in the twelfth century, a development frequently associated with ossified, somehow artificial means to achieve mystical experiences.⁸

The work of anthropologists and social scientists represents an opposite approach to Sufism. Instead of historical materials, they focus on contemporary manifestations of Sufism, public negotiations of power and on the rituals in Sufi shrines. In this study, I balance between the two approaches. I analyse historical texts, yet focus on the ones that are relevant to the contemporary practitioners of Sufism. I draw from ethnographic material, but relate it to the normative example of past Sufis that is still invoked today.

6 Flueckiger 2006: 208.

7 De Bruijn 1997: 35

8 See, e.g. J. Spencer Trimingham's history of Sufi brotherhoods, entitled *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (1971). On one such characterization of *samā'*, see Gribetz 1991: 61.

As Nile Green suggests in *Sufism: A Global History*, Sufism is best approached as ‘a tradition of powerful knowledge, practices and persons’ instead of mysticism.⁹ Like every tradition, Sufism has a historical, social and physical context, which keeps changing and transforming the tradition. Instead of being reclusive mystics, the Sufis emerge as carriers of a tradition. They are significant actors in their respective social contexts, and their actions touch more than their individual lives. This approach does not aim to negate mystical experiences, it merely changes the focus from the inner world of an individual to his or her historical and social context. Perceiving Sufism as a tradition also facilitates piecing together continuities between pre-modern and contemporary periods, between literary texts and lived practice. This approach has been successfully adopted by Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence in their monograph *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond* and by Robert Rozeňnal in *Islamic Sufism Unbound: Politics and Piety in Twenty-First Century Pakistan*. The first work focuses on the Chishti Nizami brotherhood, while the latter studies the followers of one Chishti Sabiri branch in Pakistan and Malaysia. While the former work is based on a wide range of textual sources and covers the period from thirteenth century to the present, the latter work combines textual analysis with ethnographic fieldwork in the contemporary context. Both works also include invaluable information on the practice of *samāʿ* among the followers of the respective Sufi brotherhoods.¹⁰ A similar approach characterizes this study as well, but instead of a particular brotherhood, it focuses on one particular practice: *samāʿ*.

Although I attempt to avoid losing sight of the distinctly mystical goal of *samāʿ* as it was delineated in Lawrence’s definition, I focus on discussing the tangible, outward dimensions of the practice. These cover the physical setting, the behaviour of the participants, as well as the musical and poetical elements, all of which can be accessed through texts and participant observation. This has also led to de-emphasizing the various mystical states experienced by the listeners during *samāʿ*. Kenneth S. Avery has analysed such states in *A Psychology of Early Sufi samāʿ: Listening and Altered States* (2004). He bases his study on the accounts of medieval Arabic and Persian Sufi manuals and saintly biographies. However, due to the nature of these sources, no first-person narratives on such experiences are available, and he has to base his discussion on descriptions of outward behaviours. Similar lack of first-person descriptions of experiences during *samāʿ* characterizes the texts studied in this work, and the only detailed account of a personal mystical experience appears in a twentieth-century text that combines history, hagiography and fiction. The same applies to the contemporary Sufis whom I have encountered. They were never keen to engage in a discussion about their personal experiences. Respecting their inclination, I decided not to probe the matter

9 Green 2012: 3.

10 See Ernst & Lawrence 2002: 34–46, 133–137; Rozeňnal 2007a, 213–225. See also Rozeňnal 2007b.

and instead limited my enquiry to the public domain of poetry and on the ways a Sufi master guides his disciples during the practice.

When it comes to the practice of *samāʿ* in India and Pakistan, contemporary qawwali music has been its most thoroughly studied dimension.¹¹ The most extensive research has been undertaken by Regula Burckhardt Qureshi. Her ethnomusicological study *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context, and Meaning in Qawwali*, originally published in 1986, still remains the seminal work on *samāʿ* in the contemporary context. In Qureshi's own words, her work is an 'ethnomusicological approach which incorporates the dimension of context into the analysis of musical sound.'¹² She leads the reader through a detailed analysis of musical performances towards an abstract model of a qawwali occasion and, finally, presents a context-sensitive grammar through which a musically literate reader is able to understand the ways of variation in qawwali. She has continued her work on qawwali in numerous articles pertaining to both its use in the Sufi context¹³ as well as in popular recordings and concert stages.¹⁴

Due to its ethnomusicological focus, Qureshi's work is essentially concerned with the musical element of *samāʿ*, and the point of view is generally that of a performer. She acquaints the reader with the qawwal's professional skills and knowledge by studying the performance and the audience response in a detailed manner. Since textual content is a vital part of qawwali music, she includes a limited range of examples of texts employed by the performers. However, she does not discuss poetry in depth. Even still, Qureshi's work is essential for understanding the use of poetry in contemporary *samāʿ*, because the qawwals expertly capitalize on the combination of musical and poetical conventions in order to create an effective performance. Since musicological analysis is not in the scope of this work, I keep referring to Qureshi's work throughout the study in order to reflect the performed texts against the background of the musical performance.

The only scholar to have systematically studied poetry in the context of *samāʿ* is Scott Kugle. He has approached the topic in three different papers that use performed poetry as their material. The first, "Qawwālī between Written Poem and Sung Lyric, or ... How a *Ghazal* Lives" (2007) analyses Munshi Raziuddin's performance of Sirāj Aurangābādī's (d. 1763) famous Urdu ghazal. The work is an in-depth exploration of the ghazal's poetic images that relate to the Sufi concept of the self and its destruction. Although the discussion is based on a recorded version of the text, the relevance of the performance only comes out as references to musical devices employed by the singer and in noting the omissions of certain verses and additions of others. The haunting literary analysis is followed by a study of the life of Sirāj and the experience of love that drove him into madness and a search for divine love.

11 On general introductions to *samāʿ*, see, e.g. During 1988 and Ernst 1997: 179–198

12 Qureshi 2006: xvii.

13 See, e.g. Qureshi 1993b, 2012.

14 See Qureshi 1992, 1995, 1999.

In another paper, “From Baghdad to Vrindavan: Erotic and Spiritual Love in Qawwali” (2009), Kugle presents a wider selection of poetry performed by the qawwals. As the title suggests, the paper explores the width of the poetic imagery found in qawwali lyrics. The author points out that images originating in Arabic literature live in harmony with indigenous Indian literary and religious motifs. He concludes that qawwali manages to create ‘a congruence of images that, despite their inflection toward either Islamic or Hindu environments, are mutually understandable and reciprocally enforcing.’¹⁵

A third paper, “Dancing with Khusrau: Gender Ambiguities and Poetic Performance in a Delhi Dargah” (2010b), opens new vistas to Islamic studies by applying the queer-theory to historical material. Kugle argues that attending the Sufi *khānqāh* of Nizām al-Dīn in Sultanate Delhi helped the (male) adepts to shed or at least temporarily suspend their patriarchal role and offered them a space where alternative values, like ‘dependence, reciprocity, servitude and humble deference,’ could be performed. This was greatly aided by musical performances of poetry. The author then analyses Hindi and Persian poems written by (or attributed to) Amīr *Khusrau* (d. 1325), focusing on their respective ways of inverting sexual and gender roles. Although the author uses the poems in reference to the fourteenth-century context, he does not discuss their precarious and often later authorship. However, the analysis shows the potential of an approach that takes the background of the performance into consideration and reaches beyond the conventional literary or religious analyses.

In addition to the ongoing work of Kugle, several scholars have discussed poetry in the context of *samāʿ* or qawwali music. A special issue of *The Muslim World* (97: 4, 2007) is dedicated to qawwali music and out of its seven contributions, four – among them Kugle’s paper on Sirāj – concentrate exclusively on poetry. Qamar-ul Huda relates qawwali lyrics, which evoke the Prophet Muhammad’s exemplary behaviour in conflict situations, to peace building efforts.¹⁶ Amer Latif translates the lyrics of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan’s famous song *Tum ek gorakhdhandā ho* (‘You Are a Lock Puzzle’) and analyses the theological implications of the text.¹⁷ Shemeem Burney Abbas, in turn, explores the political discourses in vernacular poetry performed in qawwali and other genres of Sufi music.¹⁸ In the remaining three articles, poetry occupies a significant role as well.¹⁹

Poetry is also central in Syed Akbar Hyder’s work *Reliving Karbala: Martyrdom in South Asian Memory*, in which one chapter studies the remembrance of Husain in qawwali lyrics.²⁰ Hyder discusses two qawwali performances: one in a shrine and one

15 Kugle 2009: 158.

16 See Huda 2007.

17 See Latif 2007.

18 See Abbas 2007.

19 See Newell 2007; Rozehnal 2007 and Ziad 2007.

20 See Hyder 2006: 105–135.

in a concert. However, the analysis itself does not take the performance context into account and instead follows the established practices of literary and religious approach. Instead of concentrating on the poems themselves, Hyder traces their theological background by referring to a number of disparate authors like Hujvīrī (d. c. 1072), Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar (d.1274) and Vasif Ali Vasif (d. 1993).

On the one hand, these works demonstrate the myriad approaches that can be applied in analysing performed Sufi poetry. On the other, none of the authors articulates the significance of the performance to the analysis of the poetic text. Instead, they follow established literary and religious approaches that discuss poetic images, religious ideas and the place of such poems in the broader context of Sufi thought. However, when a poem is transcribed and translated, it changes significantly. The reader of the text no more perceives it in a similar manner as a hearer. When a scholar analyses the text, he or she is able to dwell upon its import, discover various layers of meaning and relate them to broad historical and religious frameworks. However, is this what happens when a listener hears the poem in a performance during *samāʿ* or on a recording?

I try to answer this question by developing a context-sensitive reading of poetry performed during *samāʿ*, a reading that takes the dynamics of this particular Sufi practice into account and complements the established approaches that focus on literary, religious or autobiographical analysis of poetry.²¹ I base this approach to a considerably wider selection of poetic texts than any of the earlier researchers has done, and I hope to draw conclusions that are generally applicable to poetry performed during *samāʿ* in India.

Even though this work does not claim to be a literary study of poetry, it is nevertheless important to keep an eye on the literary conventions and historical developments of individual poetic genres employed in *samāʿ*. The literary sensitivity will help to avoid the pitfalls of interpreting poetic conventions as direct reflections of historical events. Nile Green, for example, portrays the Hyderabadī Sufi poet Iftikhār ʿAlī Shāh Ṣaṭān (d. 1906) as a satirist who mocked the exoteric ʿulamāʾ in his ghazals. Although the ridicule of a sheikh and an ascetic had been a stock image of ghazals for almost a millennium when Ṣaṭān wrote his works, Green now connects the image to the contemporary sectarian milieu that was characterized by the rise of the reformist ʿulamāʾ.²² In another paper, he contrasts the chaste poetry of Ṣaṭān with the sensuous ghazals of his contemporary Dāgh Dihlavī (d. 1905), who operated in the courtly

²¹ The analysis of poetry that combines all the three approaches is perhaps best embodied by Annemarie Schimmel's study of two eighteenth-century poets, Khvājah Mīr Dard and Shāh ʿAbd al-Laṭīf. See her *Pain and Grace: A Study of Two Mystical Writers of Eighteenth-Century Muslim India*, published in 1976. Her study of various genres of Sufi poetry and poetic imagery has also been significant. See, e.g. *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (1982) and *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (1992).

²² See Green 2009.

milieu. Green argues that the former's verses were 'deliberately uncontroversial' because of the increasing middle-class influence in the religious landscape of late nineteenth-century Hyderabad.²³ While his observation about the increasing influence of the middle classes and their conservatism is correct, he does not consider the fact that Sufi poetry in Urdu had been eminently chaste since the early-eighteenth century in comparison with, for example, contemporaneous Sufi poetry written in Persian. Considering that Sufis like Shāh Niyāz Aḥmad Barelvī (d. 1832) simultaneously wrote Persian verses that unabashedly mixed Sufi metaphysics with erotic themes and Urdu verses full of melancholy longing for the absent beloved, the chasteness of Vaṭān's poetry appears to be poetic convention associated with the linguistic medium.²⁴ Unfortunately, Vaṭān did not write in Persian and it is therefore impossible to tell if a similar dichotomy would have characterized his texts. However, the distinction is discernible in the multi-lingual poetic oeuvre of Vaṭān's later compatriot 'Abd al-Qadir Ṣiddīqī Ḥasrat (d. 1962).

Literary sensitivity also helps to decipher the function of different poetic genres. In an article appearing in the special issue of *The Muslim World*, mentioned above, Hodaya Ziad seeks to explain the positive attitude of an eighteenth-century Nasqbandi master and poet Khvājah Mīr Dard (d. 1785) to music by arguing that his self-understanding as a divinely appointed renewer led him to interfere with the traditionally negative Mujaddidi attitude towards music. Dard condoned musical performances because the singers would perform his poems. They would thus convey the gist of his teachings to audiences and contribute towards the spread of his Sufi brotherhood.²⁵ Ziad's arguments are well researched, yet she ignores the crucial fact that there is nothing in Dard's ghazals that would unambiguously link them to his Sufi views. On the contrary, they fully comply with the literary conventions of contemporary Urdu poetry. Some of the poems are descriptions of the sweet sadness of love, while others appear to espouse *vaḥdat al-vujūd* ('oneness of existence'), a metaphysical concept vehemently opposed by Dard. If ghazals were indeed meant to entice new people to the fold of his brotherhood, writing verses that are liable to misinterpretation seems counteractive to achieving this goal. Thus, a context-sensitive reading of poetry in *samā'* needs to also consider the broader literary history.

Dynamics of samā'

I begin by an exploration of the dynamics of *samā'* on the basis of textual sources. Sainly biographies (*tazkirahs*) and collections of discourses (*malḥūzāt*) comprise the key sources of Part I. Concentrating on sources that can be loosely termed as hagiographical is a result of choosing to focus on practical aspects of *samā'* instead of theory. Theory of *samā'* has been the most keenly studied facet of the practice among the spe-

²³ See Green 2010.

²⁴ On the poetry of Niyāz, see Viitamäki 2012.

²⁵ Ziad 2007.

cialists of South Asian Islam. Ernst and Lawrence have surveyed the early Chishti contribution to the theory of *samāʿ* by analysing the conceptualization of different types of ecstasy. They compare the works of early Indian theoretical thinkers with the writings of non-Indian Sufis and conclude that the major development effectuated by the former was to maintain that 'empathetic ecstasy is not just optional but indispensable to the entire experience of *samāʿ*.' The early Chishtis, they argue, considered empathetic ecstasy (*tavājud*) as a necessary passageway to the higher levels of genuine ecstasy (*vajd*).²⁶

The theory of *samāʿ* also occupies a central role in Syed Shah Khusro Hussaini's study of Gesūdarāz's (d. 1422) views on Sufism. Based on a thorough investigation of the Sufi master's works, the study tackles the theoretical conceptualization of the practice.²⁷ While Ernst and Lawrence establish a link between the Indian Sufi authors and earlier Sufis, Hussaini's study shows how Gesūdarāz built his theoretical framework on Niẓām al-Dīn's pronouncements. On the whole, however, the study of theoretical aspects of *samāʿ* indicates that very little happened in this field and no revolutionary steps were taken. However, the lack of theoretical development does not necessarily indicate the stagnation of the practice. On the contrary, the hagiographical sources evidence a flourishing practice whose theory was, I suggest, purposely left unarticulated. Moreover, in contrast to the theoretical writings, accounts of *samāʿ* assemblies in hagiographical sources portray the seamless coexistence of seemingly contradictory discourses that the theories usually tend to smooth away in favour of coherent models. While my focus is on hagiographical material, I also refer to theoretical and legal treatises, as well as to the letters written by Sufi masters whenever they discuss the practical aspects of *samāʿ*.

It should be noted that my intention is not to glean historical facts from hagiographical sources by purging from them material that appears legendary or supernatural to the modern reader, like Riazul Islam has done in his study of medieval *tazkirahs* and *malḡūẓāt*.²⁸ Rather, my focus is on the normative character of these sources. Instead of being passive accounts on historical events, they record an ideal example for the subsequent generations of Sufis to emulate. Discussing *tazkirah* literature in South Asia – and this applies to the *malḡūẓāt* as well – Marcia K. Hermansen and Bruce B. Lawrence have noted that '[a]lthough they draw from the past, they are *not* commemorative; they do not recall the past for its own sake or for the sake of the heroes whom they exalt. They *are* memorative, relying on memory and remembrance to communicate with the living the legacy of prior Indo-Muslim exemplars.'²⁹

In accordance with this approach, I have not attempted an exhaustive survey of all the works – or even all the important works – that discuss *samāʿ*. Instead, I have selec-

26 Ernst & Lawrence 2002: 40, 44.

27 See Hussaini 1983: 110–172. See also Hussaini 1970.

28 See Islam 2003.

29 Hermansen & Lawrence 2000: 150.

ted texts that are read and quoted by the Sufis whose practice I have observed during my fieldwork in Delhi and Hyderabad. Discussions with them have also helped in understanding the relevance of textual sources from a contemporary point of view. For this reason, my study presents only a handful of sources that have not been previously studied. However, the close reading of the passages discussing the practice of *samāʿ*, as well as the dialogue with the contemporary practice introduce a fresh approach to the textual material.

Chapter 1, “*Samāʿ* in the Sufi circle of Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyaʿ,” focuses on one of the most influential early Sufis in India and a key figure in the Indian history of *samāʿ*. Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyaʿ (d. 1325) wrote no books himself, yet his life and teachings were recorded in elaborate detail by his disciples. In addition, his followers spread throughout the Indian Subcontinent making his Sufi lineage one of the most prevalent in India.

Niẓām al-Dīn’s significance lies in the coincidence of his personal sensitivity to poetry and music with an ability to attract celebrated poets and singers to his circle. He established a model of a Sufi master as a patron of these arts and contributed to transforming *samāʿ* into a refined institution of Sufi practice, as well as of poetic and musical art. Moreover, his disciple Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī laid the basis for the legal defence of the practice in India against critics. The chapter ends with a discussion on the significance of etiquette (*adab*) in transforming the aesthetically refined occasion into a powerful Sufi practice whose effect can be channeled for spiritual goals.

Chapter 2, “*Samāʿ* in the Sufi circle of Kalīm Allāh Shāhjahānābādī,” discusses *samāʿ* in the writings of this influential late Mughal Chishti Nizami master and his followers. The leap from the early fifteenth century, when Gesūdarāz (the last Sufi discussed in Chapter 1) died, to the turn of the eighteenth century may seem random. While *samāʿ* was certainly practiced and discussed in texts in the course of the intervening three centuries, the Sufi masters who lived during this period appear only infrequently in the later tradition I am studying. This also applies to the poetry sung in contemporary *samāʿ* assemblies. The classical canon of Persian poets from Niẓāmī (d. 1209) to Jāmī (d. 1492) is well-represented. The great Mughal poets are ignored almost completely, whereas the eighteenth-century Urdu poets again feature prominently in the repertoires.

Like Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyaʿ, Kalīm Allāh (d. 1729) was a Sufi whose influence is strongly felt in contemporary South Asia; the majority of Chishti Nizami branches trace their lineage of masters and disciples to him. Kalīm Allāh’s career is often said to have instigated a revival of the Chishti Nizami brotherhood, yet in scholarship he has been overshadowed by the contemporary Naqshbandi Mujaddidis. In the case of *samāʿ*, Kalīm Allāh’s significance lies in carrying the practice over a period when it was increasingly criticized by the Mujaddidis and when the focus of religious discourse was turning from metaphysical speculation and allegorical, poetic expression towards

legal argumentation and expository prose. However, Kalīm Allāh and his followers Niẓām al-Dīn Aurangābādī (d. 1730) and Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn Dihlavī (d. 1785) determinedly continued to advocate the practice as well as the metaphysics of *vaḥdat al-vujūd*.

Chapter 3, “Redefining Sufi practice in twentieth-century India,” discusses the practice of *samāʿ* in an environment where it had become increasingly condemned by Muslim reformists. However, since the reformists in India have for the most part been themselves Sufis, they have not been able to ignore the normative example of the past Sufi masters who had engaged in the practice. For this reason, the legal argumentation has, since the late nineteenth century, been supplemented by retellings of the history of Sufism in India. The chapter discusses one such retelling that aims at enforcing the practice of *samāʿ*. Among the main works of a prolific author, social and political activist, educator and Sufi guide – Khwaja Hasan Nizami (d. 1955) – is a saintly biography of Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyaʿ, which seeks to simultaneously rewrite the history and address contemporary issues. One of the recurring themes in the work is *samāʿ*, and the author strives to arm his disciples with arguments against the rampart criticism of the reformists. This he seeks to achieve by portraying the practice as a key element in the devotional regime of the medieval Sufi master.

Chishti Nizami masters are in the limelight throughout these three periods. This focus arises from the question posed in this study: what are the dynamics of *samāʿ* and what is the role of poetry in this particular Sufi practice? As I have explained, this necessitates an examination of texts that relate on the actual practice. This type of information was most readily available in the works of the Chishti Nizami authors, who seem to profess a keen interest in describing the musical assemblies of their masters. To my knowledge, a similar approach is not found in the writings of other brotherhoods even when they practise *samāʿ* and employ the same literary genres as the Chishti Nizamīs. Where the texts about Niẓām al-Dīn are replete with detailed accounts about his *samāʿ* assemblies, they are all but missing from the discourses and letters of his junior contemporary, the Firdausi sheikh Sharaf al-Dīn Manerī (d. 1381). One of his letters in *Maktūbāt-i ṣadī* (‘Hundred Letters’) demonstrates a positive attitude towards the practice,³⁰ but Paul Jackson, the translator of his works, notes that Sharaf al-Dīn’s interest waned during the later years.³¹ Consequently, the texts written about him do not display a great interest in it either. The same holds true in the case of a twentieth-century Qadiri sheikh ‘Abd al-Qadīr Ṣiddīqī Ḥasrat. He was an avid listener of *samāʿ*, who wrote a pamphlet in its defence.³² Moreover, he was acquainted with the theory and practice of music, and he wrote poetry that is widely sung in *samāʿ* assemblies in the Deccan. Yet, his otherwise extensive and detailed biography written

30 See Manerī, *The Hundred Letters*, 382–393. Another collection of his letters, translated as *In Quest of God: Manerī’s Second Collection of 150 Letters*, makes no mention of *samāʿ*.

31 Zāin, *Khwān-i Pur Niʿmat*, 36.

32 See Hasrat, *Samāʿ*.

by his grandson and disciple does not include accounts of the *samāʿ* assemblies he attended.³³ Although the present study focuses on Chishti Nizamīs, I refer to other brotherhoods as well in order to avoid giving the impression that the former have defined the entire practice in the Indian context.

Poetry in samāʿ

Parts II and III concentrate on the poetry and music employed in the context of *samāʿ*. While the texts discussed in Part I occasionally record the verses that were especially effective in *samāʿ* assemblies, such references are extremely scarce and provide only a general idea about the poetry that was sung. For this reason, the rest of the study concentrates on the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries, when poetic anthologies compiled for the performers and listeners participating in *samāʿ* were beginning to be published and recordings made preserving the sound possible. Since *samāʿ* is a living Sufi practice, a researcher can also use the methods of ethnographic fieldwork. In contrast to the earlier periods, however, he or she is now confronted with a different problem: the abundance of poetic texts performed in *samāʿ* assemblies by qawwali musicians.

In a recent study on Hindi poetry in *ṭhumrī*, a musical genre conventionally categorized as 'light classical' or 'semi classical', Lalita du Perron establishes the main corpus of texts specific to this genre. Her main corpus is not exhaustive in the sense that it would cover all the texts that have been performed by *ṭhumrī* singers throughout the genre's history or are included in anthologies of *ṭhumrī* lyrics. Instead, it includes the texts that are still performed in concerts or have been sung on recordings that are available since the very beginning of the twentieth century. The resulting corpus covers altogether 180 texts, including the variations. Most of the texts are relatively short, comprising four to six lines on average, so the main corpus is manageable and presentable within the limits of a monograph.

Were the same principles applied to repertoires of the qawwals, the main corpus would include an enormous amount of texts. I have recorded fourteen *samāʿ* assemblies for this study and attended dozens taking notes. In these fourteen assemblies, the qawwals performed altogether 102 song texts. If different performances of a single text, distinguished from each other by textual omissions and embellishments, are included, the number climbs to 138. The song texts in qawwali are also considerably longer than in *ṭhumrī*. Ghazals that comprise four to eight two-line verses on average form the bulk of them. Moreover, the repertoires include a number of adjunct items – individual verses or groups of a few verses excerpted from other poems – that are inserted into the salient text during the performance. This situation is further complicated by the fact that the song texts include a vast range of linguistic and poetic registers in Persian, Urdu and archaic or dialectal forms of Hindi.

33 See Anvar, *ʿAbd Allāh: Ik bandah-yi khudā*.

For this reason, I had to give up the idea of accomplishing a comprehensive survey of the repertoires. Instead, Parts II and III of this study provide the reader with a map that helps in contextualizing the poetry, understanding its function and distinguishing the factors that create its specific effect in a *samāʿ* assembly.

Chapter 4, “Qawwali repertoires,” begins with a general discussion of the languages, forms and authors of the poems sung by the qawwals, which is followed by an analysis of the poetic anthologies written for the purpose of *samāʿ*. It then explores the immense fluidity of the repertoires through case studies of two widely performed poets: Jāmī and Amīr Khusrau. Chapter 5, “Qawwals, qawwali and stages of performance,” discusses the contemporary professional performers who sing these poems. It focuses on their self-image as the heirs of the musical and poetic legacy of Amīr Khusrau, their mutual hierarchies and competition, as well as the stages where they perform in the Sufi context.

The study of poetry in *samāʿ*, however, is bound to remain suggestive, if it is solely based on textual sources. Each performance of a poetic text is uniquely shaped in the interaction between the listeners and performers. For this reason, Part III of the study covers a detailed ethnographic analysis of four *samāʿ* assemblies. Most of the assemblies discussed in chapter 6, “Observing poetry in *samāʿ* assemblies,” took place in and around the Nizamuddin shrine in Delhi or under its sphere of influence in the same city. The Nizamuddin shrine is perhaps the most closely studied individual shrine in South Asia. Its pilgrims have been interviewed by Desiderio Pinto.³⁴ Arthur Saniotis has studied the sensuous interaction of the pilgrims with the spiritual landscape in the shrine,³⁵ and I have discussed the culture of scent and perfume oils in the same context.³⁶ Several studies of qawwali music have focused on the shrine since the seminal study of Regula Qureshi.³⁷ When an opinion of a representative of authentic qawwali music has been sought by scholars, they have invariably turned to Meraj Ahmed Nizami, the senior figure among the qawwals of the shrine.³⁸ However, no one has specifically studied poetry sung by the qawwals there, and since I had become acquainted with the shrine and its people already during my undergraduate studies, I decided to choose it as the base of my fieldwork. However, in order to avoid inadvertently giving the impression that *samāʿ* in the Nizamuddin shrine is representative of the entire Subcontinent, I keep referring to the second locus of my fieldwork, the city of Hyderabad in the Deccan. I include one assembly organized there into the chapter. Although Hyderabad is an established centre of Sufism, Urdu poetry and qawwali

34 See Pinto 1995 and 2004 [1984].

35 See Saniotis 2008.

36 See Viitamäki *forthcoming* d.

37 See, e.g. Devos 1995, Holland 2010.

38 See, e.g. Hyder 2006: 106–107.

music, it has attracted considerably less attention than Delhi. Consequently, only a handful of scholars have studied qawwali and *samāʿ* there.³⁹

In an attempt to present a context-sensitive reading of poetry that is performed in *samāʿ*, I include the English translation of all the poems sung in respective assemblies into the descriptions of these occasions, while the full transcription is provided in the Appendix. The abundance of texts may at times seem tedious, but it helps to illustrate the dazzling variety of poetic themes and emotional registers that are evoked in the course of a single *samāʿ* assembly. Moreover, as I rarely refer to interviews with the performers and listeners, this is a way to allow them to speak in their own voice through the performance, on the one hand, and through their response to the sung poetry, on the other. This forms a contrast to a number of studies, where poetic texts are merely used as illustrative examples, and where the scholar frequently selects only the most suitable texts for the discussion. Instead of selecting only the best bits of poetry, I have included also texts that may be crude in the literary sense, but come alive in the performance. I also include performances that have not been particularly successful, failing to arouse the listeners. While discussing the poetry, I trace the shaping of the performance through the interaction between the performers and the listeners by focusing on different textual and performative techniques that the qawwals utilize, but also paying close attention to the physical settings of the occasion, the hierarchies that regulate the interaction of the participants, as well as the economics involved.

I present my own analysis of the poetry performed in different *samāʿ* assemblies in Chapter 7, “Confluence of poetry, music and metaphysics.” I discuss the use of poetic language in relation to the dynamics of *samāʿ* discussed in Part I of the study, and I also relate it to the ethnomusicological information provided by Qureshi. In order to establish a conceptual framework for the analysis, I utilize the terminology of ghazal poetics articulated in Frances Pritchett’s seminal work *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and Its Critics* (1994). Her work is a rare instance of literary analysis, which acknowledges that ghazals were sung or read aloud and that this has affected the literary conventions of the poetic genre. Building on her discussion, I demonstrate how the performers capitalize on these literary conventions in an attempt to maximize the effect of their performance. I also explore how this effect is linked with the conceptualization of *samāʿ* as a Sufi practice.

Most of the texts in this study appear now for the first time in translation. All the translations are mine, if not otherwise mentioned. In translating poetry, I have made an attempt to make it readable while keeping as close to the original as possible. For this reason, the translations are not literary. For those interested in enjoyable literary translations of some of these poems, I recommend the selection of Amīr Khusrau’s poetry entitled *In the Bazaar of Love* (2011) translated by Paul E. Losensky and Sunil Sharma. *Jashn-e-Khusrau: A Collection* (2012), a recent volume celebrating the poetical

39 See Hassett 1995; Johnston 2000 and Flueckiger 2006: 201–234.

and musical legacy of Amīr Khusrau, includes three CDs of his poetry performed by qawwals, as well as the original texts in the beautiful hand of Shafiq-ur-Rahman and translations by Sunil Sharma, Paul E. Losensky and Saleem Kidwai. However, one should keep in mind that while the translations are enjoyable and precise, the transcription of the song texts is often inaccurate.

PART I: SAMĀ' OF THE CHISHTI NIZAMI BROTHERHOOD

1 SAMĀ' IN THE SUFI CIRCLE OF NIZĀM AL-DĪN AULIYĀ'

1.1 India during the Delhi Sultanate

When Nizām al-Dīn Auliya' was born in 1238, Delhi had emerged as the capital city of the Indian dominions governed by Turkish Muslims of Central Asian origin. Its sultan had managed to establish his supremacy over the governors of competing urban centres and garrison towns of the area, and his court was developing into a centre of cultural and religious patronage that attracted immigrants from different parts of the Islamic world.

Political developments and the emergence of Indo-Persian culture

A Muslim presence was not a new phenomenon in the Indian Subcontinent. Muslim merchants had lived on the Malabar coast since the seventh century, and Sindh had been attached to the Arabic-Islamic empire by the Umayyad general Muḥammad ibn Qāsim, who led a campaign to the region in 711. However, the impetus towards the emergence of India as one of the key areas of Islamic culture came from Central Asia. The Ghaznavid ruler Maḥmūd Ghaznavī (d. 1030), who was to become one of the most controversial figures in Indian history, ran several raids to India in the early eleventh century. These have been described by his contemporary chroniclers as having been motivated by Maḥmūd's piety and his wish to attack infidels and spread the glory of Islam. Although this portrayal has been appropriated by colonial and nationalist historians of India, recent research has noted the ambivalent stance of Maḥmūd's contemporaries to his alleged piety and emphasized the financial motives behind his raids and the destruction of Hindu temples.⁴⁰

Although Maḥmūd's campaigns to the Indian heartland were looting expeditions, he also expanded the Ghaznavid territories to cover present-day northern Pakistan, where Lahore was established as the winter capital of the dynasty. Towards the end of the twelfth century, the successors of the Ghaznavids, the Ghurids extended their territory south and eastwards and established several fiefdoms in the area. They moved their centres of power and culture closer to the Indian heartland to Uch, Multan and Delhi. After 1192, the governorship of the Indian appendages was increasingly entrusted to the slave-generals whose relationship with the Ghurid ruler grew increasingly looser. 1192 is

⁴⁰ See e.g. Eaton 2000b and Davis 1999: 88–112.

sometimes quoted as the year of the founding of the Delhi Sultanate, yet Sunil Kumar has demonstrated that the governor of Delhi was not initially the self-evident overlord of the region. It was only in 1226, the year when an investiture from the Abbasid caliph reached his court, that he had managed to consolidate his rule over the area and could claim the symbolic authorization as a vicegerent of the caliph.⁴¹

The political history of the Delhi sultanate was characterized by the alternation of strong and militarily adroit rulers whose reign spanned several decades and periods of unrest when coups and battles over succession led to prevailing unrest. Nonetheless, the sultans kept expanding their dominions during the stable periods so that the empire of Muḥammed ibn Tughluq (r. 1325–1351) covered the entire Subcontinent, except for its southernmost tip, during the 1330s. This was the largest geographical extent of the Sultanate, and by the end of the century, much of its territory had been taken by different Hindu and Muslim polities – the Deccani kingdoms of the Bahmanis (1347–1527) and Vijayanagar (1336–1646) being the most influential among them.

In addition to the internal unrest, the Delhi sultanate was shaken by the Mongols during the thirteenth century. They harangued its western borders, but were never able to wreak similar havoc in India as they did in Central Asia and the Middle East. A sort of culmination of their campaigns was the destruction of Baghdad in 1258 and the execution of the last Abbasid caliph. Although the latter's might was by then purely symbolic and the political fragmentation of the Arabic-Islamic empire had already begun during the tenth century, the concrete end of his rule effectively furthered the decentralization of political and cultural power to new areas like India.

The Mongol destruction of the central Islamic lands proved significant to the emergence of the distinctly Indian Islamic culture that is in scholarly literature called either Indo-Persian or Indo-Islamic culture. Scores of people belonging to the educated elite fled Central Asia and the Middle East under the impending Mongol threat. India's relative stability and wealth attracted them to the Delhi Sultanate, where their contribution turned the city into a significant centre of learning and culture that was known throughout the Islamic world.

The ruling class of the Sultanate was Turkish. They were conscious of their distinct identity and kept aloof from the local populace. While the chronicles written in the court portray them as valiant and noble, the evidence gleaned from other sources such as the recorded discourses (*malḡūẓāt*) of the Sufi masters shows that outside the courts they were commonly perceived as 'rude, bellicose, vain, and their military calling undoubtedly led to the unjust killing of innocent people.' Even though they were not a homogenous group, according to Kumar they appeared as such to the broader populace, for whom they were 'powerful, rich, and very different.'⁴² However, the influx of immig-

⁴¹ On the emergence of the Delhi Sultanate, see Kumar 2007. On the history of the Sultanate period, see Wink 1997 and 2003.

⁴² Kumar 2007: 201.

rants to the Sultanate gradually turned Delhi into a cosmopolitan city with a broad ethnic basis.

Although the ruling elites spoke Turkish as their mother tongue and strove to preserve their identity by cultivating this language, it never emerged as a language of literary culture. Arabic dominated religious and scientific writing, but it was Persian, the *lingua franca* of the eastern Islamic world, that became the language of choice in the field of literature. Ghaznavid Lahore had already seen the beginning of Persian Sufi writing in the Subcontinent when ‘Alī Hujvīrī (d. c. 1072) had written his manual *Kashf al-mahjūb* (Revelation of the Veiled), while the court poets Abū’l-Faraj al-Rūnī (d. c. 1102) and Mas‘ūd Sa‘d Salmān (d. 1121) had laid the foundations of Persian poetry written in India.⁴³

In Delhi, the sultan assumed an active role as a patron of flourishing historical writing and poetry in Persian. Authors like Amīr Khusrau (d. 1325) and Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī (d. 1337) have acquired a prominent place in the classical canon of Persian literature. The former was also intimately acquainted with music and significantly contributed to its development. Typical to the contemporary urban elite, both Khusrau and Ḥasan were also Sufi disciples.

Religious environment

Initially, the relationships between the sultans and the religious scholars, the ‘*ulamā*’ (sing. ‘*ālim*’), were tenuous. However, Kumar has pointed out that Iltutmish (r. 1211–1236) took the strategic decision to build closer ties with them. In conditions where the Turkish ruling class kept itself aloof from the wider populace and where the sultan was obliged to seek alliances with different power holders in order to cement his position in the still volatile circumstances, the patronage of ‘*ulamā*’ proved essential. They had close contacts with the local populace as teachers and adjudicators, and they were part of the lives of local people through the administration of life-cycle rituals. For this reason, the sultan made an attempt to integrate them into his administrative apparatus and, in the process, acquire their approval of his policies. This he achieved by granting them stipends and also by appointing them to the posts of *qāzī* and *shaiḫ al-islām*. While the former acted as a judge in a designated geographical area, the latter’s task was ‘to guide the conduct of Muslims in his area of jurisdiction, interact with the pious and most crucially, scrutinize their texts and teachings.’⁴⁴ Iltutmish was markedly successful in this project, and his alliance with the ‘*ulamā*’ significantly furthered the perception of the Delhi Sultanate as a haven of Islam.

In discussing the religious environment in the Delhi Sultanate during the early thirteenth century, Kumar has underlined the variety of different approaches to Islam. Not only were sharia-oriented Sunni scholars, Sufis and the Shiite well represented, but the piety was furthermore significantly individualistic in the sense that ‘Muslims could in-

⁴³ On Mas‘ūd Sa‘d Salmān, see Sharma 2000.

⁴⁴ Kumar 2007: 230–231.

dulge in considerable “borrowing” from the separate Islamic streams of belief without any sense of contradiction.’⁴⁵ From the point of view of this study, it is significant that the influence of religious specialists professing a Sufi affiliation was increasingly felt in the society and the roles of an *‘ālim* and Sufi often overlapped.

A major development that rendered Sufism ‘mainstream’ Islam coincided with the establishment of Muslim political power in India and the emergence of the Indo-Persian culture. This was the organization of Sufism into ‘brotherhoods’ or ‘orders’ (*ṭarīqat*), which began to emerge in the twelfth century. Although each brotherhood is named after a founding saint or the place of origin, their actual shape and codification was usually the result of the efforts of the first few generations of disciples. The word *ṭarīqat* literally means a path and it denotes both a path to the internal realities or union with God and a certain practical method comprising a variable set of practices, which were differently emphasized in various brotherhoods. As a brotherhood, *ṭarīqat* was also a means to transmit the practical and theoretical teachings from a master (*shaiḫh*, *pīr*) and guide (*murshid*) to a disciple (*murīd*), who would become initiated into a brotherhood through an oath of allegiance (*bai‘at*). The *bai‘at* linked a disciple to the chain (*silsilah*) of masters and disciples that was construed so as to continue to the Prophet. Some of the disciples would be made deputies (*khālīfah*) of their masters, and they could initiate their own disciples.

Although the commitment of disciples would vary greatly, the new organization was clearly more structured than the older, more informal teaching tradition. However, notwithstanding the devotion expected from a Sufi disciple, the *khālīfahs* were fairly free to shape the tradition they would pass on to their own disciples. The variegation inside one brotherhood was further increased by the fact that they seldom had a single head. Instead, they have kept branching into various sub-*silsilahs* whose leaders guide their own disciples but rarely have much influence outside the circle of their followers. If a sub-branch of a brotherhood becomes particularly influential, it may become named after its eponymous founder with whom his followers want to identify. Thus, the Chishti Nizami Niyazi *silsilah* refers to the branch of the Chishti brotherhood transmitted through Nizām al-Dīn Auliya’ and Shāh Niyāz Aḥmad Barelvī. The contemporary significance of a Sufi master is decided by his own activities, whereas his posthumous fame largely depends on the ability of his disciples to immortalize their master’s fame for posterity.

Together with the organizational developments, the brotherhoods acquired a clearly demarcated geographical locus. Not only did they spread to certain areas – Chishtiyya to South Asia, Mevleviyya to Turkey and the Levant and so on – but they also built physical structures to serve as the foci of the brotherhoods’ activities. The masters built *khānqāhs*, where the communal activities would take place. In practice, a *khānqāh* could comprise a room in the house of the Sufi master or an elaborate complex of buildings

⁴⁵ Kumar 2007: 203.

that housed accommodation for disciples, a mosque, a madrasa and a soup kitchen (*langar*). When a Sufi master died, he was often buried in the precincts of his *khānqāh* and his tomb became an important site of pilgrimage for his followers and often to a wider populace as well. The Sufi master himself would become perceived as a friend of God or a saint (*valī*), and the miraculous powers he was thought to have possessed during his life would continue to work through his tomb. The pre-modern Sufi masters often enjoyed the patronage of local rulers, who sought their blessings for their rule. With the same purpose in mind, they frequently undertook building elaborate mausolea on their tombs. Although the increasing emphasis on tombs has been perceived by earlier scholars like Arberry, Nicholson and Trimmingham as a sign of a transition from a vital teaching tradition to tomb-cults, it is worth noting that both traditions have continued to co-exist to the present.

These same scholars have also tended to contrast the organized brotherhoods with the romanticized idea of spontaneous mysticism of the earlier period. However, the fact remains that it was this very structure that made Sufism a major social, cultural and religious force in Muslim societies during the period extending from the founding of the brotherhoods in the twelfth century until their authority was vehemently challenged by modernists and religious reformists in the nineteenth century. A large part of Sufi literature has been written and a significant number of cultural expressions generated in the framework of Sufi brotherhoods. Tellingly, practically all the characters discussed in this study belong to one or another brotherhood.

Crucial to the increased influence of the brotherhoods was also the theological synthesis that culminated in the works of Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) and that sought to substantiate the Sufis' claims to represent normative Islam. Al-Ghazālī was a Shafi'i jurist and an Ash'arite theologian who forsook his teaching post in Jāmi'ah Nizāmiyyah of Badgad, the most important contemporary institute of religious learning, and turned to Sufism towards the end of his life. He wrote his major work, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* ('The Revivification of Religious Sciences'), during the last decade of his life. In his magnum opus, he utilizes legal, theological and philosophical arguments to demonstrate how the beliefs and practices of the Sufis are in accordance with the Koran and the hadiths and, thus, represent the normative Islam. Similar arguments had already been voiced in the first extant manual of Sufism, Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj's (d. 988) *Kitāb al-lum'ah fī'l-taṣawwuf* ('Book of Splendours Concerning Sufism'), but al-Ghazālī's systematic approach and expert argumentation made his work especially persuasive. The practical result of the amalgamation of scriptural religious learning and the Sufis' emphasis on internalized religion was the consolidation of Sufism as a part of the Islamic mainstream.

This, of course, did not mean that Sufis were a unanimous lot. Far from it, Sufi brotherhoods and individual masters displayed a stunning variety of approaches to religion, ranging from strict legal emphasis to experiencing ecstatic states. In addition to the

organized brotherhoods that generally kept within the confines of social propriety, anti-nomian Sufis like *qalandars* and *haidarīs* intentionally challenged these confines by, for instance, showing disregard to the basic religious obligations, roving around naked and consuming drugs and alcohol.

Sufi brotherhoods in Sultanate India

Three brotherhoods, Suhrawadiyya, Firdausiyya and Chishtiyya arrived in India in the wake of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. The founder figures of the Suhrawardiyya were Abū Najīb al-Suhrawardī (d. 1168) and his nephew Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafs ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234). They were based in Baghdad, where they had close connections with the Abbasid caliph. Each wrote a widely read manual of the Sufi code of conduct entitled *Ādāb al-murīdīn* (‘Code of Conduct for Sufi Disciples’) and *‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif* (‘Gifts of knowledge’), respectively. Shihāb al-Dīn sent one of his *khalīfahs*, Bahā’ al-Dīn Zakariyyā (d. 1267) to India, where he settled in Multan in Punjab. Another *khalīfah*, Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī (d. 1291) established himself in Uch not far from Multan.

The second brotherhood to establish itself in India during the period was the Firdausiyya that traced its chain of masters and disciples to a prominent disciple of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1221), Saif al-Dīn Bākhārzi (d. 1260). The centre of the brotherhood was established in Bihar, where Sharaf al-Dīn Manerī (d. 1381) led a flourishing Sufi community.

The third important brotherhood was Chishtiyya that was named after the town of Chisht situated close to Herat. Chisht served as the centre of the brotherhood’s activities before Khvājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn (d. 1235) brought it to India after long wanderings in the Middle East and Central Asia. While he settled in Ajmer in present-day Rajasthan, his leading *khalīfah* Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī (d. 1236), who famously died during *samā‘*, lived in Delhi. Quṭb al-Dīn’s *khalīfah* Bābā Farīd al-Dīn Ganjshakkar (d. 1265) chose a more remote location in Ajodhan (present-day Pakpattan), east of Multan. His two illustrious disciples gave names to the main branches of the Chishti order. Chishtiyya Sabiriyya derives its name from the elusive ‘Alī Aḥmad Ṣābir ‘Alā’ al-Dīn (d. 1291) whose tomb is situated in the village of Kaliyar, near present-day Roorkee in Uttarakhand.

Chishtiyya Nizamiyya is named after Niẓām al-Dīn Auliya. He was born in Badayun, a north Indian city that had gained repute as a centre of learning during the early thirteenth century. His father died when he was a child, and he subsequently moved with his mother to Delhi in order to acquire further religious learning. Although he initially aspired for a career of a *qāẓī*, he was attracted by the fame of Bābā Farīd, whose disciple he eventually became. After the death of his Sufi guide, Niẓām al-Dīn acted as the virtual head of the Chishti order in Delhi.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ For a detailed account of his life, see, e.g. Nizami 1991.

Nizām al-Dīn was not a founding figure of the order, nor a lone representative of Sufism in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century India. According to S.A.A. Rizvi, the *khānqāhs* in the Delhi Sultanate numbered two thousand.⁴⁷ However, he stands out from his predecessors and contemporaries because he superbly fulfilled the expectations of a Sultanate Sufi master and because he is the first Indian Sufi master whose life has been recorded in written texts.

Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence have discussed the attributes a medieval Sufi sheikh needed in order to become successful not only during his life, but also after passing away. According to them, Nizām al-Dīn had them all and he managed to fulfil the often contradictory expectations of his role. He combined personal charisma with the authority stemming from formal religious learning. He followed a strict religious regime of praying, fasting and keeping vigil, but he also had a keen aesthetic sensitivity that made him susceptible to mystical states induced by poetry and music during *samāʿ*. He acknowledged the existence of miracles performed by Sufis, but shunned them himself.⁴⁸ He successfully managed to keep aloof from the affairs of the world and those who governed them while living in Ghiyaspur, in the vicinity of the Kilokhri fort established by the sultan Kaiqubād (r. 1287–1290). Whenever the reigning sultan tried to meet him, he would absent himself, but he nevertheless listed many courtiers as his disciples.⁴⁹

In addition to embodying the ideal of a Sufi master, Nizām al-Dīn established a Sufi tradition that would be counted among the most influential in South Asia. He had a number of able *khalīfahs* who spread his teachings throughout the Subcontinent during the following two generations. His disciple Burhān al-Dīn *Gharīb* (d. 1337) was forced to leave Delhi when Muḥammad ibn Tughluq transferred his capital and much of the political and cultural elite to Daulatabad in the Deccan in 1328. Another disciple, *Akhī Sirāj al-Dīn* (d. 1357) took the brotherhood to Bengal. From among the followers of Nizām al-Dīn's *khalīfah* Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd *Cirāgh-i Dihlī* (who stayed in Delhi until his death in 1356), Sayyid Muḥammad Gesūdarāz (d. 1422) migrated south to Gulbarga, where he was received by the Bahmani sultan Fīroz Shāh (r. 1397–1422) in 1400. He was the first Chishtī master to establish close relationships with royalty and enjoy their lavish patronage. Had Nizām al-Dīn been a recluse, his legacy would likely have remained obscure.

After his death, Nizām al-Dīn was entombed in the courtyard of his *jamāʿatkhānah*,⁵⁰ and his shrine became an important site of pilgrimage in the city, which has served as a capital of various polities since the thirteenth century with only minor intervals.

⁴⁷ Rizvi 1998: 47.

⁴⁸ Subsequently, both literary and oral traditions would embellish Nizām al-Dīn's career with miraculous feats.

⁴⁹ Ernst and Lawrence 2002: 73–77.

⁵⁰ The early Chishtīs referred to their places of gathering as *jamāʿatkhānahs* ('community houses'). The word *khānqāh* has subsequently replaced this term.

Sultanate Chishti literature

As significant as the paradigmatic life and the physical site of pilgrimage were for the posthumous fame of a medieval Sufi master, he would have been forgotten without a literary tradition. Before Nizām al-Dīn, the literary output of Indian Sufis had been scarce. The only extant works written before Nizām al-Dīn are the treatises of Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nagaurī (d. 1274), a *khalīfah* of Mu‘īn al-Dīn and poems and aphorisms of Jamāl al-Dīn Hānsavī (d. 1261), a *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd.⁵¹ Nizām al-Dīn himself wrote no books, but his disciples recorded his life and teachings and preserved an image of him as an ideal Sufi guide for posterity.

The earliest work on Nizām al-Dīn is a collection of his discourses (*malḥūzāt*) recorded by a disciple and court poet, Amīr Ḥasan Sijzi, who entitled his work *Favā'id al-fu'ād* ('Benefits for the Heart'). Sayings and teachings of Sufi masters had been preserved as a part of Arabic and Persian Sufi manuals and saintly biographies since the tenth century; the Indian *malḥūzāt* genre is a novel development in the sense that it includes only the discourses between the Sufi guide and his disciples without an attempt to contextualize them in the broader framework of the former's life or teachings. As a consequence, the *malḥūzāt* may cover a wide variety of topics that appear in no logical order. Although *malḥūzāt* are literary texts, at their best they preserve conversational spontaneity and record the topics of discussion without reconciling the contradictory views presented by a Sufi master at different times.

Amina Steinfels has emphasized the difference between *malḥūzāt* and the collections of formal speeches delivered by a Sufi master, such as *Fīhi mā fīh* ('There is What There Is') recording the speeches of Rūmī, because the former offers glimpses to the actual teaching situations. In her analysis of four *malḥūzāt* of the Suhrawardi master Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥusain Bukhārī, known as Maḥdūm-i Jahāniyān Jahāngasht (d. 1384), she has distinguished four different types of voices present in the works. There is the incidental voice, which consists of the small talk with guests or disciples and has no direct didactic purpose. Second is the master's autobiographical voice, while the third, hagiographical voice describes the Sufi masters of the past. Fourthly, she has named Jalāl al-Dīn's explication of scriptures as the scholarly voice. Even if such disparate materials may seem incoherent, the very lack of the author's editorial input is motivated by an attempt to 'reproduce the experience of being in the presence of the shaykh.'⁵²

As Sunil Kumar points out, Amīr Ḥasan was not the inventor of the *malḥūzāt* genre. Collections of the sayings of Bābā Farīd were already circulating in the time of the writing, although they were considered spurious by Nizām al-Dīn.⁵³ It is the author's ability

⁵¹ Lawrence 1978: 36–39.

⁵² Seinfels 2004: 62–67.

⁵³ Kumar 2007: 344. At present, a collection of Bābā Farīd's *malḥūzāt*, supposedly recorded by Nizām al-Dīn, is known as *Rāḥat al-qulūb* ('Repose of Hearts'). For an Urdu translation of this work, see Nizām al-Dīn, *Rāḥat al-qulūb: Ḥaẓrat Bābā Farīd Ganjshakkar kā roznāmchāh*. The text is also included in the collec-

to reproduce the very experience of being in the presence of the sheikh that has made *Favā'id al-fu'ād* the foundational work of the genre. Although he was a skilled poet, Amīr Ḥasan uses simple and straightforward Persian and recreates the conversational atmosphere, where the comments of Niẓām al-Dīn alternate with the questions of his disciples. Instead of delivering lengthy soliloquies, Niẓām al-Dīn engages in discussion with those present. Amīr Ḥasan allows all four voices distinguished by Steinfels to intermingle, and the quotations of poetry mix seamlessly with the prose. The text is also notable for the fact that Amīr Ḥasan reports Niẓām al-Dīn to have given him feedback on his writing.

Instead of inventing it, Amīr Ḥasan transformed the *malḥūzāt* into an established genre of Sufi writing on par with Sufi manuals (*'ishārāt*) and saintly biographies (*tazkirāt*). Following the instant popularity of the work, collections of what Ernst calls 'inauthentic' and Nizami 'apocryphal' *malḥūzāt* were written soon after.⁵⁴ *Malḥūzāt* has remained one of the most important genres of South Asian Sufi literature until the present, and having his discussions recorded has become part of the legacy of any established Sufi.⁵⁵ *Favā'id al-fu'ād* itself has remained extremely popular, and it is one of the few Sultanate works that are readily available in its original Persian in addition to Urdu and English translations.⁵⁶

Favā'id al-fu'ād includes assemblies (*majlis*) of Niẓām al-Dīn, each of which begins with the date and the formula: 'the pride of kissing the feet was obtained' (*sharaf-i pābos muyassar shud*). The assemblies were recorded at irregular intervals between 1308 and 1322. The task of presenting a comprehensive picture of Niẓām al-Dīn's life was undertaken by Amīr Khvurd Kirmānī about three decades after the master's death. He attempted to collect all the available information into his *tazkirah Siyar al-auliya'* ('Deeds of Saints'), which covers the life and teachings of Niẓām al-Dīn in considerable detail.⁵⁷

tion of Urdu translations of eight early Chishti *malḥūzāt*, entitled *Hasht bihisht* ('Eight Paradises').

⁵⁴ See Ernst 2004: 77–84 and Nizami 1991: 194–195.

⁵⁵ Twentieth-century examples include the *malḥūzāt* of such diverse personalities as Aḥmad Rīzā Khān Barelvi, the founder of the so called Berelwi movement, Ashraf 'Alī Thānavī, a Deobandi 'ālim, and Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi, the founder of Tablighi Jamaat. See Dihlavi, *Malḥūzāt-i A'lā Ḥazrat*; 'Uṣmānī & al., *Malḥūzāt-i Ḥakīm al-Millat I-XXX* and Nu'mānī: *Malḥūzāt-i Ḥazrat Maulānā Muḥammad Ilyās*. The thirty volumes of the second work also include material atypical to the genre; they record Thānavī's advice concerning various matters as well as some of his own writings.

⁵⁶ In this study, I refer to a recent bilingual (Persian-Urdu) edition that includes the variant readings. The text was edited and translated by Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami and published in 2007. The Persian text was published as a lithograph by a major commercial publisher Munshi Naval Kishore in 1894. The work was translated into Urdu during the twentieth century by Shams Barelwi, and it is included in *Hasht bihisht*. An English translation by Bruce B. Lawrence appeared in 1992, entitled *Morals for the Heart*. However, the translator chose to omit some passages dealing with the technicalities of *fiqh* and Sufi practice. A complete English translation by Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi was published in 1996.

⁵⁷ The Persian text used in this study was lithographed in 1885. According to Sunil Kumar, the edition published in Lahore in 1978 reproduces the text of this edition. An Urdu translation was recently published together with a facsimile of a Persian manuscript by Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami. The text was trans-

Amīr Khvurd's project benefited from the fact that many of Nizām al-Dīn's disciples were still alive and could impart their reminiscences to him.

While these two works are the main sources of this chapter, I shall also refer to the discourses of Nizām al-Dīn's *khaliḥah*, Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd and Naṣīr al-Dīn's *khaliḥah* Gesūdarāz. The former work, *Khair al-majālis* ('The Best of Assemblies'),⁵⁸ was recorded by Ḥamīd Qalandar in the mid-fourteenth century and the latter, *Javāmi' al-kalim* ('Comprehensive Utterances'),⁵⁹ by Gesūdarāz's son, Muḥammad Akbar Ḥusainī, over a period of nine months in 1400. *Siyar-i muḥammadi* ('Muhammadan Deeds'),⁶⁰ the *tazkirah* of Gesūdarāz was authored by his disciple Muḥammad 'Alī Sāmānī. In addition to these works, I shall refer to *Afzal al-favā'id* ('The Most Excellent of Benefits'), a collection of discourses of Nizām al-Dīn that was allegedly recorded by Amīr Khusrāu.⁶¹ Scholars commonly consider the work as inauthentic. However, such texts deserve consideration, because they date back to the fourteenth century and offer important information on contemporary popular perceptions, as Bruce B. Lawrence has argued.⁶²

The texts written by the Sultanate Chishtis include abundant references to *samā'*. Even when they are scattered throughout the works, they offer a coherent picture of the attitudes of the early Chishtis towards *samā'* and, more importantly, contain invaluable information on its actual practice. *Samā'* is a common topic in all the *malḥūzāt*, where it crops up at irregular intervals. A more systematic approach is adopted by Amīr Khvurd in *Siyar al-auliya'*, where most of the material found in *Favā'id al-fu'ād* is collated with the information collected from Nizām al-Dīn's surviving disciples into a chapter on *samā'*.⁶³ However, much more lies scattered throughout the text. Although the chapter on *samā'* in *Siyar al-auliya'* attempts to exhaust the topic when it comes to Nizām al-Dīn, references to the practice are found whenever a *samā'*-loving predecessor or successor of his is discussed. Some passages in *Siyar al-auliya'* cover theoretical and legal issues, but the main bulk concentrates on describing actual *samā'* assemblies. *Siyar-i muḥammadi* is more taciturn when it comes to *samā'*, but includes a few interesting references to Gesūdarāz's practice in the chapter discussing his customs (*ravish*).

The material that lies scattered throughout Nizām al-Dīn's discourses and biography was systematized by the second generation of his followers. The systematization went

lated into Urdu also by the late imam of the mosque of the Nizamuddin shrine, Khwaja Islamuddin Nizami, and the second edition was published in 2002.

⁵⁸ The text was edited and published by K.A. Nizami in 1959.

⁵⁹ The Persian text was published as a lithograph in Hyderabad in 1937. At present, a somewhat imprecise Urdu translation by Mu'in al-din Dardā'i is widely available.

⁶⁰ The Persian text was published with a parallel Urdu translation in Gulbarga in 1984.

⁶¹ *Afzal al-favā'id* was published as a lithograph in 1887. An Urdu translation is included in *Hasht bihisht*.

⁶² See Lawrence 1976.

⁶³ See al-Kirmānī, *Siyar*, 491–534. The significance of this chapter to the contemporary Chishti Nizamis is underlined by the fact that it was published separately in Urdu translation by Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami in 2012, entitled *Ḥazrat Nizām al-Dīn Auliya' kā farmān bābat-i samā' vajd raqṣ (qaul o qavvālī)*.

hand in hand with the integration of the teachings of the early Chishtis with the preceding tradition of Arabic and Persian Sufism. The increased consciousness of the earlier Sufi literature also manifests itself in the discourses of the second-generation disciples. For instance, *Javāmi' al-kalim* records an anecdote of a disciple of Naṣīr al-Dīn who is enraptured by a Hindi poem to such an extent that he does not notice a nail forcing its way into his foot while he is dancing. Unfortunately, he was alone in his room and was later found lying dead in a pool of blood. This anecdote is immediately followed by an anecdote on Abū'l-Ḥasan Nūrī from *Risālah qushairīyyah*. He died in a similar manner, although his death was caused by the sharp stubble of a reed bed.⁶⁴

In addition to linking contemporary, orally transmitted anecdotes with the older literary tradition, the systematization also meant increased emphasis on theoretical and legal issues. This took the shape of extensive analyses of *samā'* that amalgamated Niẓām al-Dīn's sayings with those found in earlier Sufi literature. Gesūdarāz, who related the anecdote above, was a prolific author who produced a Persian translation of Abū Najīb Suhrawardī's *Ādāb al-murīdīn*, which includes a discussion on *samā'* in one of its chapters.⁶⁵ Besides interlacing the translation with his own comments, Gesūdarāz also wrote a supplement to the work, known as *Khātimah* ('Epilogue'). The focus of this text is on Indian material.⁶⁶ Another second-generation disciple, Rukn al-Dīn Kāshānī (d. after 1337), a *khalīfah* of Burhān al-Dīn Ḡharīb, includes a chapter on *samā'* in *Shamā'il al-atqiyā'* ('Virtues of the Devout'). This extensive work covers a wide range of topics from metaphysics to Sufi practice discussed in respective chapters that revolve around quotations derived from the Koran, hadith and the works of religious scholars and Sufis.⁶⁷ Unlike the earlier works, the systematic expositions contain very little information about the actual practice of *samā'*. They follow the conventions of the earlier works of the *'ishārāt* genre, discussing the permissibility of *samā'* from a legal point of view, analysing the theory of mystical experiences, and prescribing the proper etiquette for the participants. However, they do not describe *samā'* assemblies and the actual conduct of the participants. For this reason, this study focuses essentially on the earlier works that combine fragmentary theoretical musings with remembrances of *samā'* assemblies.

⁶⁴ Ḥusainī, *Javāmi'*, 321.

⁶⁵ See Gesūdarāz, *Tarjumah*, 254–282.

⁶⁶ On *samā'* in *Khātimah*, see Gesūdarāz, *Khātimah*, 120–139.

⁶⁷ Rukn al-Dīn intertwines the quotations from Niẓām al-Dīn and Burhān al-Dīn with citations from Arabic and Persian works, such as the translations of *Risālah qushairīyyah* and *'Awārif al-ma'ārif* (referred to as *Tarjumah qushairī* and *Tarjumah 'avārif*, respectively), *Qūt al-qulūb* by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, and the works of al-Ḡhazālī. See Kāshānī, *Shamā'il*, 341–371. Similar systematization took place in the works of Mas'ūd Bakk and Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī during the latter half of the fourteenth century. See Ernst & Lawrence 2002: 40–43.

1.2 *Samā'* in Nizām al-Dīn's devotional regime

When Nizām al-Dīn assumed the lead of the Chishti order after the death of Bābā Farīd, he inherited an established practice of *samā'*. *Samā'* had already been firmly consolidated into the practice of Sufism in Khurasan when the order was brought from there to India by Khvājah Mu'īn al-Dīn. Several Sufi authors like al-Qushairī (d. 1015) and Hujvīrī had expressed a cautious acceptance of the practice, while others like Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī and Ahmad al-Ghazālī (d. 1126) had advocated it in an eloquently articulated manner. However, they had all sought to limit the participation to advanced practitioners. In contrast, another Sufi master from Khurasan, Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī'l-Khair (d. 1049) was more liberal in his approach and also allowed novices to attend. He had a significant role in institutionalizing the *khānqāh* as the centre of Sufism and thus in paving the way for the organized Sufi brotherhoods. The sheikh from Mayhana was not a theorist to express his thoughts in copious writings. Instead, the *tazkirahs* written after his death portray him as a teacher whose main focus was in guiding disciples. In the case of poetry and music, his enthusiasm sprang from the potential of these arts to assist his disciples in their Sufi practice.⁶⁸ This enthusiasm was shared by the early Indian Chishti masters, who are remembered as avid practitioners of *samā'*. However, Nizām al-Dīn is the first Chishti whose mystical and aesthetic sensitivities in the matter are recorded in great detail.

Poetry and music play a conspicuous role in the texts studied for this chapter. In *Favā'id al-fu'ād*, poetic verses recur throughout the discussions between Nizām al-Dīn and his disciples. The master resorts to expressing himself in verse when sentences in prose fail to communicate his thoughts. When Amīr Ḥasan committed Nizām al-Dīn's discourses into writing, he capitalized on this in order to highlight the emotional charge of Nizām al-Dīn's assemblies. On several occasions, the assembly ends with Nizām al-Dīn, tears in his eyes, finishing a story with a verse that crystallizes its moral or emotive import.⁶⁹ The use of poetry is even more profuse in *Siyar al-auliyā'*. Amīr Khvurd laces his prose with verses by favourite poets of the period⁷⁰ and anonymous authors, as well as his own verses. The tendency to extend the reach of prose by poetry is especially evident in the author's description of his *bai'at* from the hand of Nizām al-Dīn. When the narration reaches an emotional climax and the reader can feel the voice of moved Amīr Khvurd choking, a verse follows almost every phrase written in prose.⁷¹ When Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī (d. 1347), a *khalīfah* of Nizām al-Dīn, undertook the defence of

⁶⁸ On Abū Sa'īd, see Graham 1999.

⁶⁹ See, e.g. Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 184, 392, 434.

⁷⁰ The most frequently cited poet is Sa'īdī, closely followed by Sanā'ī and Amīr Khusrāu. Verses by Amīr Ḥasan, Nizāmī, Khāqānī and 'Attār occur occasionally.

⁷¹ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 357–360.

samāʿ using legal terminology, his central justification for listening to poetry was its ability to reach to the divine reality and reveal from it hidden meanings.⁷²

A further increase in the effect of poetic verses when sung in a beautiful voice, and not merely read aloud, is acknowledged by both Niẓām al-Dīn and Zarrādī.⁷³ When the texts praise the effect of sung verses, they save no words. *Samāʿ* can bestow a blissful union with the beloved to the listeners who die during a musical assembly, as happened to Quṭb al-Dīn.⁷⁴ However, *samāʿ* can also revive the dead. In explaining how the Suhrawardi sheikh Rukn al-Dīn, who led the funerary prayers of Niẓām al-Dīn, forbade organizing a three-day *samāʿ* assembly after the latter's death, Gesūdarāz attributes this to his desire to avoid the disorder that would ensue when the master would rise from his grave and start dancing.⁷⁵ In an anecdote related by Niẓām al-Dīn in *Siyar al-auliyaʿ*, a deceased Sufi disciple visited the Suhrawardi sheikh Ziyāʿ al-Dīn Rūmī in a dream vision. Despite the high rank he had attained in Paradise, he appeared forlorn. As for the reason, he explained that his new abode was devoid of pleasure and taste (*lazzat-e o zauq-e*) equalling those derived from *samāʿ*.⁷⁶

The anecdote, no doubt, seeks to establish *samāʿ* as a potent religious practice, but it also delicately expresses the Chishtis' understanding of their superiority over the Suhrawardis. While the Suhrawardi path may lead to Paradise, the pleasure that surpasses even the paradisiacal delights can be derived from the hallmark Chishti practice. Simon Digby has described the relationship between the two orders in the Delhi Sultanate as amicable rivalry.⁷⁷ This attitude manifests in early Chishti sources as the absence of outright criticism of the Suhrawardis, yet they often imply that their lavish lifestyle and their inadequacy in *samāʿ* left them wanting in their spiritual achievement.⁷⁸ In addition to the above anecdote, Niẓām al-Dīn states in *Favā'id al-fu'ād*, on the authority of Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī's contemporary, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā that the former was endowed with every conceivable blessing except for a taste for *samāʿ*.⁷⁹ Further evidence of this is found in an anecdote describing Shihāb al-Dīn's lack of interest in a musical

⁷² Zarrādī, *Risālah*, 20–22.

⁷³ Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 350–352; Zarrādī, *Risālah*, 15–19.

⁷⁴ Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 628–630; Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 55–56.

⁷⁵ Ḥusainī, *Javāmiʿ*, 132.

⁷⁶ Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 500.

⁷⁷ Digby 2003: 243.

⁷⁸ See Lawrence 1976: 129. The Chishtis' portrayal of the Suhrawardis as inimical or indifferent to *samāʿ* and music notwithstanding, later musicological treatises attribute musical inventions to Bahāʿ al-Dīn Zakariyyā. For instance, Navāb Saif *Khān* Faqīr Allāh's treatise completed in 1666, which includes a Persian translation of the vernacular *Man kutuhal* and his own work *Risālah-yi rāgdarpan*, locates Bahāʿ al-Dīn in the same category of saintly musical innovators as Amīr *Khvurd*. Faqīr Allāh ascribes the invention of *rāg multānī dhanashrī* and the song form *chand* to him. See Faqīrullāh, *Tarjuma-i-Manakutuhala o Risala-i-Ragadarpana*, 65–67, 117.

⁷⁹ In the Sufi parlance, the word taste (*zauq*) denotes sensitivity for spiritual experience as well as the experience itself. These two meanings intertwine in the expression *zauq-i samāʿ* ('taste for/of *samāʿ*') that can either denote inclination for the practice or the experience derived from it.

assembly he organized for his guest Auḥād al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. 1237). Nizām al-Dīn praises the Suhrawardi master for his absorption in the remembrance of God, but in light of Kubrā's statement quoted on another occasion, mild criticism is hidden in the praise.⁸⁰ Nizām al-Dīn's overall consideration for the Suhrawardis probably derives from the fact that *Awārif al-ma'ārif* by Shihāb al-Dīn was used by Bābā Farīd in his teaching. Gesūdarāz, on the other hand, was not as tactful: he bluntly states that the Suhrawardis are gnostics (*'ārif*) whereas the Chishtis are lovers (*'āshiq*). The position of the former is, no doubt, commendable, but being a lover is 'another world' (*jahān-e dīgar ast*).⁸¹

In addition to making *samā'* an important identity marker of the Sultanate Chishtis, the comments associating the practice with passionate love (*'ishq*) point to the Chishtis' conceptual understanding of its role in the broader framework of their devotional regime. This understanding emerges clearly in *Siyar al-auliya'*. After recording the lives of Nizām al-Dīn and his predecessors and successors in five lengthy chapters, Amīr Khvurd initiates a thematic discussion on different aspects of Sufi teachings and practices in five further chapters. The sixth chapter of *Siyar al-auliya'* explores Nizām al-Dīn's approach to the relationship between a Sufi guide and his disciples, whereas the seventh chapter covers topics like ritual purity, prayers (*du'ā*) for various situations, as well as religious practices associated with different times and occasions (*vazīfah*). The chapter also includes advice on dietary and sartorial etiquette, but the focus is on the practice of *zīkr*, the remembrance of God, which in the context of Sufi practice denotes repeating different religious formulae either silently or aloud, in private or collectively. The general emphasis of the seventh chapter is on strengthening one's faith and cleaning one's inner being through the practices that are characterized by numerical repetition and that are to be undertaken at fixed times in order to achieve the desired purpose. In other words, they constitute a gradual and toilsome process that requires personal commitment and considerable effort.

The discourse changes in the eighth chapter that discusses love (*muḥabbat*), desire (*shauq*), passionate love (*'ishq*) and seeing God (*ru'yat-i bārī ta'ālā*). The emphasis shifts from systematic practice towards the Sufis' overall aim and the exploration of the relationship between a human being and God. Expository prose gives way to poetic, metaphorical language. For instance, Amīr Khvurd records Nizām al-Dīn to have explained the meaning of *'ishq* by comparing it with a creeper (*'ashiqah*) that drains a tree from life by preventing it from getting water. Similarly, love empties the lover from his individual ego.⁸² What is significant is that the ninth chapter on *samā'* follows this exploration. Although it briefly begins with a prosaic discussion on the permissibility and etiquette of the practice, it soon moves to discussing poetic metaphors and Nizām al-Dīn's engagement with *samā'*. The language used in the ninth chapter echoes the discourse of love

⁸⁰ Sijzi, *Favā'id*, 248–250. The passage is repeated in Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 525.

⁸¹ Ḥusainī, *Javāmi'*, 31.

⁸² Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 466.

found in the previous chapter. The systematic presentation of Niẓām al-Dīn's life and teachings ends with the chapter on *samā'*, and the tenth chapter serves as an appendix that includes a miscellanea of disconnected topics. The association of *samā'* with passionate love and distinguishing it from other, more systematic practices would be articulated even more clearly during the late Mughal period.

1.3 Inquest in the sultan's court

Niẓām al-Dīn's enthusiasm for *samā'* did not pass without opposition. The controversy raging around the practice reached its apogee around 1320, during the reign of Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Tughlaq (r. 1320–1325), and this became one of the key historical moments repeatedly evoked by the later generations of Chishti Nizamīs. At that time, a certain Ḥusām al-Dīn, who, according to Amīr Khvurd, had enjoyed Niẓām al-Dīn's care and learned to walk in his house, had been allured by fame. This made him envious of Niẓām al-Dīn's standing among the residents of Delhi. He launched a virulent attack against the Sufi master using the fatwas previously written against Qazī Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nagaurī's⁸³ (d. 1244) practice of *samā'*. Ḥusām al-Dīn's campaign was successful and it culminated in Niẓām al-Dīn being summoned to defend his views at the sultan's court. During the inquest (*maḥẓar*), Niẓām al-Dīn retorted Ḥusām al-Dīn for speaking about something he was unable to understand. When Niẓām al-Dīn's adherence to the Hanafite school of law was questioned, he brushed such allegations aside, but did not deny the negative stance of its founder, Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 765), to music. The case was solved only when the grandson of Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā, Maulānā 'Ilm al-Dīn appeared and explained that *samā'* was a common practice among the Sufis of Turkey, Syria and Baghdad. When the case against Niẓām al-Dīn was eventually dropped, he declined the sultan's offer to pass a conclusive verdict in the matter.⁸⁴

Niẓām al-Dīn's defence of *samā'* is not a display of erudite scholarship. He had specifically declined the help of disciples who had collected legal evidence in favour of the practice and went to the sultan's court alone. During the inquest, he refused to argue with Ḥusām al-Dīn on the grounds of his ignorance of *samā'* and the breach of etiquette he had committed in taking a stand against a former well-wisher. When questioned, he agreed that Abū Ḥanīfah, whom he claimed to follow, indeed, disapproved of music and, finally, the issue was solved through an intervention of a Suhrawardi sheikh. It is possible that the account of *Siyar al-auliya'* is oversimplified. Instead of Abū Ḥanīfah's views, Niẓām al-Dīn appears to have adopted the more lenient stance to music propounded by the founder of the Shafite legal school, al-Shāfi'ī (d. 820). The follow-up of the anecdote in *Siyar al-auliya'* corroborates this view. The text quotes Ziyā' al-Dīn Baranī's (d. after

⁸³ This Suhrawardi Sufi is not to be confused with the *khalīfah* of Khvājah Mu'īn al-Dīn bearing the same name.

⁸⁴ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 526–530.

1354) *Hasratnāmah* and explains how Niẓām al-Dīn, after his return from the court, complained to Amīr Khusrau and Muḥyī al-Dīn Kāshānī that the scholars of the city do not listen to sound hadiths, if they are transmitted by al-Shāfi‘ī but not by Abū Ḥanīfah.⁸⁵ Niẓām al-Dīn also refers to differing opinions of the two scholars in the matter of music in *Favā'id al-fu'ād*.⁸⁶

More revealing than the scholarly argumentation is the urgency Niẓām al-Dīn felt in defending *samā'*. He had avoided meeting the sultans for his entire Sufi career that had spanned almost sixty years by 1320. The attendance in the court during the *samā'* controversy was the very first time he conceded to face the ruling monarch. K.A. Nizami is quick to point out that Niẓām al-Dīn was not attending the royal court but the court of sharia.⁸⁷ The fact remains, however, that Niẓām al-Dīn was compromising one of his most cherished principles in order to defend his views. Moreover, in order to justify his practice, he was ready to blur the conventional boundaries between the legal schools.⁸⁸ In the eyes of Amīr Khvurd, the chain of events reached its culmination when Muḥammad ibn Tughlaq moved his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. This, according to him, was the corollary of Niẓām al-Dīn's suspicion over the future well-being of a city inhabited by such stubborn *'ulamā'*.⁸⁹ On a more tangible level, the controversy spurred the Sultanate Chishtis to articulate their legal stance to *samā'*. The first one to participate in this project was Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī.

Zarrādī's legal argumentation and aesthetic sensitivity

Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī is in *Siyar al-aulyā'* described as a Sufi disciple who had a strong affinity with *samā'*.⁹⁰ He was immersed in passionate love, weeped often during *samā'* and was an enthusiastic listener. Before his *bai'at*, he was a learned scholar interested in argumentation. He had little respect for Niẓām al-Dīn, but when Naṣīr al-Dīn took him to meet the master, he was deeply impressed by his ability to explain scriptural subtleties he himself did not understand. Subsequently, he became one of Niẓām al-Dīn's leading *khālīfahs*. After the latter's death, Zarrādī spent peripatetic life, dividing his

⁸⁵ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 531–532. None of the early sources specifies the hadith itself in this context. Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami's modern hagiography, *Niẓāmī bansurī* relates that the hadith in question was the famous account where the Prophet was listening to servant girls who sang and accompanied themselves with framed drums (*daff*). When Umar tried to stop them, the Prophet told him to desist. See Nizami 2009a: 307–308. Reference to the hadith in Zarrādī's *Risālah* indicates its circulation among the early Chishtis. See Zarrādī, *Risālah*, 29.

⁸⁶ Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 904–906.

⁸⁷ Nizami 1991: 119.

⁸⁸ Following the trends of his time, Khwaja Hasan Nizami interprets this as a proof of Niẓām al-Dīn's attainment of the degree of a *mujtahid*, a person who is not bound by the decisions made by earlier jurists belonging to a particular legal school. See Nizami 2009a: 31–312.

⁸⁹ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 532.

⁹⁰ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 270–271.

time between Delhi, Daulatabad, Ajmer and Ajodhan. In 1347, he embarked on a pilgrimage to Mecca, but drowned *en route*.

Amīr Khvurd mentions that Zarrādī participated in collecting evidence for his master in support of *samāʿ* before the inquest.⁹¹ Although Niẓām al-Dīn did not use this material in the court, Zarrādī's work was not wasted and he wrote three treatises on *samāʿ*. One of them, the Arabic *Risālat uṣūl al-samāʿ* seems to have been most important of them and apparently the only one that has survived.⁹²

Zarrādī's *Risalah* is part of an established tradition of legal discussions on the permissibility of *samāʿ*. Sufis had taken up the defence of the practice in works belonging to the *ʿishārāt* genre. The most eloquent defence is probably found in al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*. The opponents of the practice, many of whom were sharia-minded Sufis, criticised such stance in a number of fatwas and legal treatises. Among the leading opponents of the practice was Zarrādī's senior contemporary Ibn Taimiyyah (d. 1328 in Damascus). His *Majmūʿ al-rasāʾil al-kubrā* includes a chapter entitled *Al-samāʿ va'l-raḡṣ*, and it is still widely quoted in contemporary South Asia.

Arthur Gribetz has noted that one of the main characteristics of the discussions on the permissibility of *samāʿ*, and music in general, is the repetitiveness of the arguments.⁹³ He is circumspect in pointing out that the Koran says very little that can be interpreted as a prohibition of music, while the evidence found in the hadiths can be interpreted in both ways. Ultimately, the conclusions of an individual author depend on his overall approach to legal issues. He uses Ibn Taimiyyah and al-Ghazālī as instances of two contrary trends directing the interpretation of the formative scriptures. The former argued that something not explicitly allowed is to be understood as forbidden, whereas the latter maintained that if something is not explicitly forbidden, it is allowed. In the case of *samāʿ*, this basic premise lead to diametrically opposing views.⁹⁴

Lois Ibsen al-Faruqi adopted a more articulate approach in her compelling article on the legal status of music in Muslim law. She states at the outset that since no punishment is prescribed for musical activities in the Koran or the hadiths, it cannot fall into the category of forbidden (*ḥarām*) activities. Instead, the debate on its permissibility has revolved around the context where what she calls sound art (*handasat al-ṣawt*) is practiced. While the recitation of the Koran or singing poetry in religious or festive occasions is hardly ever questioned, music in other contexts has been attacked because of the activities that accompany it.⁹⁵ In the case of the Sufis' practice of *samāʿ*, the criticism has targeted their dance-like movements, rending of clothes and other ecstatic behaviours. In addition, the more overtly questionable practices, like witnessing the manifestations

⁹¹ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 528.

⁹² According to *Siyar al-Auliyāʾ*, the other two were *Ibāḥat-i samāʿ* and *Kashf al-miftāḥ min wujūd al-samāʿ*.

⁹³ See Gribetz 1991: 44.

⁹⁴ See Gribetz 1991.

⁹⁵ See al-Faruqi 1985.

of God in young boys and dancing with them during *samāʿ* (*shāhidbāzī*), have been used to buttress the demand for banning the practice altogether. In the latter case, the accusations of immorality could conveniently be combined with alleged incarnationism (*hulūliyya*), as Lloyd Ridgeon has demonstrated to have happened in the case of Auḥād al-Dīn Kirmānī.⁹⁶

Although the legal treatises written on the permissibility of *samāʿ* and the accompanying activities have probably never managed to convince those who hold opposing views, recapitulating Zarrādī's main arguments here is useful. The work is particularly interesting, because it has visibly been written by a person who is a practitioner of *samāʿ* and his aesthetic sensitivities, as well as the contemporary practices, have affected his writing. Like the inquest at the sultan's court, Zarrādī's *Risalah* has retained its currency. It was published from the Nizām al-Dīn shrine with a Persian translation and a preface detailing the inquest in 1889, at a time when the criticism of *samāʿ* was vehemently voiced by the reformist Islamic movements. To my knowledge, the only scholar to have discussed the text is Bruce Lawrence in his article 'The early Chishtī approach to *samāʿ*' published in 1983. However, his analysis is limited to Zarrādī's understanding of the term *tavājud*, which Lawrence translates as 'empathetic ecstasy'.

In the *Risalah*, Zarrādī adopts an atomistic approach by splitting *samāʿ* into ten basic principles (*uṣūl*, sing *aṣl*). In the course of the work, he proves the juridical acceptability of each of these and concludes that the entire practice is acceptable, *mubāḥ*. In the legal jargon, this means that not engaging in *samāʿ* is not punishable, whereas the opposite will be rewarded by God. Before entering the discussion of the principles, Zarrādī defines his epistemological framework by unabashedly proclaiming that the Sufis are the best among the religious specialists because they are fully immersed in God, and therefore excel the hadith scholars, jurisconsults and those engaged in rational reasoning.⁹⁷

In the first principle, Zarrādī defines *samāʿ* as a combination of beautiful voice (*al-ṣawt al-ḥasan/āwāz-i nekū*) and measured speech (*al-kalām al-mawzūn/kalām-i mauzūn*) and states that listening to neither is disapproved in the sharia. He distinguishes *samāʿ* from *ghinā* ('singing') and establishes a conceptual difference between the Sufi practice, on the one hand, and music that is listened for pleasure in profane contexts, on the other. The second principle is that the beautiful voice is a gift from God, whereas the third principle claims that prohibiting the use of certain instruments, like the reedpipe (*mizmār*), has always been contextual because playing them has been associated with drinking of alcohol. If, on the contrary, the actions and intentions of the listeners are pure, instruments can be used. Zarrādī, however, notes that the Sufi masters have generally given preference to the human voice over instruments.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ See Ridgeon 2012.

⁹⁷ Zarrādī, *Risalah*, 13, 49–50.

⁹⁸ Zarrādī, *Risalah*, 13–19.

The fourth principle analyses the measured speech, which manifests itself in poetic verses (*shīʿr*). Poetry has the ability to impart knowledge about subtle meanings, and it affects the heart because of the poetic metre. Unlike the beautiful voice that also certain animals possess, writing and understanding poetry is specific to human beings. The disparaging comments about poets in the Koran apply only to those who ridiculed the Prophet in their verses. After discussing music and poetry, the two main components of *samāʿ*, Zarrādī contests in the fifth principle that combining two good things will lead to greater good. The benefits of the practice thus established, Zarrādī proclaims in the sixth principle that even though *samāʿ* in itself is acceptable, engaging in it in a frivolous manner makes it forbidden.⁹⁹ Again, the musical and poetic activities themselves cannot be condemned, and the context defines their permissibility.

Zarrādī has kept incorporating references to the Koran and the hadiths throughout the first six principles. The next three principles are exclusively dedicated to listing proofs from religious texts in favour of the practice. Typically to legal works, he begins with references to the Koran (seventh principle) and then continues to the hadiths (eighth principle) and the sayings of religious scholars and Sufis like Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, Sulamī, al-Ghazālī, Shiblī, Abū'l-Daqqāq and Niẓām al-Dīn (ninth principle).¹⁰⁰

The final, tenth principle discusses *tavājud*, which for Zarrādī denotes measured movement that can be interpreted as dancing. He thus seems to refer to voluntary simulation of *vajd* as the term is understood in the earlier Sufi manuals¹⁰¹ and which meaning Lawrence's translation 'empathetic ecstasy' captures. However, I am not sure if this is what Zarrādī means, because he attributes the origins of *tavājud* to the melody (*naghmah*) that moves the spirit (*rūḥ*), which then moves the body (*qālab*). Since the melody is measured, also the movements caused by it can be measured. Thus, it seems that for Zarrādī *tavājud* is not voluntary movement although it can appear as such. Contrasting *tavājud* with dancing (*raqs*) strengthens this impression. *Tavājud* differs from *raqs* precisely because the latter is voluntary and self-conscious. As for the movements of those who experience *tavājud*, Zarrādī presents examples of a suffering animal: one is to be slaughtered, the second is a fish that sees the ocean from the shore, or the third is a moth that soon burns in the flame. After discussing *tavājud*, Zarrādī concludes by declaring that the one who considers practising *samāʿ* as erring is himself misguided in making such an innovation (*al-mubtadiʿ al-dāll/bidʿatī gumrāh*).¹⁰²

Although Zarrādī uses legal arguments, his text arises from lived practice. The *samāʿ* Zarrādī divides into ten basic principles is not an abstraction but the practice encouraged in the circle of Niẓām al-Dīn and described in detail below. This is especially evident in the first five principles. He argues for the combined effect of the triad that com-

⁹⁹ Zarrādī, *Risālah*, 20–25.

¹⁰⁰ See Zarrādī, *Risālah*, 25–41.

¹⁰¹ See, e.g. Avery 2004: 66.

¹⁰² Zarrādī, *Risālah*, 44–45, 50.

prises Nizām al-Dīn's *samā'*: the beautiful voice, instruments and poetry. Especially the ability of versified speech to reveal divine secrets was a widely held concept among the Sultanate Chishtis. The rather cursory discussion on the use of instruments also echoes their attitudes. Although not favoured by the Sufi sheikhs (i.e. Nizām al-Dīn), Zarrādī would not prohibit them, because some of Nizām al-Dīn's disciples were great enthusiasts of instrumental music. The treatment of the effects of poetry reveals the author's sensitivity to its effects, a sensitivity that is instinctive rather than intellectual. Even re-defining the term *tavājud* seems to arise from the phenomena actually witnessed in *samā'* assemblies, where the movements of the listeners might resemble dance even if they were not conscious. Zarrādī's description of these movements as resembling different animals in distress is based on what he saw, not on what he thought should happen. Instead of being a theoretical systematist, Zarrādī is a practitioner whose contribution lies in integrating the lived experience into the carefully articulated literary tradition.

1.4 Nizām al-Dīn as a patron of literature and music

In addition to advocating *samā'* and integrating lived practice into the pre-existing literary patterns and religious discourses, the Chishti texts of the Sultanate period reveal the role of the Sufis, especially Nizām al-Dīn, in the contemporary cultural scene. His ability to attract notable poets and musicians to his circle contributed to his emergence as an important cultural force in Sultanate Delhi. Although he did not belong to the affluent ruling elite, he nevertheless assumed a role as a patron of poets and musicians.

Amīr Khusrāu

The most prominent of Nizām al-Dīn's poet-disciples was Amīr Khusrāu. At present, he is remembered as a great poet in areas where Persian is still the spoken language, although, for instance, in Iran he has been overshadowed by Iranian-born authors. In India, where Persian skills have all but disappeared, his fame rests on the Hindavi poetry attributed to him. He is also perceived as a cultural force that greatly contributed to the emergence of the distinctly Indian Islamic culture that seamlessly incorporates Central Asian, 'Muslim' influences with Indian, 'Hindu' culture. His inventions are believed to comprise the languages of Hindi and Urdu, a variety of ragas, musical instruments like tabla and sitar and musical genres like *khayāl* and qawwali. Although the versatility of Khusrāu in the fields of literature and both Indian and Central Asian musical traditions is evident and texts like *Nuh sipihr* testify to his fondness of India as a region next to Paradise, most of the individual inventions popularly attributed to him are of arguably later, often seventeenth- or eighteenth-century origin.

In addition, Khusrāu is in South Asia remembered as a Sufi disciple of Nizām al-Dīn. His final resting place opposite his master's tomb and the custom of paying one's re-

spects to him before entering the main shrine have kept him in the focus of a major shrine-cult and the collective imagination of local Muslims.

More books have been written about Amīr Khusrau than about his Sufi guide.¹⁰³ His father was of Turkish origin and hailed from Central Asia, whereas his mother was a daughter of an Indian Muslim. Unlike paradigmatic Sufi poets like Rūmī, Khusrau was both a professional poet and a Sufi disciple. During the Sultanate period, being a professional poet meant serving a patron, who was either the ruling monarch or some of the *amīrs*, in the capacity of a court poet. Khusrau acted as a courtier and a court poet for almost five decades from 1277 until his death in 1325 and wrote much of his poetry in this context. His early works were panegyric *qaṣīdahs*. However, during his career Persian poets were increasingly turning to narrative *maṣnavīs*, longer poems consisting of rhyming couplets. Sunil Sharma points out that while the narrative poetry had traditionally dealt with epic or romantic themes, Khusrau's 'personal engagement with the court and the political events of his time ... allowed him to present living history through the lens of history and didactic poetry.'¹⁰⁴ He wrote one *maṣnavī* for each of the five sultans he served, in addition to the *Khamsah* ('Quintet') of five romantic narratives modelled after the work of Nizāmī Ganjavī (d. 1209). In addition to narrative poetry, he wrote *Ijāz-i khusravī*, which consist of 'model prose writings in the forms of letters and anecdotes.'¹⁰⁵ This work is important for the information it contains about the contemporary court culture. Its significance for the study of music has been emphasized by Shahab Sarmadee.¹⁰⁶

Khusrau was extremely successful in the court. He navigated his way through turbulent times that often followed the death of his patrons and managed to find employment in the courts of their successors. However, he was equally respected in the Sufi circle of Nizām al-Dīn. Khusrau's *qaṣīdahs*, *maṣnavīs* and prose are distinctively products of the courtly context, even if he associates himself with Nizām al-Dīn by praising him together with the sultan in the beginning of his *maṣnavīs*. However, his ghazals, shorter lyrical poems, that he kept writing throughout his career and which comprise four poetic collections (*dīvān*) are more ambiguous. Many were written for sultan's soirées (*majlis*), and Ziyā' al-Dīn Baranī vividly describes one such occasion that took place in the court of Jalāl al-Dīn Khiljī (r. 1290-1296) in his *Tārīkh-i fīrozshāhī* ('History of Fīroz Shāh'). Baranī

¹⁰³ Among the earliest studies are Mohammad Habib's *Hazrat Amīr Khusrau of Delhi* published in 1927 and Wahid Mirza's *Amīr Khusrau: Savānīh-i 'umrī* published in 1945. For a collection of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century key writings on Khusrau, see *Amīr Khusrau* edited by Sheikh Saleem Ahmed. The most recent comprehensive monograph about the poet and his works in English is Sunil Sharma's *Amīr Khusrau: The Poet of Sultans and Sufis*. In addition, more or less scholarly works on him keep appearing at regular intervals. Much of the contents of these works is repetitive and, as Sunil Sharma has noted, 'there is little new or interesting work on his actual writing.' See Sharma 2006: 89.

¹⁰⁴ Sharma 2006: 59.

¹⁰⁵ Sharma 2006: 66.

¹⁰⁶ For the English translation of relevant passages, see Sarmadee 2004. For a discussion on musicological information in the text, see Sarmadee 2003: 444–459.

relates that Khusrau would daily present the ruler with a new ghazal in an assembly where the participants got intoxicated by the charms of the cupbearers, sweet voices of the singers, graceful movement of female dancers as well as by wine.¹⁰⁷ However, the poetic imagery of the ghazals was equally suitable to be interpreted in the Sufi framework, and so Khusrau's texts found favour also in the *samā'* assemblies organized in the *jamā'atkhānah* of his Sufi guide. The fact that Khusrau had an established position in both courtly and Sufi context reveals the extent of the accommodating nature of the Sufi tradition; becoming a recognized disciple and a close companion of a prominent Sufi sheikh did not presume adopting a cloistered lifestyle.

Amīr Khusrau's special bond with Niẓām al-Dīn is described in detail in *Siyar al-auliya'*, while other early texts either remain silent about him or remember only his poetry.¹⁰⁸ Favā'id al-fu'ād, a work of another poet-disciple, Amīr Ḥasan, mentions Amīr Khusrau in a single instance.¹⁰⁹ Ernst and Lawrence suggest that this is due to the rivalry between the two poets.¹¹⁰ However, it is worth noting that also other prominent disciples like Naṣīr al-Dīn and Burhān al-Dīn are mentioned only sporadically in the text. This may be because they simply were not present in Niẓām al-Dīn's assemblies together with Amīr Ḥasan, or that the conversation never turned to them during the discourses that were recorded. Furthermore, the friendship between Amīr Khusrau and Amīr Ḥasan is noted by several contemporary authors.¹¹¹

Judging from *Siyar al-auliya'*, the contact between Niẓām al-Dīn and Amīr Khusrau was established very early, when the former moved from Badayun to Delhi and took up his residence in the neighbourhood where the latter lived.¹¹² It is significant that this happened before Niẓām al-Dīn's oath of allegiance to Bābā Farīd. After he had established himself as a Sufi master, Khusrau provided him interim accommodation in his grandfather's house¹¹³ and when Niẓām al-Dīn later was on the verge of leaving Delhi for a more secluded life, he considered Amīr Khusrau's village, Patiyali, as a possible choice.¹¹⁴ The bond between Khusrau and Niẓām al-Dīn stayed firm for the rest of their lives. According to Amīr Khvurd, Khusrau was the sole disciple who could meet the master whenever he wanted, without asking for permission. Khusrau would keep him company before he retired for his nocturnal solitude and told him stories and news, thus, no doubt, also keeping him up to date on the events in the court.¹¹⁵ Amīr Khvurd highlights Khusrau's position by stating that even prominent disciples like Naṣīr al-Dīn and Burhān

¹⁰⁷ See Sarmadee 2003: 525–527.

¹⁰⁸ For an English translation of the entry on Khusrau in *Siyar al-auliya'*, see Sharma 2006: 94–98.

¹⁰⁹ Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 618–620.

¹¹⁰ Ernst & Lawrence 2002: 77.

¹¹¹ See, e.g. Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 278–279; Qalandar, *Khair*, 55; Ḥusainī, *Javāmi'*, 178.

¹¹² Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 108.

¹¹³ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 301.

¹¹⁴ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 110.

¹¹⁵ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 125.

al-Dīn sought his mediation and presented their entreaties to Nizām al-Dīn through him.¹¹⁶

Ernst and Lawrence have paid attention to the fact that despite the prominence of Amīr Khusrau among Nizām al-Dīn's disciples, he was never made the latter's *khalīfah*. They suggest that this was due to his ties with the court.¹¹⁷ However, none of the early Chishti authors felt a need to explain the apparent contradiction of intimacy and lack of formal recognition, or courtly career and Sufi discipleship. The single instance that points to Khusrau's worldly ties as a hindrance for spiritual lifestyle is an anecdote in *Siyar al-auliyā'* that recounts Nizām al-Dīn's critical remarks on Khusrau's dancing in *samā'*: he should not dance with his hands raised, like a dervish, because he was still tied to the world.¹¹⁸ However, this is a lone incident in contrast to a number of passages that emphasize the close relationship between Khusrau and Nizām al-Dīn. According to Amīr Khvurd, Khusrau invariably chose Nizām al-Dīn when he was forced to decide between the loyalty to the sultan and his Sufi guide. For instance, when Jalāl al-Dīn Khiljī wanted to pay a surprise visit to Nizām al-Dīn, Khusrau betrayed the plan to his master who immediately set forth for a pilgrimage to Ajodhan.¹¹⁹

When it comes to the literary activities of Khusrau, the Sufi texts are cursory and brief. His poems are cited in *Siyar al-auliyā'*, either interspersed between the prose passages, or in the context of *samā'* assemblies where they are sung.¹²⁰ In addition, Amīr Khvurd records a few instances of Nizām al-Dīn's involvement in Amīr Khusrau's writing process. On the first occasion, in the initial stage of his poetic career, Khusrau presents some poems to his master, who advises him to write about moles and locks in the manner of Isfahani poets so that his verses would incite passionate love in the audience.¹²¹ On another occasion, the poet presents his *dīvāns* to Nizām al-Dīn in order to verify their poetic allusions and indications (*rumūz o 'ishārāt*).¹²² Amīr Khvurd further states that Khusrau would bring whatever he wrote to Nizām al-Dīn, who would take the books in his hand and read a prayer over them. On occasion, he would also read a few lines from them.¹²³ Amīr Khvurd concludes by stressing Nizām al-Dīn's impact on Khusrau's success as a poet, although his outward involvement seemed to be limited to rather general stylistic advice and blessing the poet's works.

¹¹⁶ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 237 and 280–281, respectively.

¹¹⁷ Ernst & Lawrence 2002: 76–77.

¹¹⁸ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 506–507.

¹¹⁹ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 135.

¹²⁰ See, e.g. Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 304, 515.

¹²¹ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 301.

¹²² Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 301.

¹²³ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 302.

In contrast to Khusrau, the person of Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī remains elusive in the Sultanate Chishti texts. This holds true for his fame among the posterity as well. Amīr Ḥasan was made to move from Delhi to Daulatabad, where he died. His tomb is situated in a secluded compound outside the township and the main shrines of Khuldabad. No Hindavi poems or musical innovations are attributed to him, and his Persian poetry is today quoted or performed extremely rarely. The accomplishment that has saved him from oblivion is his record of Niẓām al-Dīn's discourses that Khusrau is said to have been ready to exchange all his works for.¹²⁴ Although Amīr Ḥasan keeps the focus on Niẓām al-Dīn in *Favā'id al-fu'ād*, his persona occasionally comes out when he poses a questions, expresses his fondness of *samā'* or recites a verse.¹²⁵ As a poet, he is praised for the subtlety of his poems and for the effect they have on listeners.¹²⁶ His style resembled that of Sa'dī to such an extent that he was known as Sa'dī of India. *Siyar al-auliya'* recounts no anecdotes involving him. In addition to the verses cited by the author, the information about him is included in a brief biographical entry that consists of the praise of his poetry and a mention of the special affection of Niẓām al-Dīn towards him.¹²⁷ In *Favā'id al-fu'ād*, Amīr Ḥasan tells how he presented one of his books to Niẓām al-Dīn and received a blessing.¹²⁸ He also writes that when he presented the first volume of discourses to Niẓām al-Dīn, the master took great interest in the work and even helped filling in the gaps that Amīr Ḥasan had not been able to write from memory, thus contributing to the contents of his work.¹²⁹

The third author listed among Niẓām al-Dīn's disciples in *Siyar al-auliya'* is the historian Ziyā' al-Dīn Baranī. The text notes his erudition and position as Muḥammad ibn Tughlaq's (r. 1325-51) boon-companion (*nadīm*). Amīr Khvurd envisions his subsequent dismissal from the court by Fīroz Shāh Tughlaq (r. 1351-1388) as voluntary retirement and the consequent penury as an expression of his dervish-like disposition.¹³⁰ Baranī's role in the circle of Niẓām al-Dīn remains marginal, and he is not mentioned in the other texts discussed in this chapter. However, Simon Digby has emphasized the significance of Baranī's *Tārikh-i Fīrozshāhī* for the immortalization of Niẓām al-Dīn's fame.¹³¹

¹²⁴ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 308.

¹²⁵ See e.g. Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 528, 904–906, 958.

¹²⁶ See, e.g. Ḥusainī, *Javāmi'*, 178.

¹²⁷ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 308.

¹²⁸ Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 418.

¹²⁹ Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 234.

¹³⁰ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 312–313. For a detailed discussion on Baranī, see Aquil 2009: 49–75.

¹³¹ Digby 2003: 252–253.

The singers

Amīr Khusrau's lasting impact as a poet-composer on the development of Indian music has been analysed by Shahab Sarmadee in several compelling articles.¹³² It is unfortunate that none of the contemporary texts elaborates on his role in shaping the musical culture at Niẓām al-Dīn's *jamā'atkhānah* which, no doubt, must have been significant. The Sultanate Chishti texts rarely mention Khusrau as a musician. In *Siyar al-auliya'*, he is recorded to have taken part in singing in a *samā'* assembly after the qawwals' performance.¹³³ Among Niẓām al-Dīn's other Sufi disciples, Khvājah Muḥammad, the son of Badr al-Dīn Ishāq, is depicted as an expert in the science of music (*'ilm-i mūsīqī*). In addition to attracting expert qawwals singing in Persian and Hindi around himself, he sometimes sung in *samā'* assemblies himself.¹³⁴

Alongside with a handful of Niẓām al-Dīn's singing disciples, singers frequently appear in the texts under discussion. In the context of Niẓām al-Dīn's *samā'* assemblies, the singers are usually called qawwals (*qavvāl*). At the first sight, this seems to support the modern notion that the contemporary musical genre associated with *samā'* in South Asia, qawwali, existed already then. However, the word qawwal, derived from the Arabic verb *qāla* ('to say') and simply meaning someone who says or recites, had been used throughout the Arabic and Persian Sufi texts since at least the tenth century.¹³⁵ Considering the breadth of the geographical area extending from the Arabic Middle East to Khurasan and Lahore, where these works originated, the musical styles employed in *samā'* must have varied greatly. The Sultanate Chishti texts simply continued the convention of referring to a singer performing in *samā'* assemblies as a qawwal without indicating a specific musical genre.

What is significant about the qawwals in the texts is that they appear first and foremost as professional singers offering their services in the musical assemblies of Sufis. It is nowhere mentioned, if they were initiated into a Sufi brotherhood or not. When it comes to singers in general, the texts express doubts concerning their respectability. In *Javāmi' al-kalim*, Gesūdarāz describes men endowed with beautiful voices as extremely greedy, whereas *Afzal al-favā'id* considers respecting singers (*mughanniyān o muṭribān*) as a definite sign of the arrival of the last days.¹³⁶ Such remarks are never passed on the qawwals who perform in *samā'* assemblies. On the contrary, they are generally portrayed in a favourable light.

¹³² See, e.g. Sarmadee 1976 and 2006 [1975].

¹³³ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 304. This musical assembly will be discussed below.

¹³⁴ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 200.

¹³⁵ The word qawwal is employed by at least al-Sarrāj in *Kitāb al-luma'*, by Ibn Munavvar in *Asrār al-tauḥīd fī maqāmāt-i shaikh Abī Sa'īd* (Persian, completed between 1158 and 1192) and by Hujvīrī in *Kashf al-mahjūb*.

¹³⁶ Ḥusainī, *Javāmi'*, 23; Khusrau, *Afzal*, 100.

Several professional qawwals are mentioned by name in *Siyar al-auliya*¹³⁷ and occasionally in other texts, as well.¹³⁸ These mentions are, however, limited to stating the qawwal's presence in a particular assembly. Their identity and the relationship with Nizām al-Dīn remain unclear. This is true to some extent even in respect to the two qawwals, who receive extended attention from Amīr Khvurd: Ḥasan Paihadī¹³⁹ and Ṣāmit Qavvāl. Both are described as Nizām al-Dīn's qawwals, who served him constantly by singing verses.¹⁴⁰ According to Amīr Khvurd, Ḥasan Paihadī's forte was his ability to excite the listeners with the very first phrase he sang¹⁴¹ and to stir up emotions in an assembly that would otherwise remain unaffected.¹⁴² These abilities were combined with a skill to select appropriate verses for Nizām al-Dīn's state – a skill noted in the accounts of two assemblies that were described to Amīr Khvurd by his father.¹⁴³ Ṣāmit Qavvāl had fairly similar qualities. The major difference seems to be that while Ḥasan appeared in formal *samā'* assemblies, Ṣāmit performed in more private settings: once in Nizām al-Dīn's antechamber and once in his room.¹⁴⁴ This may indicate that he was always present at the *khānqāh* in case the master wanted to listen to *samā'*. But beyond the praise of the musical skills of these two qawwals, Amīr Khvurd does not elaborate on their relationship with Nizām al-Dīn nor does he mention any professional qawwals among his disciples. What, then, was the role of the Sufi master as a patron and sponsor of qawwals and poets?

The patronage

At the outset, it is important to note that Nizām al-Dīn's *jamā'atkhānah* acted as an important cultural institution mediating between the court and the broader populace. Amīr Khusrau and Amīr Ḥasan helped to integrate the courtly musical and poetic traditions to Nizām al-Dīn's Sufi practice that the visitors of his *jamā'atkhānah* were exposed to. The doors to the *jamā'atkhānah* remained open for everyone and although the descriptions of Nizām al-Dīn's musical assemblies record only the names of his closest disciples among the listeners, the participation was not limited to them. In one instance Amīr Khvurd records antinomian Sufis and travellers visiting the city among the listeners.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁷ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 304 (Bahlūl Qavvāl), 501 (Junaid Qavvāl and Māhir Qavvāl) and 505 (Muḥammad Bairam Qavvāl).

¹³⁸ Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 640–642 mentions Abu Bakr Kharrāt, an itinerant qawwal arriving from Multan.

¹³⁹ Probably the same person as Nizām al-Dīn's special singer Ḥasan Maimandī mentioned in *Javāmi' al-kalim*. Similar ability to excite the listeners is attributed to both. See Husaini, *Javāmi'*, 128, 150.

¹⁴⁰ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 508.

¹⁴¹ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 508.

¹⁴² Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 514.

¹⁴³ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 514–516.

¹⁴⁴ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 511 and 513.

¹⁴⁵ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 508.

In *Siyar al-auliya'*, Amir Khvurd describes Nizām al-Dīn's influence as a cultural force as follows:

In those days, the main occupation of the people was to recount stories about *samā'*, devote themselves with sincere hearts and petition the beloved, be full of compassion and sympathy, give solace to broken hearts and bow down at the feet of the men of heart. Unrivalled poets, king's amiable favourites and subtle speaking youths who were endowed with pleasant character, had all bowed their heads on the threshold of the Monarch of Sheikhs.¹⁴⁶ Everyone had his share because everyone was able to feel the taste in his chest according to his nature, whatever it may have been. Singers with dulcet voices, both those who were at his service and those living in the city, established the science of music keeping their sight on the subtle nature of that king of love. They would continuously bring forth fresh ghazals and new melodies and thus they made music one of the sublime sciences. [...] All this was a fruit of the taste and love for God felt by the Monarch of Sheikhs.¹⁴⁷

Although the passage should be taken with a grain of salt, it points to the fact that Nizām al-Dīn's *jamā'atkhānah* attracted men of letters and music. The reference to people recounting stories about *samā'* probably reflects the popular reach of the musical traditions of the *jamā'atkhānah*. The context of the above passage helps to throw more light into the matter. According to Amir Khvurd, whenever Nizām al-Dīn desired to leave his *khānqāh* for a stroll in a garden, he would be accompanied by his attendants Iqbāl and 'Abd Allāh Kūlī. On the way, they would walk on either side of the master's palanquin and recite poetry in low voices. The verses and melodies that particularly affected Nizām al-Dīn would start to circulate among people from all walks of life.¹⁴⁸

Portrayal of Nizām al-Dīn as a patron of poets and singers in conditions where they were dependent on their patrons' financial support requires studying the resources needed for sponsoring the respective arts. The early Chishti masters were averse to both begging and working as a means of securing their livelihood. As the historian Riazul Islam has noted, this left them with only one possible means of subsistence, that is, reliance on unsolicited donations (*futūḥ*) either in cash or kind or in the form of valuables like clothes and books.¹⁴⁹ The Sufi texts are curt in discussing the actual finances of the *jamā'atkhānah*, but they do describe the two seemingly contradictory approaches of Nizām al-Dīn to wealth. They praise his poverty, on the one hand, and his unbounded generosity, on the other. These two ideals merge in Nizām al-Dīn's attitude to unsolicited donations and their redistribution. He would accept the *futūḥ* but, as a demonstration of poverty and reliance in God, he would not accumulate anything. Instead, he would dis-

¹⁴⁶ Amir Khvurd refers to Nizām al-Dīn as the Monarch of Sheikhs (*Sulṭān al-Mashā'ikh*) throughout *Siyar al-auliya'*.

¹⁴⁷ Amir Khvurd, *Siyar*, 510–511.

¹⁴⁸ Amir Khvurd, *Siyar*, 510.

¹⁴⁹ Islam 2003: 90–91.

tribute the acquired wealth as quickly as possible.¹⁵⁰ Thus, his liberal giving of gifts becomes an act of generosity, which, according to Gesūdarāz, is a prominent characteristic of the Chishti masters.¹⁵¹

Who, then, benefited from the distribution of *futūḥ*? Almost everyone who happened to be around, it seems. In discussing the system of *futūḥ*, Islam notes the somewhat arbitrary redistribution that stems from Niẓām al-Dīn's abhorrence of any wealth in his house.¹⁵² It is possible that also the poets and qawwals received their share. The texts, however, mention only one kind of gifts that are given to them: hats and other types of garments that Niẓām al-Dīn bestows as a sign of his goodwill and blessing. Gifting articles of clothing to qawwals is mentioned already in the Arabic and Persian Sufi manuals, which touch upon giving out garments torn in ecstasy. This theme figures in the Chishti sources, as well, and *Siyar al-auliā'* mentions a few instances, when a piece of clothing is given to the qawwals.¹⁵³ *Afzal al-favā'id* inflates this into profuse distribution of garments to every participant in the end of each *samā'* assembly.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, Amīr *Khvurd* mentions a peculiar practice pertaining to *samā'* that he claims to have seen prescribed in Niẓām al-Dīn's writing. The listener who falls down so that his back touches the ground should give his cloth as a pledge. In practice this meant that he gave his robe away, bought it back as a sign of gratitude and thus benefited the holder of the pledge.¹⁵⁵ It is unfortunate that the author fails to mention who received the price thus paid, the qawwals or the other listeners.

In discussing the gifts of garments, the texts de-emphasize their actual value at the cost of the blessings they transmit. Despite the fact that the garments may have been of valuable fabrics, it is their spiritual value that mattered. This is highlighted in Amīr *Khvurd*'s description of an assembly where Niẓām al-Dīn stands on his prayer mat and cries, first drenching his sleeves and then a long handkerchief. A note on the power of tears to protect one from Hell's fire follows immediately.¹⁵⁶ Later, in an account of another assembly, soaked handkerchiefs are given to the qawwals.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, the author stresses the need to preserve the gifts of a dervish, generation after generation. Thus he excludes the possibility of their sale.¹⁵⁸ A piece of clothing given with money in remuneration for the qawwals' services is mentioned only once, in a discussion about

¹⁵⁰ See, e.g. Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 120–121. For a study of the *futūḥ* system, see Islam 2003: 87–139.

¹⁵¹ Ḥusainī, *Javāmi'*, 58–59.

¹⁵² See Islam 2003: 116–117.

¹⁵³ See, e.g. Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 507–508, 515.

¹⁵⁴ *Khusrau*, *Afzal*, 14, 95, 190, 196. Whether these descriptions are stereotyped retellings of actual assemblies, formulations of popular perceptions on *samā'* or ways to legitimize the presence of saintly relics in the form of hats and clothes, remains to be determined.

¹⁵⁵ Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 504.

¹⁵⁶ Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 509.

¹⁵⁷ Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 515.

¹⁵⁸ Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 513.

Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā.¹⁵⁹ In contrast to the Suhrawardi master, Niẓām al-Dīn never seems to pay the qawwals for their performances. Whether Niẓām al-Dīn's attendant Iqbāl, who was responsible for the *khānqāh* finances, paid them or not, is never discussed.

That the qawwals could not depend solely on Niẓām al-Dīn for financial support is highlighted by the fact that they had other, perhaps more lucrative, sources of income. They performed in celebrations with no connection to Sufi practice. As documented in *Siyar al-auliyā'*, Khvājah 'Azīz al-Dīn, a relative of the author, had been absent from Delhi to attend a wedding. Upon his return, he came straight to meet Niẓām al-Dīn who inquired about his trip. Interestingly, among his questions is a casual inquiry about the quality of *samā'* in the weddings.¹⁶⁰ Performing in celebrations occurs also in *Khair al-majālis*, when Naṣīr al-Dīn asks from a certain Sayyid 'Alā' al-Dīn how the *samā'* had been and continues with a story about a party attended by al-Qushayrī in Nishapur.¹⁶¹ It seems that performing in non-Sufi contexts constituted a source of income for the qawwals. And when it comes to the poet-disciples of Niẓām al-Dīn, both Amīr Khusrū and Amīr Ḥasan were courtiers in no need of financial support. Apart from the latter receiving a hat as per the account of *Favā'id al-fu'ād*, their patronage by Niẓām al-Dīn does not seem to have involved material assets.

The patronage by Niẓām al-Dīn essentially stems from the inspiration and the stage of performance he offered for the qawwals and poets. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the patronage was reciprocal. Simon Digby has emphasized the role of the literary-minded disciples in immortalizing Niẓām al-Dīn's fame.¹⁶² In the case of qawwals, performing in the assemblies of the famous master accrued to their standing and in travelling from place to place they also spread information about the Sufis they had encountered. In this capacity, a qawwal named Abū Bakr played an important role in establishing a contact between Niẓām al-Dīn and his future master. *Favā'id al-Fu'ād* recounts the qawwal's coming to Badayun and his stories about a visit to Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyyā in Multan. Niẓām al-Dīn initially remains unmoved and is overcome with attraction only when Abū Bakr describes Bābā Farīd, whom he had met in Ajodhan.¹⁶³ In addition to spreading the fame of Sufi masters, the qawwals could also affect the popular reception of the poets. Verses by Niẓām al-Dīn's poet-disciples are frequently mentioned in the context of *samā'* assemblies. Due to the scarcity of manuscripts, the performances of the qawwals no doubt constituted an important channel for communicating poetry to a wider audience.

It seems that Niẓām al-Dīn's role as a patron of poetry and music relied essentially on his charisma as a leading Sufi master who was susceptible to the effects of music and

¹⁵⁹ Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 604.

¹⁶⁰ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 199. See also Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 304.

¹⁶¹ Qalandar, *Khair*, 223.

¹⁶² Digby 2003: 252–253.

¹⁶³ Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 640–642.

poetry. He was also an arbitrator in the matters pertaining to these arts in the Sufi framework. While attachment to Niẓām al-Dīn no doubt benefited both poets and qawwals, they also spread his fame in the contemporary world and, through their writings, among the future generations as well.

1.5 The etiquette of a *samāʿ* assembly

When it comes to the actual organization of a *samāʿ* assembly in the Sufi circle of Niẓām al-Dīn, *adab* (pl. *ādāb*) receives detailed treatment. The term has a number of meanings that have evolved gradually,¹⁶⁴ but it can be generally understood to indicate different facets of harmonious life, whereby an individual can polish his character by acting in a correct manner in relationship to God and other human beings. *Adab* has a more concrete meaning as the code of conduct or behavioural etiquette applicable in given circumstances. In plural, it denotes the group of rules pertaining to a specific occasion. In the following discussion, I use this concrete meaning, which not only serves the purpose of analysing the dynamics of *samāʿ* assemblies, but also resonates with the favoured use of the term in the texts under discussion.¹⁶⁵

In the distinctly religious framework, the Prophet is the ultimate model of a perfected character, yet his example is not unambiguously described in the formative scriptures. Sharia-minded *ʿulamāʿ* have essentially relied on the hadiths in prescribing the *adab*, whereas Sufi *ʿulamāʿ* have widened the scope by incorporating the example of Sufi masters into their discourse. For instance, the description of *adab* in the Sultanate Chishti texts revolves around the example of Niẓām al-Dīn. What characterizes the approaches to *adab* in both religious and secular contexts is the centrality of subduing the impulses of one's base nature or ego (*nafs*) with the help of the rational faculty (*ʿaql*).¹⁶⁶

In the case of the Sufi practice of *samāʿ*, where the *nafs* is subdued or transcended with the help of music and poetry instead of reason, the situation changes. However, *samāʿ* is also governed by *adab*. Discussing *samāʿ* in the Sufi circle of Burhān al-Dīn Ghārīb, Ernst notes that the function of the rules governing the practice is 'to keep open the avenues of divine influence while attempting to exclude the intrusion of the human ego.'¹⁶⁷ In consonance with this general principle, the *adab* of *samāʿ* has a specific function in shaping the experiences of the listeners in the musical assemblies in Niẓām al-Dīn's Sufi circle.

¹⁶⁴ See Hämeen-Anttila 2014 for a nuanced discussion on the origins and the evolution of the concept in Arabic sources.

¹⁶⁵ For an excellent collection of papers discussing *adab* in the context of South Asian Islam, see Metcalf (ed.) 1984.

¹⁶⁶ See, e.g. Lapidus 1984.

¹⁶⁷ Ernst 2004: 153.

Mystical states¹⁶⁹ are the most visible aspect of passages that describe *samāʿ* of Niẓām al-Dīn and his followers. The texts describe in eloquent detail the manifestations of these states such as jumping, dancing, crying and howling. However, equal attention is given to *adab*, which the participants are expected to rigorously follow. Restricting the bodily comportment and movements of the participants, *adab* seems to clash with the standard behaviour of a person who has been overwhelmed by a mystical state. But why apply a restrictive code of conduct to this practice in the first place if mystical states that breach it are the desired outcome? Why not move and dance unrestrictedly from the very beginning instead of sitting absolutely still?

Among the Sultanate Chishti texts, *Sīyar al-auliyaʿ* includes the most detailed passages describing *samāʿ* assemblies where Niẓām al-Dīn or his followers are present. The assemblies are not selected randomly, but only ones that culminate in a mystical state are remembered. The following passage is typical of *Sīyar al-auliyaʿ*:

I remember how people gathered in the house of my uncle, Sayyid Khāmosh, about whom I have already written. The Monarch of Sheikhs was present in that gathering and Ḥasan Bahadī,¹⁷⁰ the qawwal, was singing a ghazal of Auḥad Kirmānī during the *samāʿ* in a refined voice. Then he reached this verse:

You said: from among those others, only you will now last

So that your love for life, Auḥad, would protect the others.

The Monarch of Sheikhs was affected by the verse, overwhelmed by crying and mystical state (*ḥāl*). He started to dance and acquired a taste (*ẓauq*). During the state he was experiencing, the sun started to decline. Others gave up *samāʿ* and sat down, but the Monarch of Sheikhs was still experiencing the taste of *samāʿ*

¹⁶⁸ This discussion is based on Viitamäki *forthcoming* b.

¹⁶⁹ Throughout this study, I will use ‘mystical state’ as a general term for various experiences and behaviours described by the different authors and occurring during *samāʿ*. The ‘mystical state’ can manifest itself as ecstatic loss of consciousness or meditative clarity, as dramatic outward behaviours or as complete stillness of the body. The common terms for various experiences in the Chishti texts include *vajd* (‘finding, ecstasy’), *tavājud* (Lawrence’s ‘empathetic ecstasy’), *ẓauq* (‘tasting’), *shauq* (‘yearning, desire’), *ḥāl* (‘state’) and *taḥayyur* (‘bewilderment’). Although these terms are analysed in the theoretical writings to which I occasionally refer, their use in *malfūzāt* and *tazkirahs* is considerably more liberal. The author often refers to a single experience and its outward manifestations with different terms in the course of one passage. It should also be kept in mind that sometimes the established English translations do not correspond to the content of the term. Translating *vajd* as ecstasy is a case in point. As Kenneth Avery has noted in his study of *samāʿ* in early Sufi texts, instead of the feelings of exhilaration associated with the English word ecstasy, the outward symptoms of *vajd* described in the texts ‘could well indicate to us a sudden onset of illness or seizure rather than what is normally understood by “ecstasy.”’ See Avery 2004: 65. For a useful overview of the terms referring to mystical states in Sufi literature, see Hermansen 1997.

¹⁷⁰ Probably the same person as Ḥasan Paihadī mentioned above.

and tears were rolling from his eyes like pearls. He was as if intoxicated. At that moment Amīr Khusrau started to sing a ghazal. He began by singing this verse:

He revealed to me his face entirely and said: 'Do not look!'

From that taste I am senseless and intoxicated: 'What was that talk?'

As soon as the Monarch of Sheikhs heard this verse, he looked at Amīr Khusrau from the corner of his eye that was the spring of love. Then the mystical state and crying again took over the Monarch of Sheikhs. Khusrau repeated this verse several times. Ḥasan Bahadī deduced that the Monarch of Sheikhs was again experiencing the taste of *samā'* and he began to sing the verse of Auḥad again. It affected the Monarch of Sheikhs tremendously and the dear ones who were present in the assembly experienced the same taste because of him. God knows well that whenever the author thinks how the the Monarch of Sheikhs had the taste of *samā'* in that assembly, the blazing fire of seeing the master, beauty of saintliness, Monarch of Sheikhs, starts to spark in his heart. This weak one submits:

I want to burn my heart in the fire of your love

I want to give up my life to your tresses.¹⁷¹

The occasion was witnessed by Amīr Khuvurd himself and it contains the essential characteristics of such accounts. It records the place and the participants, both the performers and the listeners, but the focus is on poetry and the mystical states caused by it. Here Niẓām al-Dīn's mystical state appears as crying and dancing, and it is so powerful that it does not subside even after the other participants have sat down when the time for midday prayer is drawing close. While they attempt to observe the *adab* by getting ready to pray, Niẓām al-Dīn's experience gains the upper hand, and all the participants are overcome by his contagious state. The passage also offers valuable insight into how the singer and, in this instance, Amīr Khusrau utilize their keen perception of the master's state to enhance his experience by selecting appropriate verses for the performance.

Accounts of *samā'* assemblies were apparently of such great interest to the wider public that they found their way into the 'inauthentic' or 'apocryphal' *malfūẓāt*. The suggested incentives to write these texts range from answering the demand raised by the success of *Favā'id al-fu'ād*,¹⁷² to filling the vacuum created by the dispersion of the Chishti order on Niẓām al-Dīn's death and the alleged loss of a living teaching tradition.¹⁷³ Whichever the case, similar collections recording the discourses of the Chishti masters from Khvājah 'Uṣmān Hārvanī (d. 1220) to Niẓām al-Dīn were soon available. Each was allegedly authored by the leading disciple of the master, notwithstanding that Niẓām al-

¹⁷¹ Amir Khuvurd, *Siyar*, 515–516.

¹⁷² Digby 2003: 252.

¹⁷³ Nizami 1991: 195.

Dīn and Naṣīr al-Dīn had both clearly stated that neither they themselves nor any of their predecessors had written any books.¹⁷⁴ Compared to *Favā'id al-fu'ād*, *Khair al-majālis* and *Javāmi' al-kalim*, the literary style of the inauthentic *malḥūzāt* is inferior and they bear distinct signs of literary rather than oral transmission.¹⁷⁵ Individual assemblies are so long that it is difficult to conceive recording them without making detailed notes as the master speaks, and many anecdotes are borrowed from other literary sources such as the *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* ('stories of the prophets') genre.¹⁷⁶ However, the value of these texts cannot be denied. Both Ernst and Lawrence have argued that their target audience included people who were not full-time Sufis but were nevertheless drawn to influential masters in search of, for example, powerful invocations that would help in navigating through the difficulties of life.¹⁷⁷ By including detailed instructions on how to perform such invocations, the inauthentic *malḥūzāt* provide the readers with what they were yearning for and hence throw light on the more popular aspects of Sufism in fourteenth-century India. The accounts of Niẓām al-Dīn's *samā'* assemblies, such as the following passage found in *Afzal al-favā'id*, reveal the popular interest in the practice:

The master¹⁷⁸ turned towards Ḥasan, the qawwal, and said: 'The dear ones are present. Sing something.' As Ḥasan begun *samā'*, *Khvājah* 'Uṣmān Sayyāḥ and Shaikh Jamāl al-Dīn Hānsavī sprang up and started to dance. They kept dancing from the mid-morning until the midday. When they finished, a robe was given to everyone. On that occasion I also got a white hat. This is the poem that the singers sung:

*Your love brought news from the world of unconsciousness
It made the men of integrity gulp down goblet after goblet.*

*Your love is a sentinel that made
Reason, the king, follow its lead, seizing it by the forelock.*

*Doctor, I have lost my powers by drinking wine
Give me medicine that would make me forget.*¹⁷⁹

Though bearing a resemblance to the passages found in *Siyar al-auliya'*, the accounts in *Afzal al-favā'id* are straightforward and stereotyped in comparison. They always follow the pattern of first recording the names of the participants and then describ-

¹⁷⁴ Ernst 2004: 77. It is noteworthy that despite such statements, the inauthentic *malḥūzāt* are commonly accepted as authentic among the Chishtis. See, for example, the statement of Khwaja Hasan Nizami to this effect in Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 10.

¹⁷⁵ Ernst 2004: 82.

¹⁷⁶ Lawrence 1976: 119.

¹⁷⁷ Ernst 2004: 83 and Lawrence 1976: 124–125.

¹⁷⁸ Here Niẓām al-Dīn is referred to simply as the master (*khvājah*).

¹⁷⁹ *Khusrau, Afzal*, 14.

ing their mystical states and their exact duration. The passage also shows a desire to include famous Sufis among the protagonists even if it made the accounts less reliable. Jamāl al-Dīn Hānsavī was a *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd who died in 1261. Thus, *Khusrāu*, who was born in 1253, could have been only eight years old when the musical assembly took place. Conventionally, such passages end with the quotation of the verses sung during the assembly. A ubiquitous trait of the accounts recorded in *Afzal al-favā'id* is the listing of gifts given by Nizām al-Dīn to the participants. The mystical states, poetry and the saintly relics seem to have best captured the imagination of the readers of the inauthentic *malfūzāt*.

Interestingly, the discussions on *adab* are conspicuously absent from the inauthentic *malfūzāt*. In the authentic *malfūzāt* and *Siyar al-auliā'*, addressing *adab* goes hand in hand with the descriptions of mystical states. This reflects the interests of the respective target audiences. In *Afzal al-favā'id*, the passages offer glimpses of the extraordinary and fascinating aspects of the *samā'*. However, the interest of the target audience is assumed to stop there and the perspective remains that of an outsider, whereas the authentic *malfūzāt* and *Siyar al-auliā'* seek to involve their audience in the practice. The mystical states are to be experienced personally, not merely observed, and the readers are assumed to integrate the advice concerning *adab* into their own practice.

Many aspects of *adab* specific to *samā'* prescribed in early Chishti texts appear diametrically opposed to the behaviours occurring under the influence of mystical states. A person overwhelmed by such an experience is frequently seen dancing, jumping, crawling, crying or wailing uncontrollably, whereas the *adab* of *samā'* seeks to restrict bodily movements. A sub-chapter of the ninth chapter of *Siyar al-auliā'* titled *Adab-i samā'* ('Code of Conduct During *Samā'*') states that the participants should avoid coughing, stretching and looking at the other listeners. They should keep their heads bowed and refrain from all premeditated movements, including dancing and clapping hands.¹⁸⁰ The only exception to this seems to be the obligation to stand up whenever a listener enraptured by a mystical state leaves his place.¹⁸¹ The texts also list the conditions for arranging a *samā'* assembly. *Siyar al-auliā'* quotes Nizām al-Dīn instructing his disciples to organize *samā'* in a place (*makān*) that is clean and pleasing to the spirit. The time (*zamān*) should be such that the heart is not engaged elsewhere, but is receptive to the effect of *samā'*. Performers should be adult men, not women or young boys, and they should not sing discreditable or joking verses nor should they use the forbidden instruments. Listeners (*ikhvān*, lit. 'the brothers'), in turn, should be in a state of ritual purity, dressed in clean clothes, anointed with perfumes, seated in neat rows and favourably inclined towards the practice.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 494.

¹⁸¹ Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 494.

¹⁸² Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 493; Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 972–974. Al-Ghazālī attributes the origins of discussing the conditions pertaining to *makān*, *zamān* and *ikhvān* to Junaid (d. 910). See Avery 2004: 45–46.

The texts take a dim view of breaching the *adab* and warn of the dire consequences of such a course of action. In *Favā'id al-fu'ād*, Niẓām al-Dīn relates how an unnamed *qāẓī* of Kirman organized a *samā'* wishing that one of his affluent guests would be the first one to rise up affected by the music. However, the first one to abandon his seat was a poor dervish. The *qāẓī* slapped him and told him to sit down. When he himself stood up a little later, the dervish returned his abuse. As a consequence, he stayed put for seven years. When the dervish returned to the town, even he was not able to help the poor *qāẓī* who died without ever leaving his seat.¹⁸³ A breach of *adab* following an attempt to use *samā'* for mundane purposes led to a severe punishment.

An anecdote found in *Javāmi' al-kalim* is even more sinister, as it is allegedly based on events witnessed by Gesūdarāz himself. In the anecdote a certain Sayyid Naṣīr al-Dīn dances and jumps around in the presence of his Sufi guide Burhān al-Dīn Gharib. Gesūdāraz notes how the master scowls at the disciple and he thinks it does not bode well. After the *samā'*, Burhān al-Dīn remarks that Naṣīr al-Dīn is a very good dancer and has much power in his feet. Soon, the latter falls ill and is no longer able to stand. Burhān al-Dīn refuses to send remnants of his food to him noting that life and death are in the hands of God. A week passes and Naṣīr al-Dīn dies.¹⁸⁴

Why was Naṣīr al-Dīn punished so harshly, when his behaviour was nothing extraordinary judging by other contemporary accounts? Perhaps disregard for his master led to breaching the *adab* governing the master-disciple relationship. Another possible reason is that Naṣīr al-Dīn did not fulfil the conditions under which such behaviours are allowed, which would have made his actions a breach of the *adab* of *samā'*. Such conditions also point to the internal dynamics of *samā'* that harmonize the seemingly contradictory requirements of *adab* and the highly valued behaviours during mystical states.

The early Chishti texts frequently state that various types of movement are allowed during *samā'* if the listener is overwhelmed by the mystical state and is not conscious of what he is doing. According to Niẓām al-Dīn, quoted in *Sīyar al-auliya'*, voluntary movement during the *samā'* renders the entire practice forbidden (*ḥarām*), and it becomes contaminated (*ma'lūl*) if the listener moves while still retaining control over himself.¹⁸⁵ Dancing is allowed, if it is not measured (*ghair mauzūn*), but forbidden, if it is measured (*mauzūn*).¹⁸⁶ One can move, but only, if the movements are not premeditated and do not appear to follow a preset pattern.

The listeners' liability to follow the *adab* is also revoked by referring to their unaccountability for their actions during a mystical state. One of the few theoretical aspects of *samā'* discussed in the early Chishti texts is the attribution of the effects of music and poetry to the reactions of the souls during the day of the primordial covenant (*yaum al-*

¹⁸³ Sijzī, *Favā'id*, 668–670

¹⁸⁴ Ḥusainī, *Javāmi'*, 336–337.

¹⁸⁵ Amīr Khvurd, *Sīyar*, 492, 504.

¹⁸⁶ Amīr Khvurd, *Sīyar*, 507.

mīṣāq or *roz-i alast*) during which God asked them ‘Am I not your Lord?’ and the souls answered in the affirmative.¹⁸⁷ According to *Sīyar al-auliyā*, this affirmation was not necessarily verbal, but could have been indicated by, for example, nodding the head or moving the limbs. When a beautiful voice heard during the *samāʿ* then reminds the listeners of the voice of the divine beloved, they automatically respond in a similar manner as they did during the day of the covenant. According to Bābā Farīd, this also determines the retaining or losing of one’s consciousness during *samāʿ*. If one became unconscious during the day of the covenant, the same is bound to happen during *samāʿ*, whereas others retain their senses.¹⁸⁸

However, this seemingly simple solution resolving the contradiction between *adab* and the behaviours occurring during mystical states is nuanced by yet another set of ideas presented in the texts under discussion. Several passages suggest that losing consciousness may not be the most sought-after state after all. *Sīyar al-auliyā* reports Niẓām al-Dīn to have noted that some listeners lose themselves in *samāʿ* to such an extent that they would not even notice a nail being hammered into their heads. But there is another state as well, the state of the perfect ones. It resembles a heightened state of consciousness because during it the listener senses even a rose petal under his foot.¹⁸⁹ Although not stated explicitly, it is clear that the author counts Niẓām al-Dīn in the latter group of listeners.

The same idea comes out in Niẓām al-Dīn’s classification of *samāʿ* as either something that assaults the listener (*hājim*) or something that does not (*ghair hājim*). According to him, nothing can be said about the first type of experience (since the listener is not in his senses), whereas during the second, he is able to relate the poetic images to his sheikh or divine beloved through the process known as *taḥmīl*.¹⁹⁰ Although the passage does not give a preference to one type of experience over the other, other excerpts emphasizing the importance of *taḥmīl* (and citing it as the factor that makes listening to love poetry full of erotic images permissible) make it clear that the latter type of experience was considered more preferable.¹⁹¹

Rather than making *samāʿ* a clearly defined and straightforward process, where following the *adab* can be waived under the condition of unconsciousness, these ideas uphold the internal tensions that underlie the practice. However, these tensions do not seem to have troubled the early Chishtis, as there are no attempts to harmonize them. The only statement to this effect in their texts is found in *Javāmiʿ al-kalim* where Gesūdarāz paradoxically notes that the listener should be both with himself and without himself during *samāʿ*.¹⁹² Otherwise, the different discourses on *samāʿ* intertwine with re-

¹⁸⁷ The concept of the primordial covenant is based on a neoplatonic interpretation of the Koran 7:172.

¹⁸⁸ Amīr Khvurd, *Sīyar*, 497, 504.

¹⁸⁹ Amīr Khvurd, *Sīyar*, 497.

¹⁹⁰ Sijzi, *Favā'id*, 528. For a discussion on *taḥmīl* in the writings of Gesūdarāz, see Hussaini 1983: 137–138.

¹⁹¹ Sijzi, *Favā'id*, 468–470.

¹⁹² Ḥusaini, *Javāmiʿ*, 152.

gard to the practice, and many accounts of the *samāʿ* assemblies show the participants vacillating between following the *adab* and succumbing to the mystical states. Amīr Khvurd relates that the ties of Niẓām al-Dīn’s turban would frequently loosen during the *samāʿ* – apparently as a consequence of his movements – but he would always tighten them again.¹⁹³ The master is frequently seen crying, but his face does not contort as in the case of other people, nor does he ever howl or sigh.¹⁹⁴ The following anecdote recounted by Gesūdarāz shows Naṣīr al-Dīn performing similar balancing acts:

Although Naṣīr al-Dīn was old, he was energized by *samāʿ* to such an extent that he walked, jumped and danced so vigorously that even young men were unable to perform such a feat. This did not happen every time, but it happened once in my house. On that day, the qawwal was singing the following verse:

*A dog [ran] after the camel litter and I am running too, humbly following him
I answer to him ‘At your service’, if he just calls out to the dog.*

Suddenly he got up and ran faster than any young man would ever be able. However, he felt quivering in his leg and beginning to reel, he sat down. After that, he never stood up in *samāʿ*. If taste overcame him, he would express the agitation (*iẓtīrāb*) sitting. If someone stood up, he would follow, although he could get into a mystical state while remaining seated. He had all the taste. Sometimes, he was less affected by Hindavi and its enjoyable sound and more affected by Persian verses. He would often throw his turban to the singers during his state, but never tore his cloth.

In Gesūdarāz’s account, Naṣīr al-Dīn balances between not letting his mystical states manifest too extravagantly, yet expressing them in sufficient measure. He frolics like a youngster until he feels a quiver in his leg, which he takes as a sign to refrain from such behaviour. Eventually, he never stands up again unless the *adab* requires him to do so along with the other listeners. He removes his turban, but never caves in to the more extreme behaviour of tearing his clothes.

Another illustrative example is found in *Siyar al-auliyaʿ*. Niẓām al-Dīn was once particularly affected by *samāʿ*. Losing control over himself, he was the first one to stand up in the assembly. This was followed by a vow to never again rise up first.¹⁹⁵ Unfortunately, Amīr Khvurd does not elaborate on the reasons behind Niẓām al-Dīn’s decision. Perhaps it was connected with the feeling of embarrassment for being so easily overcome with ecstasy. Whatever the case, this decision would inconvenience him later. On another occasion he was sitting in the anteroom of his *jamāʿatkhānah* listening to Ṣāmit Qavvāl. A mystical state overtook him and he began to cry. No disciple of his was around, so he could not dance and those present grew anxious. At that moment a stranger arrived and started to dance, thus allowing Niẓām al-Dīn to do the same. After the *samāʿ*, Niẓām al-

¹⁹³ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 510.

¹⁹⁴ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 509.

¹⁹⁵ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 506.

Dīn ordered his disciples to search for the man, but he was nowhere to be found. Amīr Khvurd expresses his conviction that he belonged to ‘the men of the hidden’ and was sent by God to save ‘a lover who flails his hands and feet drowning in the ocean of love and intimacy.’¹⁹⁶

The behaviour of Nizām al-Dīn illustrates the interaction of *adab* and mystical states. The master holds himself back from fully expressing his mystical state due to the code of conduct he has previously imposed on himself. Those present started to become anxious for him since suppressing a mystical state could cause severe harm and even lead to death. Divine intervention, however, salvages the situation and allows Nizām al-Dīn to dance without breaching *adab*. The passage succeeds in portraying Nizām al-Dīn as a perfect master in two senses: he follows *adab* to its utmost limit and risks his own life in the process, but he also expresses powerful mystical states.

The function of the etiquette

The code of conduct prescribed for the participants of *samāʿ* is not arbitrary, but serves an important pragmatic function in transforming a musical recital into a potent Sufi practice. The Sultanate texts are taciturn about the actual musical content of *samāʿ* assemblies. However, it is significant that they nowhere state the existence of a separate genre of Sufi music. Considering that one person, Amīr Khusrāu, was influential in both Sufi and courtly contexts, it seems probable that the music performed in the *samāʿ* assemblies of his master did not differ radically from the music sponsored in the court. The only major distinction was probably the use of instruments. In the court, they occupied a central role, whereas Nizām al-Dīn did not express much interest in them. In his view, musical instruments were superfluous for softening the hearts of the listeners.¹⁹⁷ Some of his followers like Burhān al-Dīn, Amīr Khusrāu and Amīr Ḥasan allowed instruments in their own *samāʿ* assemblies, whereas others like Gesūdarāz gave them up on the instigation of his master Naṣīr al-Dīn.¹⁹⁸

Even the term *samāʿ* does not seem to apply exclusively to the Sufi context. As has been noted above, it is in the Chishti texts used also in association with musical entertainment in weddings. In *Tārīkh-i firozshāhi*, Ziyāʿ al-Dīn Baranī refers even to the musical assemblies of the sultans as *samāʿ*, pairing them with pastimes like hunting and drinking.¹⁹⁹ As a disciple of Nizām al-Dīn, he would have surely distinguished between different types of *samāʿ* assemblies had it been an issue at the time. This, in my view, indicates that neither music nor the institution of a musical assembly called *samāʿ* were unambiguously Sufi phenomena.

¹⁹⁶ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 511.

¹⁹⁷ He was averse to using the reed pipe (*mizmār*), harp (*cang*) and lute (*rabāb*), which were suspect from the legal point of view. Otherwise, his attitude towards musical instruments is best described as indifference. See Sijzī, *Favāʿid*, 464, 906.

¹⁹⁸ See Ḥusainī, *Javāmiʿ*, 174, 243; Sāmānī, *Siyar*, 89.

¹⁹⁹ See, e.g., Baranī, *Tārīkh*, 522.

Similar ambiguity applies to poetry. As the verses included in the passages translated above indicate, the most important topic in poetry performed during *samāʿ* was passionate love (*ʿishq*). Such poetry is ambiguous and can refer, sometimes simultaneously, to both divine and human love, and there is nothing in the verses themselves that would direct the audience to prefer one interpretation over the other. Niẓām al-Dīn and his followers refer occasionally to interpreting poetic images in a certain manner. *Siyar al-auliyaʿ*, for instance, records that tresses (*zulf*) denote intimacy with the beloved and infidelity (*kufṛ*) refers to hiding the lover's existence and persona in order for the beloved to manifest.²⁰⁰ However, these remarks do not form a comprehensive interpretive system covering each and every poetic image. Rather, they are disconnected topics that have come up in conversations with the master, and ultimately, the responsibility for applying the technique of *taḥmīl* and relating the images of passionate love to God or the Sufi sheikh is left to the listener.

The verses recorded in the early sources in connection with *samāʿ* assemblies no doubt constitute only a small scratch of the entire range of poetry utilized by the singers. Nevertheless, it is striking that not a single verse, ghazal or quatrain recorded in the Sultanate Chishti texts is unambiguously religious. No verse explicitly praises the Prophet Muhammad or notable Sufi saints. Nor are there didactic verses that would record a piece of Sufi wisdom in an easily memorized format. Niẓām al-Dīn and his followers were well acquainted with such poetry and they occasionally quote it in their discourses and writings. However, they never listened to it during *samāʿ*.

The experiences caused by listening to sung poetry could furthermore be extremely powerful and difficult to control, as is demonstrated by the passages quoted above. Unlike other practices, *samāʿ* is not a part of the daily routine and rather than gradual, its effect is sudden, even violent. When Amīr Ḥasan notes in *Favāʿid al-fuʿād* that nothing else but *samāʿ* can move the human being as efficiently, Niẓām al-Dīn agrees.²⁰¹ On another occasion, he contrasts *samāʿ* with acts of formal worship (*ʿibādat*) by stating that only the former gives him a feeling of tender-heartedness (*riqqat-e*) and repose (*rāḥat-e*) akin to that felt in the presence of his master.²⁰²

Since music, poetry and experiences incited by them remain in themselves ambivalent, *adab* emerges as a primary means to integrate them into the listeners' Sufi practice. Many aspects of *adab* emphasize the religious character of the occasion by drawing parallels with ritual prayer: ritual purity of both the body and clothes is prescribed for the listeners. Also, organizing the participants into rows resembles the arrangement followed in mosque during prayers. In the light of statements like Gesūdarāz's words, 'if there is *adab* in *samāʿ* assemblies, no one can have anything against it,'²⁰³ it is tempting

²⁰⁰ See Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 494–495; Sijzī, *Favāʿid*, 484.

²⁰¹ Sijzī, *Favāʿid*, 325.

²⁰² Sijzī, *Favāʿid*, 528.

²⁰³ Ḥusainī, *Javāmiʿ*, 232–233.

to attribute the emphasis laid on *adab* to the Sufis' attempt to lend respectability to the practice in the eyes of outsiders. This may be true to a certain extent, but whenever Nizām al-Dīn clashed with the critics of *samā'*, *adab* did not play a notable role in the argumentation. Rather, the critics were dealt with by means of legal arguments. During the investigation in the sultan's court, Nizām al-Dīn invoked a hadith and the example of the sheikhs in the Middle East to support his views. Zarrādī does not refer to *adab* in his *Risālat usūl al-samā'*, but sticks to legal reasoning.

When Nizām al-Dīn discusses the permissibility of *samā'* elsewhere, he does not refer to the Koran, hadith, or religious scholars, but to the motivations of the listeners. For him, *samā'* was not allowed or forbidden in any absolute sense.²⁰⁴ When he was asked about the permissibility of the practice, he first wanted to know who is listening.²⁰⁵ He formulated its legal status by referring to various types of listeners: *samā'* is sanctioned by religion (*ḥalāl*) if the listener is fully inclined towards the truth. It is acceptable (*mubāḥ*) if the listener has some spiritual standing and wishes to attain the truth. However, it turns objectionable (*makrūh*) if the listener's attention and concentration veer more in the direction of the phenomenal world instead of the spiritual, and it becomes absolutely forbidden (*ḥarām*) if he is fully submerged in the former.²⁰⁶

The motivation of a listener is, of course, very difficult to monitor and something more tangible is required in order to make *samā'* a practical Sufi technique; this is where the significance of *adab* lies. It is essentially a tool for training Sufi disciples by directing their motivation from the phenomenal world towards spiritual pursuits. It is also a means of rendering music and ambiguous poetic images religious and channelling the experiences of the listeners towards spiritual realities. This points to another important function of *adab* as well: if a listener observes *adab* before succumbing to a mystical state that manifests as behaviours at odds with *adab*, it is likely that his experience is genuine and not just a premeditated act stemming from less than spiritual motivations.

The early Chishtis were emphatically averse to affected mystical states and even the term *tavājud* seems to have acquired a new, concordant meaning in Zarrādī's *Risalah*. Apparently, showing mystical states during *samā'* assemblies conferred enhanced spiritual authority, and persons with less clean motivations used to imitate ecstatic behaviours expressed by influential Sufi masters. Among these persons were probably the antinomian Sufis for whom the conventional *adab* was something of an anathema. In discussing the outcome of the *samā'* investigation, Amīr Khvurd relates that although Nizām al-Dīn was allowed to continue with his practice, *ḥaidarīs* and *qalandars* were forbidden to do so, since they only listened to music for pleasure.²⁰⁷ Although the author

²⁰⁴ This was probably one of the reasons why Nizām al-Dīn asked the sultan to refrain from passing an absolute verdict on the legal status of *samā'* after concluding the investigation. See Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 530.

²⁰⁵ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 492.

²⁰⁶ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 491.

²⁰⁷ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 530.

rejects this information as unreliable, it indicates the suspicion with which Niẓām al-Dīn's circle viewed the *samā'* of other Sufis.

The chapter on *samā'* in *Siyar al-auliya'* ends with a strong condemnation of people who turn *samā'* into a show and attempt to acquire fame through it and who, in doing so, only create confusion about the dance and other movements of those who have real taste.²⁰⁸ *Adab* emerges as the factor that separates real *samā'* from false pretensions to mystical states and guarantees that it is a genuine spiritual practice.

On the whole, the texts written in the Sufi circle of Niẓām al-Dīn considerably shaped the ethos of the Nizami sub-branch by elevating the sensitivity for the effects of music and poetry on par with perfection in religious learning and practice. In discussing Niẓām al-Dīn's followers, Amīr Khvurd takes care to note their proclivity for *samā'* in addition to the more conventional motifs of erudition and piety. Almost everyone possesses the latter two qualities, while only some merit special mention for their taste for *samā'* (*zauq-i samā'*) and crying that burns the liver (*gīrya-yi jigarsoz*).²⁰⁹

In addition to highlighting the merits of absorbed listening, the Sultanate period was especially significant for the later development of *samā'*, as the personal qualities of mystical and aesthetic sensitivity combined with high musical and poetic standards in Niẓām al-Dīn's *jamā'atkhānah*, transforming the Sufi practice into a refined cultural and religious institution. The extensive tradition of Sufi literature that emerged simultaneously around Niẓām al-Dīn ensured that the practice of an individual master became a model for the subsequent generations of Chishti Nizamīs. The textual codification also established certain key characteristics that shaped Niẓām al-Dīn's *samā'*. He employed professional musicians in the manner of contemporary courts instead of relying on amateur input of his Sufi disciples. The practice was intimately linked with passionate love and, as a corollary, poetry on the topic was deemed the most apt choice to be sung by the qawwals. Furthermore, *adab* that emphasized restricting voluntary bodily movements effectively precluded the development of a dance-oriented tradition that emerged, for instance, among the so called whirling dervishes of the Turkish Mevlevis.

²⁰⁸ Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 533–534. On one occasion, such behaviour is said to have infuriated Niẓām al-Dīn. One day, some noisy youngsters, who happened to be sons of the Firdausi sheikh Rukn al-Dīn sailed in a boat from below his *jamā'atkhānah* and disturbed his meditation with their loud music and revelry. On seeing the youngsters, Niẓām al-Dīn remarked wryly: 'Praised be God! One drinks the blood of liver on this path, year after year, and sacrifices his soul, but some newcomers on this road question whether he is something they are not.' He then waved his hand towards them in dismissal. When they attempted to disembark, they drowned. Amīr Khvurd includes this anecdote in a chapter on Niẓām al-Dīn's miracles. See Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 147.

²⁰⁹ See, e.g. Amīr Khvurd, *Siyar*, 164, 196, 199, 201, 205, 292, 311, 314, 315, 317, 319.

2 SAMĀ' IN THE SUFI CIRCLE OF KALĪM ALLĀH SHĀHJAHĀNĀBĀDĪ

2.1 Late Mughal India

According to Scott Kugle, the later Mughal period begins with the coronation of Aurangzeb in 1659 and ends with the deposition of Bahādur Shāh Z̄afar by the British in 1857.²¹¹ On the other hand, one could argue that it was only the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 that hailed the setting in of a new era that was characterized by the emergence of new ruling elites, cultural expressions and religious trends. The beginning of this era saw also the formation of a number of aspects that still characterize South Asian culture and religion today. In the case of *samā'*, the shift of Sufis' focus from metaphysical speculation and poetic-metaphorical expression to traditionalist religious scholarship and expository prose necessitated a conscious effort from the part of the Chishti Nizami sheikhs, who wanted to maintain its relevance yet remain on the cutting-edge of religious developments.

This chapter investigates, how three prominent Chishti Nizami sheikhs, Shāh Kalīm Allāh Shāhjahānābādī (d. 1729), Nizām al-Dīn Aurangābādī (d. 1730) and Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn Dihlavī (d. 1785) perceived and organized the practice of *samā'*. None of them was a poet or musician unlike, for instance, the Chishti masters of Barnawa who remarkably affected the development of Hindustani music during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²¹² Instead, the relevance of these Sufis stems from the influence their legacy has exerted to the present day.

Eighteenth century in Indian history

When Aurangzeb died in 1707, the Mughal territory covered almost the entire Subcontinent from Afghanistan to the eastern borders of Bengal and from Kashmir to the Deccan. Only the southernmost tip remained outside the Mughal rule. Aurangzeb's military campaigns had concentrated on the Deccan, and they culminated in 1687 with the annexation of Golconda of the Qutb Shahis. The remainder of Aurangzeb's life was spent in trying to ward off the attacks of the Marathas in the western Deccan. His death was followed by a war of succession. Such wars were a normal feature of the Mughal kingship that was not based on primogeniture and Aurangzeb himself had had to vanquish his brothers (and jail his father) in order to ascend to the throne. However, after Aurangzeb the rulers changed in rapid succession until Muḥammad Shāh ascended to the throne in 1720. The political disintegration was quick and by the mid-eight-

211 See Kugle 2012: 456.

212 On the Chishti tradition of Barnawa, see Rizvi 2002: II, 275–279. On its significance for music, see Brown 2010.

eenth century the Mughal ruler's territories covered no more than the surroundings of the imperial city in Delhi. In the Deccan, Niẓām al-Mulk Aṣif Jāh set the trend for governors to detach their provinces from the Mughal polity by declaring his fiefdom a personal dominion in 1724. He thus founded the state of Hyderabad that would last until 1948 when it was annexed to independent India in what is called a 'police operation'. Murshid Kulī Khān founded his dynasty in Bengal and Bihar in the 1740s, and a decade later, Awadh emerged as an independent state under its governor, Ṣafdar Jang.

The governors were not the only ones to extend their territories at the cost of the Mughals. Since the 1720s, the Marathas had advanced towards north from the western Deccan and extended their rule over much of central India from Gujarat to Orissa. Afghan leaders took over Kabul and Sind and also founded polities in the Ganges-Yamuna valley and Bhopal. They initially ruled Punjab in the name of the Mughal ruler, but were by the 1750s replaced by the Sikhs whose fragmented rule was substituted by a unitary Sikh state under Ranjit Singh in 1799. From the mid-eighteenth century, the British and French shifted their focus from commerce to governing territories. By the end of the century, the British had defeated the French in the battle over colonizing the Indian Subcontinent.

The fragmentation of political authority and the prevalence of military campaigns have led to a portrayal of the eighteenth century as a period of virtual anarchy. However, recent research suggests that despite the volatile conditions, the overall situation was relatively stable.²¹³ Large areas of the Subcontinent escaped the effects of war. The Mughal administrative structure was upheld under the new rulers and the economy revived swiftly in areas that were affected by military campaigns. Nowhere else is this more tangible than in the case of Delhi. The city survived the devastating incursions of Nadīr Shāh and Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī in 1739 and 1757, respectively, and nevertheless remained a centre of symbolic power, culture and religion until 1857.

Capitals of the successor states came to share the role of the Mughal court as centres of religious and cultural patronage. The nawabs of Awadh shifted their court from Faizabad to Lucknow in 1775, and the latter soon acquired a legendary fame for its refined, aristocratic culture that continued until the British annexation in 1856. In the Deccan, Hyderabad remained a bastion of Indo-Persian culture until 1948. After the termination of the Mughal period, its court attracted an increasing number of poets, musicians and religious scholars from other parts of the Subcontinent. In addition to the urban centres, C.A. Bayly has demonstrated how in the case of north India, smaller townships (*qaṣbah*) came to acquire a significant role in contemporary economic and social developments.²¹⁴

The relative stability perhaps helps to understand the abundance of cultural activities over the eighteenth century. Persian still dominated the literature in the Mughal

213 For recent studies on eighteenth-century India, see Marshall (ed.) 2003.

214 See Bayly 2002.

empire in the beginning of the century. The poetic style of *tāzagū'ī*²¹⁵ that had been promoted in the Mughal and Safavid courts culminated in the literary oeuvre of Mīrzā 'Abd al-Qādir Bedil (d. 1720). The poetry of Bedil and his predecessors is often decried as prolix and abstrusely intellectual, yet the main aim of the poets was to express things in a fresh manner as the term *tāzagū'ī* implies. In practice, this meant developing novel *mazmūns* ('poetic themes'). Shamsur Rahman Faruqi argues that a key means to achieve this was to elaborate the meaning (*ma'nī*) of each *mazmūn* by treating the metaphoric meanings of *mazmūns* as facts and attributing them new metaphorical import. This led to the weaving of dense nets of meaning and affording the metaphor a syntagmatic rather than paradigmatic role. The poetic language became extremely nuanced and it played with polysemic words in a manner that rendered all their meanings germane at once. This resulted in poetry that 'thrives best under rigorous and vigorous reading for its driving force is the intellectual, and not the emotional imagination.'²¹⁶ In the view of Francis Robinson, *tāzagū'ī* (he calls it 'Indian style') entailed 'a mental withdrawal from the immediate physical environment.'²¹⁷ While this may arise essentially from ghazal poetics that eschew realism, it led to the alienation of poetic language from spoken idiom.

However, one should not jump into the conclusion that *tāzagū'ī* poetry in Persian was elitist to the core. The eighteenth century was the period when Persian was used in India more extensively than ever before. It had spread outside the elite *ashraf* classes, and the involvement of Hindus in Persian writing peaked. Bedil, for instance, enlisted several Hindus among his poetic disciples, and they wrote Persian poetry that employed Krishnaite themes. Although one might assume some Indianization of the poetry because of their religious background and the choice of topic, Stefano Pellò has demonstrated that their style of writing was totally in line with the language and interpretive framework promoted by Bedil. Persian was still the universally applicable literary medium that facilitated a discourse on any conceivable topic.²¹⁸

However, Persian was to lose its significance in poetry in the course of the eighteenth century, when Urdu became established in the literary field. The period produced some of the most famous Urdu poets, such as Khvājah Mīr Dard (d. 1785), Mīr Taqī Mīr (d. 1810) and Muḥammad Rafī' Saudā (d. 1781). The new linguistic medium entailed adapting a new poetic style, as well. Although many concepts of *tāzagū'ī*, such as *mazmūn* and *ma'nī*, survived in Urdu poetic theory, the approach was distinctly differ-

215 This style is conventionally referred to as *sabk-i hindī* ('Indian style'). Rajiv Kinra has compellingly argued for abandoning this appellation for two reasons. First, it was coined in early twentieth-century Iran and would not have been recognized by the poets ascribing to this particular style. Second, the style was cosmopolitan and had transregional importance instead of being somehow specific to India or having Indian roots. In contrast, the term *tāzagū'ī* captures the driving force of the poetic style in a manner the poets themselves used. See Kinra 2007.

216 Faruqi 2004: 31, 37, 63, 67.

217 Robinson 2001: 17.

218 Pellò 2014.

ent. Instead of nuanced expression requiring extensive intellectual effort, Urdu poets did not shun seemingly simple speech and wordings that were akin to the spoken language of Delhi. It should be kept in mind that even while Urdu became the language of choice in poetry, a number of poets wrote also Persian verses, and it took almost a century before Urdu was established as a language of prose.

Another art to acquire a form that is still recognizable today was music. Both the Mughal court and the rulers of its successor states extended a generous patronage to musicians. In Delhi, Ni'mat Khān Sadārang introduced the new form of *khayāl* singing to the court of Muḥammad Shāh, and it soon won popular favour from *dhrupād* that was increasingly perceived as archaic. In the eighteenth century, the instruments that are still in vogue in Hindustani music emerged. Ni'mat Khān's brother or nephew introduced sitar, which all but eclipsed the most prestigious court instrument of the Mughal India, the *bīn*. Sarangi became the most widely used accompanying instrument and sarod substituted rabab. From among the membranophones, tabla appears in the paintings of mid-century.²¹⁹ In addition to Delhi, Lucknow, the Rajput courts of Rajasthan and, slightly later, Rampur emerged as important centres of musical patronage.²²⁰

Religious environment

Francis Robinson highlights two factors that were central to the Persian culture extending from Ottoman Istanbul to Delhi and beyond. First was the use of Persian language and the shared literary tradition. The second was the combination of formal and mystical learning and the associated systems of transmission. He has also described two religious trends that crystallized in India in the eighteenth century. The first one combines learning of rational sciences (*ma'qūlāt*) such as logic, mathematics and philosophy with the *vujūdī* metaphysics of Ibn 'Arabī that were, as Stefano Pellò has pointed out, often filtered through the neoplatonic school of Isfahan epitomized by Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1640). The second trend concentrates on traditional religious sciences (*manqūlāt*), especially hadith studies, and supports the *shuhūdī* views promulgated by Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624).²²¹

An instance of the first trend is the '*ulamā*' of the Firangi Mahall studied by Robinson. From their centre in Lucknow, they educated a considerable number of administrators to serve in the Muslim courts during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They used Persian in teaching *dars-i niẓāmī* that became the most widely followed syllabus in India until it was superseded by traditionalist religious learning and modern educational institutions in the latter half on the nineteenth century. Most of the textbooks included in the syllabus represented rational sciences, and it was

²¹⁹ On the musical developments in the eighteenth century, see, e.g. Bor & Miner 2010, Brown 2010 and Miner 2010.

²²⁰ On the latter, see Brahaspati 2010.

²²¹ Robinson 2001: 16, 41 and Pellò 2014: 33. On Sirhindī, see Friedmann 2000 [1971].

designed so as to teach thinking instead of rote learning and to facilitate quicker completion of the course. The ‘*ulamā*’ of the Firangi Mahall also acted as Qadiri sheikhs, and some of their most widely-circulated writings include treatises on *vujūdī* metaphysics.²²²

In eighteenth century Delhi, however, the second, traditionalist *shuhūdī* trend was gaining ground. Before the reign of Aurangzeb, the Mughal court had favoured Qadiri and Chishti brotherhoods. Dārā Shikoh, who was executed by his brother Aurangzeb in 1659, was a disciple of the Qadiri sheikh of Lahore, Miyān Mīr (d. 1635). His sister Jahānārā was more eclectic; she was a Qadiri disciple, but also wrote a hagiography of Khvājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn and was eventually buried opposite the mausoleum of Nizām al-Dīn.²²³ During Aurangzeb’s reign, the atmosphere in the imperial army and the royal court turned favourable to the Mujaddidi sub-branch of the Naqshbandi brotherhood, so named after the title *Mujaddid-i Alf-i Sānī* (‘The Renewer of the Second Millennium’) proclaimed by its founder, Aḥmad Sirhindī.

In Delhi, the traditionalist trend was spearheaded by Shāh Valī Allāh (d. 1762) and his descendants.²²⁴ Valī Allāh was born to a family of religious scholars and Sufis. His father, Shāh ‘Abd al-Raḥīm (d. 1719) had been involved – although reluctantly, according to Guenther²²⁵ – in writing a work on Hanafi jurisprudence, *Fatāwā-yi ‘ālamgīrī*, for Aurangzeb. He had founded Madrasa Raḥīmiyya, one of the most influential religious schools of Delhi that concentrated on studying the Koran and hadith, while eschewing sciences like logic and philosophy that were so essential to *dars-i nizāmī*.

Valī Allāh received training in religious sciences in the madrasa and received the Mujaddidi teachings and practices from his father. He spent eight years studying hadith and *fiqh* in the Hijaz and claimed his own rank in the Sufi hierarchy in the exorbitant fashion familiar from Sirhindī’s writings: according to Valī Allāh, he had been bestowed the light that made him the pole of the saints. Pearson calls Valī Allāh’s combining of the roles of an ‘*ālim* and a Sufi ‘a unique development’.²²⁶ However, such combination was not uncommon and is in evidence in the careers of both the ‘*ulamā*’ of Firangi Mahall and Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn. It rather seems that the emphasis on formal religious learning may have distanced Valī Allāh from what was considered the role of a Sufi sheikh in late Mughal society. When Sayyid Aḥmad Khān wrote his *Āsār al-ṣanādīd* documenting the architectural monuments and notable personalities of Delhi in 1846, he classified Valī Allāh’s son, Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (d. 1824) among the religious

222 Robinson 2001: 14, 41–68.

223 On Jahānārā, see Ernst & Lawrence 2002: 87–90.

224 On Valī Allāh and his writings, see Jalbani 1980; Hermansen 1988, 1997 and 1999; Robinson 2001: 30–32 and Pearson 2008: 8–32.

225 Guenther 2004: 214.

226 Pearson 2008: 9.

scholars (*'ulamā'-i dīn*).²²⁷ Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn and his descendants were tellingly found among the great sheikhs (*kabā'ir al-mashā'ikhīn*).

Much of Valī Allāh's writings revolve around interpreting the formative scriptural sources and positing religion as a central explanation for the social and historical phenomena. He developed a historical trajectory based on the appearance and corruption of religious revelation and explained the turmoil surrounding him arising from the neglect of sharia. As a remedy, he attempted to convince the Muslim nobility to follow and enforce his interpretation of sharia. This went hand in hand with turning to the early Arab followers of the Prophet as an inspirational model. By portraying Muslims as exiles from Arabia to India where Arabic language and genealogy were their most cherished pride, he de-emphasized the Persian legacy and contributed to the formation of a new *ashraf* identity. It was, after all, only this class that could claim Arabic learning and Arab family trees.

Despite his emphasis on Arabic legacy, Valī Allāh was also a synthetic thinker whose concern was the cohesion of the society. This concern led him to forge, through *taṭbīq* ('reconciliation of divergences'), compromises between mutually contradictory views. He attempted to reconcile *vujūdī* and *shuhūdī* views by declaring that *vahdat al-vujūd* was a quality of God, but speaking about him in dualistic terms would serve the purpose of human understanding and thus validate also the *shuhūdī* view. He attempted to bring the Sunnis and Shias closer by declaring that the divine appointment of the first caliphs was attested to by peace that prevailed throughout their reigns, even though Ali was spiritually superior to them. When it came to the divergent legal schools, he rejected conformist following (*taqlīd*) in favour of directly consulting the formative texts. He thus assumed a role of a *mujtahid* who practices independent reasoning in respect to the sharia and is effectively above the divergent legal schools. In this he may have been influenced by his teacher in Hijaz, Abū'l-Ṭāhir al-Kuranī, who also taught Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's teacher Muḥammad Hayyā al-Sindī and advised him to abandon *taqlīd*. It is doubtful, if any of these manoeuvres managed to convince those who held opposite views. Pearson points out that at least the more committed followers of Sirhindī criticized Valī Allāh for compromising the *shuhūdī* views.²²⁸ Instead, the reforming approach was his most important legacy, and during the nineteenth century, it would be claimed by several different movements.

A similar drive for renewal (*tajdīd*) was behind the tradition of the Mujaddidis Muḥammad Nāṣir 'Andalīb (d. 1759) and his son Khvājah Mīr Dard.²²⁹ They were patronized by Aurangzeb's daughter Mihrparvar Begum, who built them a compound inside the walls of Shāhjahānābad when its environs were being repeatedly raided. Following the teachings of his father, Dard advocated a Muhammadan path (*ṭarīqah muḥammadiyyah*), which he boldly considered to be higher than other paths and rep-

227 See *Khān, Āsār* II, 51–55.

228 Pearson 2008: 31.

229 On Dard, see Schimmel 1976: 29–147 and Ziad 2005.

representative of the pure religion of the Prophet. As a *shuhūdī*, he claimed that his experiences as a pure Muhammadan were far beyond those of Ibn ‘Arabī. Unlike Valī Allāh, who profited as an *‘ālim*, Dard was first and foremost a Sufi sheikh, and in *Āsār al-ṣanādīd* his descendants are included in the chapter of great sheikhs.²³⁰

As Hermansen has noted, Valī Allāh favoured expository prose and adopted a polemic and legalistic discourse.²³¹ Dard, on the other hand, expressed his ideas in metaphoric poetic language. His major work, *‘Ilm al-kitāb* consists of a commentary on Persian poetry he claims to have written as a result of divine inspiration. However, he is best remembered as one of the four pillars of Urdu poetry. Annemarie Schimmel reflects a common view, when she writes that Dard is ‘probably the only [Urdu] poet who has achieved a complete blending of mysticism and verse.’²³² It is interesting to note that despite the esteem he enjoys as a mystical poet, his ghazals are hardly ever sung in contemporary *samā‘* assemblies. This is all the more surprising considering his fondness of music. Sirhindī had condemned *samā‘* in no uncertain words and Dard’s liking of music has continued to puzzle both his Mujaddidi colleagues, as well as scholars who have tried to solve the seeming conundrum.²³³ However, it is evident from Dard’s own words that for him music was not a means to experience mystical states, but one of the mathematical sciences. His engagement with music was that of a learned gentleman who appreciated both its aesthetic dimensions and the scientific precision that characterized performances of skilled musicians. Nevertheless, he expressed certain reservation about his musical soirées when he famously said that musicians kept coming to him on their own accord without being invited.²³⁴

Interestingly, Dard expressed similar reservation concerning his Urdu verse by stating that poetry was nothing to be proud over, because as a human skill it could be honed. He found searching for patronage distasteful, since running after rich sponsors would only lead to losing one’s dignity. While Dard accorded to *‘Ilm al-kitāb* a status nearing a revealed scripture, he never expressed similar pride over his Urdu verses. Unlike Dard’s literary legacy in Urdu, his tomb and that of his father are now almost forgotten. They lie inside a fenced compound deep inside a congested slum not far from Old Delhi’s Turkman Gate. Both times I have visited the place, it has been deserted except for a few goats. As far as I know, no Sufi *silsilah* carrying Dard’s legacy has survived to the present.

The opposite holds true for a third Mujaddidi, Mīrẓā Maẓhar Jān-i Jānān (d. 1780). He was also a poet and is considered one of the four pillars of Urdu poetry. Like his colleagues, he was a staunch Sunni. He died after being stabbed by unidentified assailants. However, he had mocked a Shia procession carrying a replica of Husain’s tomb

230 See *Khān, Āsār* II 28–30.

231 Hermansen 1999: 343.

232 Schimmel 1976: 57.

233 See, e.g. Ziad 2007.

234 On Dard’s views on music, see Schimmel 1976: 53–54.

(*tāziyah*) earlier in the day. Despite his negative stance towards the Shia, he was lenient towards Hindus and argued that they did not worship many gods, but agreed on *tauḥīd* and belonged to the people of the book (*ahl-i kitāb*). He apparently had Hindus among his disciples, and since the turn of the twentieth century, one sub-branch of his *silsilah* has operated in a purely Hindu environment.²³⁵ In addition, his influence is felt among the larger Muslim community through the Khalidiyya sub-branch, which has a global following.²³⁶

2.2 The three Chishti Nizami masters

This is the context where the three Chishti Nizami masters operated, spreading their influence throughout the Subcontinent from the imperial capitals of Delhi and Aurangabad. Their presence in the imperial cities is significant because they were otherwise dominated by Mujaddidi stalwarts during the eighteenth century. This environment was conducive to neither the practice of *samāʿ* nor *vujūdī* views. Nevertheless, the three masters successfully advocated both.

Kalīm Allāh Shāhjahānābādī

Most sources date the birth of Shāh Kalīm Allāh to 1650. Shāh Jahān (r. 1627-1657) had, a few years earlier, moved to his new capital of Shahjahanabad, whose building work had started in 1639; furthermore, the building of Taj Mahal was under way. Kalīm Allāh's family of builders, engineers and scholars hailed from Khujand (in present-day Tajikistan). They had immigrated to India during Shāh Jahān's reign and found employment in the service of the architecture-loving monarch. Kalīm Allāh's grandfather, Aḥmad Mi'mār ('the Architect') was involved in the building of both the Taj Mahal and the imperial fort of Shahjahanabad. Kalīm Allāh's father, Ḥājji Nūr Allāh, was a celebrated calligrapher, whose elegant hand graces the facade of Shahjahanabad's Jami' Masjid. The family members also wrote profusely about sciences.²³⁷

Kalīm Allāh received an excellent education at home and started to veer towards Sufism at an early age. Among his early teachers was Shāh Valī Allāh's uncle, Shaikh Abū'l-Riḏā al-Hindī, who had initially rubbed shoulders with the aristocracy but, according to Nizami, later opted for a more modest lifestyle.²³⁸ He was a supporter of *vaḥdat al-vujūd* who emphasized Koranic exegesis and hadith studies in his teaching. Kalīm Allāh's introduction to the Sufi practice followed a coincidence recounted in a famous anecdote.²³⁹ In his youth, Kalīm Allāh had become enamoured with a Hindu youth who, nonetheless, remained indifferent towards him. In order to draw

²³⁵ On which, see Dahnhardt 2007.

²³⁶ On which, see Abu-Manneh (ed.) 2008.

²³⁷ Nizami 1984: 75–80.

²³⁸ Nizami 1984: 89–90.

²³⁹ See, e.g. Nizami 1984: 91; Rizvi 2002: 297 and Khan 2001: 304.

nearer to him, Kalīm Allāh managed to present a gift to a *majzūb*²⁴⁰ who would only accept something from those whose goal would be achieved. When Kalīm Allāh then approached his beloved, he was received with affection. Kalīm Allāh, however, had lost his interest and he returned to the *majzūb*, who instructed him to go to Medina. There, a sheikh called Yaḥyā Madanī would give him what he was yearning for. The anecdote follows a common pattern²⁴¹ in its description of a Sufi's transition from metaphorical, human (*majāzī*) love to real, divine (*ḥaqīqī*) love.

According to Rizvi, Kalīm Allāh stayed in Medina some time between 1676/1677 and 1689, when Yaḥyā Madanī died.²⁴² He was initiated as a disciple of Yaḥyā Madanī and later made his *khalīfah*. Yaḥyā Madanī's Sufi lineage was the one that had been taken to Muzaffarid, Gujarat by Sirāj al-Dīn (d. 1414), the son Naṣīr al-Dīn's *khalīfah* Kamāl al-Dīn 'Allāma (d. 1355). Yaḥyā Madanī was Sirāj al-Dīn's direct descendant in seventh generation. However, his immigration to Medina relieved him of the hereditary duties of looking after the family *khānqāh* and the incumbent duties connected with landed wealth. Breakaway from the hereditary pattern is also discernible in the fact that his most celebrated *khalīfah*, Kalīm Allāh, was not related to him. When Kalīm Allāh returned to Delhi, he re-established the epicentre of the Chishti Nizami *silsilah* in the imperial capital, from where it had spread in numerous lineages throughout the Subcontinent during the Sultanate period.

Back in Shahjahanabad, which had since Aurangzeb's departure to the Deccan in 1679 been bereft of the ruling monarch's presence, Kalīm Allāh established himself in Khanam Bazaar area lying between the imperial fort and the Jami' Masjid. Although Nizami claims that Kalīm Allāh lived occasionally in penury and stubbornly refused to accept gifts from the kings,²⁴³ it is worth noting that the location of his *khānqāh* gave him considerable leverage in one of the prime neighbourhoods of the city. According to Stephen P. Blake, this area was inhabited by the lower ranking great *amūrs*, who were in relation to the emperor next to the princes of the royal family, and a handful of prominent great *amūrs*.²⁴⁴ Kalīm Allāh lived in Delhi until his death in 1729. He was buried in the precincts of his *khānqāh* that remained a flourishing Sufi centre until it was destroyed by the British in the aftermath of the 1857 uprising together with other buildings surrounding the fort and Jami' Masjid. Today, the rebuilt *dargāh* lies inside a congested, decrepit cluster of residential buildings.

240 *Majzūb*, lit. 'someone who is drawn towards someone or carried away'. The term indicates a class of Sufis, whose reason has been rendered dysfunctional by their attraction to God. They are notorious for acting in unpredictable or absurd ways.

241 The most famous of such stories is perhaps the love story of Shaikh San'an and a Christian girl. The former was so enamoured with the latter that in order to please his beloved, he would even agree to herd her pigs. One of the best-known tellings of the story is found in Aṭṭar's *Manṭiq al-ṭair*.

242 Rizvi 2002: II, 298.

243 Nizami 1984: 96.

244 Blake 2002: 51.

Kalīm Allāh was a prolific author who discussed Sufi topics as well as astronomy and medicine in his works.²⁴⁵ The most famous of his books is entitled *Kashkūl*²⁴⁶ ('The Alms Bowl'), completed in 1690. The text has been translated into Urdu²⁴⁷ and into English, the latest translation being Scott Kugle's work published in 2012. Kalīm Allāh named the book after the black, oval-shaped begging bowl made of gourd or coco de mer and used by Sufi mendicants. Like food offerings placed in such a bowl, his book includes different techniques of *zīkr* and contemplation (*murāqabah*) collected from different teachers. Kalīm Allāh hopes that the morsels (*luqmah*) into which each chapter is divided will nourish the readers and that everyone would find something from among the wide variety of meditative techniques.²⁴⁸ The book begins with an introduction that sets the theoretical frame of reference for remembering and contemplating God. Kalīm Allāh then introduces a wide range of techniques in two chapters that discuss *zīkr* and *murāqabah*, respectively. These techniques cover various ways of repeating the commonly employed phrase *lā ilāha illā'llah*, contemplating the written form of these words or Allah's name, observing the breath (*pas-i anfās*), imagining everything as a mirror reflecting the names and attributes of God, as well as exercises borrowed from yogis. The book ends with a lengthy conclusion that offers advice deemed helpful for practitioners.

Before the *Kashkūl*, Kalīm Allāh had written another text, *Muraqqa'* ('The Patched Cloak'), so named because by putting its contents into practice, one could stitch a cloth of insight that would protect him or her from straying away from the Truth.²⁴⁹ *Muraqqa'* contains instructions for reciting Koranic and non-Koranic passages and formulas on different occasions. The first three chapters, called patches (*ruq'ah*), list texts for different obligatory and supererogatory prayers. This is followed by eleven chapters that prescribe certain practices (*ashghāl*, sing, *shagh*) consisting of repeating particular formulas intended to procure a certain result, or writing and ingesting or wearing amulets that often take the form of magic squares. The prescribed results of the practices found in *Muraqqa'* range from extending one's livelihood and healing different ailments to spiritual achievements. Monthly recitations at the end of the book have been borrowed from the celebrated Shattari manual, *Javāhir-i khamsah* ('The Five Jewels') by Muḥammad Ghāus Gvāliyarī (d. 1563), a work that *Muraqqa'* resembles in many respects. Both *Muraqqa'* and *Kashkūl* were actively used among Kalīm Allāh's *khālīfahs*. In a letter addressed to Shāh Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd Allāh, Kalīm Allāh instructs him to

245 For a complete list of Kalīm Allāh's works, see Nizami 1984: 100.

246 As in the case of Kalīm Allāh's other books, the word *kalīmī* has been subsequently added to the title and the work is commonly known as *Kashkūl-i kalīmī* ('The Alms Bowl of Kalīm Allāh').

247 See Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl-i kalīmī: Urdū tarjuma* (2009).

248 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl-i kalīmī*, 2.

249 The text has been published with a parallel Urdu translation in 1922, entitled *Muraqqa'-i kalīmī ma' urdū tarjumah*.

teach *zīkr* and other practices from *Muraqqaʿ* and *Kashkūl*, which are in the former's possession.²⁵⁰

The two manuals are distinctly different in respect to both the content and approach. *Kashkūl* concentrates on cultivating the relationship between a human being and God, whereas *Muraqqaʿ* includes many practices that are meant to render daily life easier. *Muraqqaʿ* merely lists different practices, and *Kashkūl*'s approach is more holistic in a sense that it also discusses the theoretical framework and provides practical advice for transmitting the techniques to disciples. The introduction of *Kashkūl*, for instance, prefaces the practice-oriented chapters with a summary of the manifestation of the universe in *vujūdī* terms.²⁵¹ Kalīm Allāh also keeps reflecting his own views vis-à-vis those of other Sufi masters. When he agrees with them, he usually mentions them by name, but simply refers to 'books on wayfaring' (*kutub-i sulūk*), when he disagrees. The latter expression is used, for example, when Kalīm Allāh recommends concentrating on *zīkr*, *fīkr* ('reflection') and *uns* ('intimacy'), as well as waiting until divine reality draws a human being away from his limited sense perception instead of striving to attain various way stations (*maqām*).²⁵² Later he declares *zīkr* higher than *fīkr*, since it concentrates on God and leads to union (*vuṣūl*) with him while *fīkr* focuses on the self (*naḥs*) and merely leads to repentance (*taubah*), the first step in the Sufi path.²⁵³ Such statements significantly modify the hierarchically conceptualized Sufi path in which different stations and meditative techniques follow each other.

The pedagogic advice in *Kashkūl* addresses actual teaching situations. The first chapter instructs to impart the method of *zīkr* to a disciple together with giving him or her *baiʿat*. Later, Kalīm Allāh recommends a method for teaching the observation of breath to simpleminded or inexperienced practitioners. The guide and the disciple should sit knee to knee while the former synchronizes his own breath with the latter's. His intense concentration causes the disciple's breath to synchronize with either *lā ilāha illāʾllāh* or *allāh hū*.²⁵⁴ What is noteworthy is that the practice of *samāʿ* is discussed only in passing, even as other sources reveal Kalīm Allāh's engagement with the practice. *Muraqqaʿ* is silent about the topic, and a short mention is found in the very end of *Kashkūl* as if as an afterthought to discussing the eternal sound (*ṣaut-i sarmadī*).²⁵⁵

While *Muraqqaʿ* seems to have been modelled after *Javāhir-i khamsah*, Scott Kugle has pointed to Dārā Shikoh's *Risālah-yi haqqnumā* as the antecedent of *Kashkūl*. He notes that, notwithstanding the general emphasis on *zīkr* in Sufi texts, little was written about the actual practices. Instead, they were transmitted orally. In Mughal India,

250 Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt-i kalīmī*, 104.

251 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 3–4.

252 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 4.

253 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 5–6.

254 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 15–16.

255 See Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 51–52.

Dārā Shikoh was the first one to break this silence by describing techniques of *zīkr* in a written text. In line with research that has drawn attention to the competition over authority and patronage between different Sufi brotherhoods and individual sheikhs, Kugle posits that Kalīm Allāh wrote *Kashkūl* as an answer to Dārā Shikoh's treatise in an attempt to demonstrate the all-encompassing nature of his own practical teachings.²⁵⁶ I will suggest below that even if *Kashkūl* was arguably a response Dārā Shikoh's *Risālah*, its contents also reflect the newly defined role of a late Mughal Sufi guide, which emerges in contemporary descriptions of *samā'*.

On the whole, the selection of various techniques presented in *Kashkūl* is remarkably catholic. However, it is important to emphasize that *Kashkūl* is not an encyclopaedia of all the available techniques. Kalīm Allāh writes that unlike certain authors, he has tried to avoid inflating the number of practices included in the text in order to capture the essence of *zīkr*.²⁵⁷ His work represents a synthesis of Sufi practice that freely borrows from various brotherhoods, individual masters and even yogis. The result is a practical method that surpasses the boundaries of different Sufi lineages and effectively raises the person who masters it above the competing traditions. This resembles what Valī Allāh attempted to achieve by the reconciliation of contradictory dogmas and what Dard tried to prove by raising his Muhammadan path above all other brotherhoods. However, Kalīm Allāh's practical approach seems to have resulted in the most enduring outcome, since his method is still utilized in contemporary South Asia.

Kalīm Allāh explained the Sufi path in other, more theoretical works as well. The Arabic *Mā lā budda minhu* ('From Which There Is No Escape), known by its Persianized name *Mā lā budd-i kalīmī*,²⁵⁸ traces the path of a wayfarer (*sālik*) through seven mountain passes ('*aqabah*) that he has to traverse on his way to God. The first passes are knowledge ('*ilm*) and repentance (*taubah*) and the final one is praising and giving thanks to God. Another work, *Tilka 'asharat al-kāmilah* ('Those Ten Perfect Ones'), popularly known as '*Asharah kāmilah*, was written in a solitary retreat (*i'tikāf*) during the final ten days of Ramadan in 1681. During the retreat, Kalīm Allāh wrote one chapter each day. The chapters discuss theological and metaphysical issues pertaining to God's names and qualities, love, as well as more concrete matters like the respective qualities a wayfarer should strive to erase and cultivate. The text is revealing of Kalīm Allāh's attitude towards *vaḥdat al-vujūd*; the bulk of the lengthy third chapter strives to clarify the doubts of those who are critical of *vaḥdat al-vujūd* through a question/answer format.²⁵⁹ Such texts had in India acquired pronounced significance after Aḥmad Sirhindī's criticism of *vujūdī* ideas, which he associated with lax following of sharia. A little before Kalīm Allāh, the Chishti Sabiri master Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī (d. 1648)

256 Kugle 2012.

257 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 17.

258 The text is not to be confused with a treatise on Hanafi *fiqh* by Qāzī Sanā' Allāh Pānīpatī (d. 1810) also entitled *Mā lā budda minhu*.

259 See Kalīm Allāh, *Asharah kāmilah*, 24–30.

had eloquently demonstrated the interconnectedness of sharia and *vaḥdat al-vujūd* in his treatise entitled *Tasviyah* ('Making Equal'). Muḥibb Allāh's significance for the *vujūdī* school in India is illustrated by his epithet Ibn 'Arabī-yi Ṣānī ('The Second Ibn 'Arabī').²⁶⁰ The ninth chapter of *Asharah kāmīlah* discusses *samā'*, with special attention given to some of its experiential aspects that will be discussed below.

Among Kalīm Allāh's widely circulating works is a commentary on the Koran written in 1713 and an Arabic treatise entitled *Sawā' al-sabīl* ('The Even Road'). The latter comprises sixty-five way stations (*marḥalah*) that discuss existence (*vujūd*), God's essence and qualities, as well as the relationship of the creator and the created. The text employs the terminology coined by Ibn 'Arabī and his followers and squarely places Kalīm Allāh among the significant advocates of *vujūdī* school in late Mughal India.²⁶¹

Kalīm Allāh's letters to his disciples have been preserved in a collection entitled *Maktūbāt-i kalīmī*. *Maktūbāt* includes 132 letters, out of which 107 are addressed to Niẓām al-Dīn Aurangābādī. Some letters consist of only a few lines, whereas others fill several pages in the lithographed edition published in 1883–1884.²⁶² According to Nizami, the lengthy ninety-sixth letter, which contains instructions on accepting charity, giving *bai'at*, teaching *vaḥdat al-vujūd* and practicing *samā'* is known as the rule of action (*dastūr al-'amal*) of the Chishti Nizami brotherhood.²⁶³ The letters were an important means for Kalīm Allāh to communicate with his *khalīfahs* who had spread throughout the Subcontinent. In the case of Niẓām al-Dīn, they were vital for sustaining the close relationship between the Sufi guide and his most important disciple.

Niẓām al-Dīn Aurangābādī

Kalīm Allāh was survived by four sons and three daughters. In addition, Nizami lists eighteen of his *khalīfahs* mentioned in various texts.²⁶⁴ After Kalīm Allāh's death, the *khānqāh* in Delhi was passed to his son. However, the most important of his disciples was Niẓām al-Dīn Aurangābādī who, according to Kugle, was almost like an adopted son to him.²⁶⁵ His year of birth is in some sources given as 1650, which would make him of the same age as his Sufi guide. Although there is nothing as such that would preclude such a possibility, Nizami contests this year on the grounds that the style of letters sent by Kalīm Allāh to Niẓām al-Dīn suggests that the latter was junior to him.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁰ On Muḥibb Allāh and his works, see Robinson 2001: 57–58; Rizvi 2002: II 139–143, 268–272 and Lipton 2010.

²⁶¹ In his survey of Indian *vujūdī* texts, William Chittick rates *Sawā' al-sabīl* as VI+, indicating a work between 'an important text in Ibn al-'Arabī's school' (VI) and 'an outstanding work, offering fresh and original contributions to Ibn al-'Arabī's school of thought' (VII). See Chittick 1992: 238.

²⁶² An Urdu translation has recently been published by the custodians of the Aurangabad shrine. See Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt-i kalīmī: Urdū tarjumah*.

²⁶³ Nizami 1984: 112.

²⁶⁴ Nizami 1984: 49–50.

²⁶⁵ Kugle 2012: 485. For a detailed discussion on the Sufi traditions of Aurangabad, see Green 2006.

²⁶⁶ Nizami 1984: 152.

Nizām al-Dīn's place of birth is also uncertain. Both Nizami and Rizvi name Kakori in Awadh as the most frequently quoted option.²⁶⁷ He belonged to a family that traced its descent to Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī.²⁶⁸

Like a number of his contemporaries, Nizām al-Dīn initially arrived in Delhi in quest of higher education, but started to show interest in Sufism under Kalīm Allāh's influence. The first meeting between the two is told to have taken place during a *samā'* assembly. As was his habit, Kalīm Allāh kept the doors to his *khānqāh* closed as long as the music continued and Nizām al-Dīn happened to arrive before they were opened. When Kalīm Allāh's disciple informed the master that there was a stranger at the door, Kalīm Allāh said that he was not a stranger and told the disciple to let Nizām al-Dīn in.²⁶⁹ After some time, Kalīm Allāh sent his disciple with the imperial army to the Deccan. He was stationed in Burhanpur and Sholapur before eventually settling in Aurangabad and laying the foundations of his *khānqāh* there.

Aurangabad was originally founded in 1610 by the Nizam Shahi rulers of Ahmednagar. After Aurangzeb had left Shahjahanabad for good in order to fully engage in the enervating campaigns in the Deccan, he re-founded Aurangabad as his southern capital. The heyday of the city continued after Aurangzeb's death, and it served as the capital of the Asif Jahi territories from 1724 to 1763. At its highest, the population of the city numbered 200 000 people living in fifty-three neighbourhoods.²⁷⁰ Measuring about half of Shahjahanabad's population, this was a significant number.

Green points out that the main supporter of Nizām al-Dīn was his disciple Kāmgar Khān, who was of Central Asian origin and acted as a superintendent in the high Mughal court. He was responsible for building the *khānqāh* and mosque for Nizām al-Dīn, as well as the mausoleum after his death. Building these edifices next to Kāmgar's house in Aurangabad's Shah Ganj area, which was a busy market in the vicinity of the city's royal palace, offered Kalīm Allāh's successor a prominent location to operate from.²⁷¹

Nizami emphasizes that Nizām al-Dīn started to accept gifts from the nobility only after Kalīm Allāh asked him to do so. Before, he had consistently refused food offerings from A'zam Shāh, Aurangzeb's third son.²⁷² Despite this seeming reluctance to associate with the aristocracy, Nizām al-Mulk Aṣif Jāh, the founder of the state of Hyderabad, is counted among Nizām al-Dīn's prominent disciples, and he is believed to have written a work entitled *Rashk-i gulistān-i Iram* ('Envy of the Rose Garden of Iram') about the Sufi master.²⁷³ Later tradition also links the founding of the state and the ruling

267 Nizami 1984: 153; Rizvi 2002: II, 304.

268 Rizvi 2002: II, 304.

269 Nizami 1984: 154.

270 Green 2006: 1–2, 4.

271 Green 2006: 24–25.

272 Nizami 1984: 167, 170.

273 The authorship of this book seems somewhat dubious, especially as it appears that neither Green, Nizami nor Rizvi seem to have actually accessed the book. It is also remarkable that the designated

dynasty with Niẓām al-Dīn's blessings.²⁷⁴ This, together with operating from an aristocratic neighbourhood of Aurangabad, aptly demonstrates the position of Sufis in late Mughal society, where they, in Nile Green's words, 'acted as the sources and recipients of authority in a society in which Sufi and courtly power sometimes competed but just as often complemented one another as the natural state of affairs in the world.'²⁷⁵

After settling in Aurangabad, Niẓām al-Dīn stayed there until his death in 1730. His assemblies there were documented by Kāmgar in a collection of *malḡūzāt* entitled *Aḥsan al-shamā'il* ('The Most Beautiful of Virtues').²⁷⁶ Kāmgar wrote the book on the request of Niẓām al-Dīn's son Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn and it was completed in 1743, over a decade after the Sufi master's passing. As the work is written posthumously unlike, for example, *Favā'id al-fu'ād* and *Javāmi' al-kalim*, it consists of undated assemblies. However, a rough chronology is established around reading particular books, such as *Kimiyā al-sa'ādāt* by al-Ghazālī, *Baḥr al-asrār*, *Laṭā'if-i ashrafi* by Niẓām Gharīb Yamanī and the *dīvān* of Rūmī, in the assemblies.²⁷⁷ This may be a literary convention used to organize disparate memories of Kāmgar. However, on most occasions it is Kāmgar himself or his brother Nūr al-Dīn who reads the books to Niẓām al-Dīn. This may have helped him to establish an approximate chronology.

Passages like the following are typical to *Aḥsan al-shamā'il*:

One day, brother Nūr al-Dīn was reading the treatise *Manāqib-i cishtīyah* and Ḥazrat [Niẓām al-Dīn], may his shadow be extended, was listening. It was written in that treatise that once there was no rain for a long time. The king sent the following humble message to Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd (who was a *khālīfah* of the Monarch of Sheikhs, Shāh Niẓām al-Dīn Auliā', the Divine Beloved), may his secret be sanctified: 'Truth, high is he, has bestowed upon me the rule of this country. I attempt to protect the creation of God and I fight against the

sajjādanashīn of the Aurangabad shrine, Mahboob-ul-Arifeen, has not been able to locate a copy of the text despite his repeated efforts. Two early nineteenth-century hagiographers Ghulām Sarvar Lahaurī and Gul Muḥammad Aḥmadpūrī attribute this book to Kāmgar Khān instead of Niẓām al-Mulk. *Manāqib-i fakhrīyah*, a saintly biography of Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn, states that Kāmgar wrote a manuscript *Rashk-i gulistān-i Iram* (*nuskḥah-yi rashk-i gulistān-i iram*) on Niẓām al-Dīn's wonderful life and named it *Aḥsan al-shamā'il*. In Nizami's view, all these statements are incorrect. Instead, he chooses to base his view on the provenance of the book on Maulvi Raheem Bakhsh's testimony that he had seen *Rashk-i gulistān-i Iram* written by Niẓām al-Mulk. See Nizami 1984: 175–176.

²⁷⁴ See Green 2006: 96.

²⁷⁵ Green 2006: 6.

²⁷⁶ For this study, I have consulted the recent Urdu translation commissioned by Mahboob-ul-Arifeen and published together with *Majālis-i kalīmī*. In the case of verses, the text includes the original Persian text as well as the translation. Deeming from them, the translator Ghous Mohiyuddin Ahmed Siddiqui has done diligent and thorough work. Furthermore, the Persian originals of many of the key terms relating to *samā'* can be gleaned from other contemporaneous texts discussing the topic.

²⁷⁷ Frequent references to books read, taught and discussed in *Aḥsan al-shamā'il* question Nizami's assertion that in Aurangabad Niẓām al-Dīn concentrated exclusively on devotional practices, having lost his interest in books. See Nizami 1984: 163.

enemies of Islam. The distress of God's creatures has exceeded the limits, since there is no rain. In this matter, I seek the help of God's friends.' The respected sheikh, Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd, may his secret be sanctified, said: 'I will read a prayer (*fātiḥah*) when there will be a *samā'* assembly.' After some days, a *samā'* assembly was organized. One of the disciples reminded [Naṣīr al-Dīn who was] overcome with intense yearning (*shauq*) about the king's request. The respected sheikh, may his secret be sanctified, raised his hands and read a prayer. Due to God's kindness, rain begun to fall that very day. After hearing this anecdote, Ḥaẓrat, may his shadow be extended, turned towards the excellent and perfect Miyān Muḥammad Fāzil Jī'ū²⁷⁸ and said: 'Such occurrences have taken place several times in our assemblies as well.' At that moment, brother Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn recited the verse:

Beauty of Joseph, breath of Jesus, white hand²⁷⁹ you have

All these [qualities] that [different] beauties have, you possess alone.

When Nūr al-Dīn had told me this incident, he said that once it occurred that there was no rain in Sholapur. In those days, Maḥdī Khān acted as the governor and requested the repository of sainthood Nizām al-Dīn Auliya' [Aurangābādī] to deal with this matter, as has been explained [elsewhere] in *Aḥsan al-shamā'il*.²⁸⁰

In *Aḥsan al-shamā'il*, Nizām al-Dīn's assemblies frequently begin with reading a book aloud. This confirms Nile Green's assertion that in early eighteenth-century India, books were still essentially associated with people. They were rarely read alone and the information they contained was mediated through a living teacher. The new book culture that would encourage individual reading and open the field for the printing press was yet to come.²⁸¹ The importance of the Sufi guide is further emphasized by Nizām al-Dīn's claim that occurrences like the one described in *Manāqib-i cishtīyah* do not belong to the past, but have taken place during his own life as well. Nizām al-Dīn's comment in itself remains elusive, and it is only Nūr al-Dīn's explanation that reveals the situation behind the claim. Such commentary by the disciples appears only in the *malḥūzāt* that were produced posthumously and it reveals the role of the Sufi sheikh's followers in building his fame. Since the text was composed only after Nizām al-Dīn's death when the general impression of his career and achievements had already taken shape, the author probably wrote his record so as to substantiate this impression. While this no doubt compromises the spontaneity characterizing the *malḥūzāt* written when their subject was still alive, it simultaneously highlights the

278 The respectful and endearing *jī'ū*, corresponding to Hindi *jī*, is also used by Kalīm Allāh in his writings.

279 *Yad-i baizā* ('the white hand') is a reference to the miracle associated with Moses. When he drew his hand out of the collar of his cloak, it had turned shining white.

280 Kāmgar, *Majālis-i kalīmī o aḥsan al-shamā'il* (henceforward *Aḥsan*), 56.

281 See Green 2010.

themes that were deemed most worthy of remembrance. Significantly, *samā'* is among the frequently occurring topics in *Aḥsan al-shamā'il*.

Kāmgār Khān also authored the only brief *malfūzāt* of Kalīm Allāh. In 1719, the governor (*sūbadār*) of Aurangabad, Ḥusain 'Alī Khān, was about to embark on a journey to Delhi and Kāmgār was offered a chance to join him. Due to the arduousness of the journey, his bother Nūr al-Dīn stayed back even though he had long nurtured a wish to meet Kalīm Allāh. In order to console his brother, Kāmgār decided to write a book about the assemblies of Kalīm Allāh he would attend. However, Nūr al-Dīn died during Kāmgār's sojourn in Delhi and the book became a memorial him.²⁸² The short text consists of fourteen assemblies recorded over a period of about one month from 27 Rabi' al-Thani to 8 Jumadi al-Awwal 1132 (6 February to 17 March 1720). The issues discussed in the assemblies revolve around the disorder following the death of emperor Farrukhsiyar in 1719 and the emergence of the Sayyid brothers in the political arena, as well as the threat of Marathas camping outside Shahjahanabad. Kāmgār also records his admiration of the imperial city and its Jāmi' Masjid where the emperor himself would pray. Unfortunately, Kāmgār neither attended *samā'* assemblies, nor did Kalīm Allāh discuss the topic during Kāmgār's visits.

Like Kalīm Allāh, Niẓām al-Dīn also wrote a treatise on different meditative techniques and called it *Niẓām al-qulūb* ('The Order for Hearts').²⁸³ It presents a wide selection of *zīkrs* in twenty-one chapters. Some are mentioned in the *Kashkūl*, while others appear only in *Niẓām al-qulūb*. *Nizam al-qulūb* lays more emphasis on the Chishti affiliation of the author than *Kashkūl*, and Kugle is probably right in attributing this to the increased competition with the Mujaddidis.²⁸⁴ Ernst has noted Niẓām al-Dīn's overwhelming emphasis laid on vocal *zīkr*, which contrasts the Mujaddidis' shunning of the practice. Among the various techniques of different Sufi brotherhoods and yogis is also an extended discussion of the Naqshbandi practice of contemplation (*murāqabah*) that, Ernst points out, differs remarkably from the practice as described in the works of Niẓām al-Dīn's junior contemporary Valī Allāh.²⁸⁵ Bearing in mind the sheer abundance of meditative and contemplative techniques available to Sufis in late Mughal India, it is possible that the practices described by Niẓām al-Dīn were derived from another Naqshbandi Mujaddidi lineage.

Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn Dihlavī

When Niẓām al-Dīn died in 1730, barely one year after Kalīm Allāh, he was succeeded by his sixteen-year-old son Fakhr al-Dīn. Nile Green suggests that due to his young age, the *khānqāh* was managed by a senior disciple of Niẓām al-Dīn, possibly Kāmgār

²⁸² Kāmgār, *Majālis-i kalīmī*, 3–4.

²⁸³ The text was published in a Persian lithograph in 1891–1892.

²⁸⁴ Kugle 2012: 484.

²⁸⁵ Ernst 1999b.

Khān.²⁸⁶ According to Rizvi, Fakhr al-Dīn spent three years studying and eight years in intensive Sufi practice after the death of his father.²⁸⁷ He studied Ibn ‘Arabī’s works, especially *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, from Miyān Muḥammad Jān. Later in life, he intended to write a treatise on *vaḥdat al-vujūd* himself, but then gave up the idea because he feared that common people might misunderstand it.²⁸⁸ In addition to Sufi practices and Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought, the third vital field of learning, hadith, was covered under the tutelage of As‘ad al-Anṣārī.²⁸⁹

After the period of intensive study and practice, Fakhr al-Dīn joined the army of Nāṣir Jang (d. 1750), the son of Nizām al-Mulk. After his death, he resolved to move to Delhi, where he arrived in 1751–1752. It is difficult to say why Fakhr al-Dīn chose Delhi instead of Hyderabad, where many Sufis were migrating during the period. Perhaps it was due to the fact that he had been attached to the troops of Nāṣir Jang, who was defeated by his half-brother Muẓaffar Jang (d. 1751) in the struggle over the dominion of the Asif Jahi territories. His choice is all the more surprising because in the 1750s, Delhi was slipping into a deepening chaos. The Iranian ruler Nādir Shāh’s looting campaign in 1739 had caused little enduring damage, but when fighting erupted in the 1750s after the military advances of his successor Aḥmad Shāh Abdalī and the Marathas, the suburbs of the Mughal capital situated outside the city walls were left desolate. In the 1760s, the city was ruled by the Rohilla Afghans, and when the Mughal emperor Shāh ‘Ālam assumed his position in 1770, the city was mostly in ruins. It started to recover only after being brought under the protection of the British in 1803.²⁹⁰

In the volatile conditions, Fakhr al-Dīn’s ties with the Hyderabad nobility remained close and he was supported by Nizām al-Mulk’s grandson ‘Imād al-Mulk Fīroz Jang (d. 1800), who was the factual ruler of the city during the latter part of the 1750s and was responsible for blinding one emperor and having another assassinated.²⁹¹ Although he does not come across as an ideal candidate for Sufi discipleship, ‘Imād al-Mulk immortalized Fakhr al-Dīn’s fame in two works, *Manāqib-i fakhriyyah* and *Fakhriyyat al-nizām*. In addition, he provided him with a place to found a madrasa and *khānqāh* close to the Ajmeri Gate. Both Margrit Pernau and Khaliq Anjum have identified this as the building that housed the famous Delhi College in the early-nineteenth century and that is today known as The Anglo Arabic Senior Secondary School.²⁹²

The madrasa of Fakhr al-Dīn, who was now known as Maulānā and Muḥibb al-Nabī (‘The Lover of the Prophet’),²⁹³ became the most important religious school in the city along with Valī Allāh’s Madrasa Raḥīmiyyah. Fakhr al-Dīn combined in his teach-

286 Green 2006: 22.

287 Rizvi 2002: 305.

288 See Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr al-ṭālibīn*, 39.

289 Nizami 1984: 187–188.

290 Blake 1991: 165–167, 169.

291 Blake 1991: 164; Green 2006: 64.

292 See Khān, *Āṣār* II, 250; Pernau 2006: 5–6.

293 According to Fakhr al-Dīn, the title was bestowed to him by Kalīm Allāh. See Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 73.

ing the religious sciences and Sufism, probably following the *dars-i niẓāmī* syllabus, whereas the latter institution concentrated on traditionalist religious learning. Fakhr al-Dīn had several able disciples who spread his *silsilah* throughout the Subcontinent just like Niẓām al-Dīn's disciples had done in the fourteenth century. A number of the most vital Chishti Nizami lineages of contemporary South Asia can be traced to one of these disciples. Nūr Muḥammad Mahārvi (d. 1790), a close disciple with whom Fakhr al-Dīn undertook a pilgrimage to Ajodhan on foot, spread the *silsilah* in Punjab and, according to Rizvi, popularized *samāʿ* in the Bahawalpur area.²⁹⁴ Shāh Niyāz Aḥmad Bareilvi (d. 1834) established himself in Bareilly and spread the *silsilah* in Rohilkhand. He was also a poet whose texts have remained extremely popular in *samāʿ* assemblies throughout the Subcontinent.²⁹⁵ Maulānā Ziyāʿ al-Dīn (d. 1810) settled in Rajput Jaipur and Mīr Shams al-Dīn, in Ajmer. Ḥājji Laʿl Muḥammad (d. 1833) stayed in Delhi and lies buried in the Nizamuddin shrine, where many of its custodians became his disciples. In addition, Nizami lists thirty-nine of Fakhr al-Dīn's *khalīfahs*.²⁹⁶

Fakhr al-Dīn died in 1785 and was buried in the shrine complex of Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, a favourite site for his pilgrimages. The madrasa continued to work for some time, but it closed down towards the end of the eighteenth century. The *khānqāh* was taken over by Fakhr al-Dīn's eldest son Ghulām Quṭb al-Dīn (d. 1817), who enlisted the last two Mughal emperors Akbar Shāh (r. 1806–1837) and Bahādur Shāh Zafar (r. 1837–57) as his disciples. Fakhr al-Dīn's grandson, Naṣīr al-Dīn Kāle Miyān ('The Black Gentleman') also cultivated close ties with the court, where he befriended the poet Mīrzā Asad Allāh Khān Ghālib (d. 1869).²⁹⁷ The relationship between Fakhr al-Dīn's family and the Mughal rulers remained a close one during the last fifty years of the dynasty.

In his writings, Fakhr al-Dīn focused on clarifying dogmatic issues. *Niẓām al-ʿaqāʾid* is a treatise on Sunni beliefs written during the pilgrimage to Ajodhan. In *Risālah murjiʿah* he tackled ʿAbd al-Qādir Jilānī's controversial statement found in *Ghunyat al-ṭālibīn* that Hanafis were Murjiites. Fakhr al-Dīn argues that the Hanafis' emphasis on divine mercy over wrath was behind this statement. However, unlike Murjiites, the Hanafis did not attempt to erase God's wrath and thus did not deviate from the truth.²⁹⁸ The most famous of Fakhr al-Dīn's works, *Fakhr al-ḥasan*, refutes Valī

294 Rizvi 2002: 309. For a detailed discussion on Nūr Muḥammad, see Alvi 2010.

295 On Shāh Niyāz and his poetry, see Viitamäki 2012.

296 See Nizami 1984: 242.

297 Nizami relates that Naṣīr al-Dīn died in 1847, whereas Rizvi mentions 1846. See Nizami 1984: 239 and Rizvi 2002: 308. Zia Inayat Khan questions this on the basis of the evidence found in *Āṣār al-ṣanādīd* and the writings of Ghālib. He suggests that Naṣīr al-Dīn was executed by the British in the aftermath of the 1857 uprising. See Khan 2001: 314.

298 It is significant that Fakhr al-Dīn does not mention the political context of Ali-Muʿawiya conflict where the Murjiite view of postponing the decision concerning the piety of a Muslim until the day of judgement was first voiced. In this respect, he follows the practice established by Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyaʿ. On the latter's views, see Kumar 2007: 205–207.

Allāh's claim that the Chishti *silsilah* could not continue unbroken up to Ali, since Ḥasan Baṣrī was very young when Ali died and could not have been selected as his *khālīfah*. The text was widely read and well-received among Indian Sufis.²⁹⁹ In addition to tackling controversial issues, Fakhr al-Dīn wrote a treatise entitled *ʿAin al-yaqīn*, on Sufism.

I was unfortunately unable to consult ʿImād al-Mulk's *tazkirah Manāqib-i fakhriyyah* for this study. Manuscripts and the lithograph published in late-nineteenth century are relatively rare in comparison with the other works discussed in this chapter. However, *Fakhr al-tālibīn*, a *malḥūzāt* compiled by Nūr al-Dīn Ḥusain Khān contains information about the significance of *samāʿ* in Fakhr al-Dīn's Sufi practice. Like *Aḥsan al-shamāʿil*, *Fakhr al-tālibīn* appears to have been written posthumously. The assemblies are not dated and in the lithographed edition published in 1897–1898 they are entitled 'About x' (*dar-zikr-i x*) and begin with the formula 'one day I obtained the wealth of seeing [him]' (*roz-e daulat-i mushāhadah muyassar shud*). Most of the passages record Fakhr al-Dīn's discourses in *malḥūzāt* style, but occasionally the author's comments about the background of different persons mentioned in the text occupy the greater part of the contents. Most discourses take place in Fakhr al-Dīn's *khānqāh*, but the text also mentions frequent pilgrimages to the shrines of Niẓām al-Dīn, Naṣīr al-Dīn and Quṭb al-Dīn. Complemented with references to visiting the tombs of Muʿīn al-Dīn and Salīm Cishtī, located in Ajmer and Fatehpur Sikri, respectively, the text reveals the importance of sacred geography in Fakhr al-Dīn's devotional life.

Fakhr al-Dīn's prominence in Delhi led to a rivalry with contemporary Mujaddidi masters. This applies especially to the tradition promulgated by Valī Allāh and his son, Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Fakhr al-Dīn had contested Valī Allāh's views on the integrity of his Sufi lineage. Their approaches to Sufi practice differed in respect to vocal *zikr* and *samāʿ*. At the same time, the two families were close. Fakhr al-Dīn tied the turban of Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz when the latter assumed the leadership of the family's Sufi tradition after his father's demise. Nizami points out that Fakhr al-Dīn also took the chance to advise ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz to clean the only stain from the hem of his father by giving up the claims of being a *mujtahid* and embracing *taqlīd*.³⁰⁰ Even though the two religious trends represented by Kalīm Allāh's and Valī Allāh's respective Sufi circles would grow increasingly apart during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this did not prevent Chishti Nizami and Mujaddidi families from forging marital ties between them. After all, they all belonged to the Sufi nobility of the city. When lithographed *Sawāʾ al-sabīl*

299 An extensive Arabic commentary entitled *Al-Qaul al-mustaḥsan fi fakhri al-ḥasan* (1894–1895) was written by Maulānā Ḥasan al-Zamān Ḥaidarābādī, a *khālīfah* of the famous Chishti Nizami sheikh Muḥammad ʿAlī Khairābādī. For the original text complemented with an Urdu translation, see Fakhr al-Dīn, *Fakhr al-ḥasan maʿhu tarjumah ʿalī ḥasan*.

300 Nizami 1984: 211.

was published in 1924–1925, it was commissioned by Sayyid ‘Abd al-Ghanī who was the *sajjādanashīn* of both, Kalīm Allāh and Valī Allāh.

2.3 *Samā’* and the dynamics of Sufi practice

The activities of Kalīm Allāh, Nizām al-Dīn and Fakhr al-Dīn are often considered to constitute a revival of the Chishti Nizami brotherhood. Since research on its history during the centuries following Nizām al-Dīn Auliya and his immediate successors is still largely lacking, it is difficult to determine if the brotherhood had lost its vitality and was in need of renewal. Chishti Nizamīs had remained active in Gujarat from where Yaḥyā Madanī hailed, in Bengal, as well as in the Deccan where the descendants of Gesūdarāz dominated the Sufi scene. What Kalīm Allāh and his followers no doubt did was to re-establish the brotherhood in the imperial capital. From Delhi and Aurangabad, new sub-branches spread throughout India, thus ensuring a wide geographical distribution of the teachings and practices of the three Sufi masters. Their articulate stance to *samā’* guaranteed the survival of the practice in the devotional regime of even the most staunch religious reformists who would hail from among their followers.

The Mujaddidi opposition

The three Chishti Nizamīs were avid practitioners of *samā’*. In a letter addressed to Nizām al-Dīn, Kalīm Allāh writes how he had designated different days of the week for different activities, such as collective *zīkr*, *samā’* and *murāqabah* in his *khānqāh*.³⁰¹ *Aḥsan al-shamā’il* relates that Nizām al-Dīn held a *samā’* assembly every Friday. The increasing influence of the Mujaddidis, however, made Kalīm Allāh and Nizām al-Dīn cautious, and Kalīm Allāh frequently advised Nizām al-Dīn to be considerate when engaging in vocal *zīkr* (*zīkr-i jahri*) and *samā’*, the two practices contested by the followers of Sirhindī.

In one of the letters included in *Maktūbāt*, Kalīm Allāh asks Nizām al-Dīn to spread real Islam from east to west, yet act in accordance with changing times and emphasize silent *zīkr* (*zīkr-i khafi*) and *murāqabah*, because they are universally accepted by all Sufi brotherhoods. Kalīm Allāh justifies his views by the fact that the Mughal rulers are increasingly favouring the Naqshbandīs to whom they are attached like their ancestor Amir Timur. To compensate for the lacking effect of *samā’*, Kalīm Allāh suggests that practicing *murāqabah* for three hours daily will create a similar state of forgetting oneself and one’s environment (*kaifiyyat-i be-khuyudī o be-hoshī*).³⁰² As important as *samā’* was for Kalīm Allāh, he recommends organizing a musical

³⁰¹ Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 93.

³⁰² Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 13–14.

assembly (*majlis-i surūd*) only occasionally. One should not abandon the practice totally, but neither should one engage in it excessively.³⁰³

Such caution was apparently inspired by a real danger. Kalīm Allāh relates how a Sufi was whipped by Ghāzī al-Dīn Khān for performing vocal *zīkr* in a mosque and Niẓām al-Dīn mentions that a supervisor (*muhtasib*) in the Mughal army had jailed a Sufi, who allowed the playing of instruments in *samāʿ*, together with his qawwals.³⁰⁴ Under such conditions, emphasizing *murāqabah* and silent *zīkr* seems a natural means to avoid the unwanted attention of Mujaddidis. On the other hand, such approach also enabled the inclusion of Naqshbandis in the circle of Kalīm Allāh and Niẓām al-Dīn. Bearing in mind Kalīm Allāh's frequent reminders that Niẓām al-Dīn could vary different practices, because he had 'all the *tarīqahs*,'³⁰⁵ the emphasis on Naqshbandi techniques appears to echo the greater synthesis of Sufi practice the late Mughal Chishti Nizamis were forging. If a Sufi master had command over a wide range of meditative and contemplative techniques, he could cater to people belonging to various *silsilahs* and guide them in accordance with the tenets of their respective traditions. In this respect, the Chishti Nizami masters re-envisioned the role of a Sufi guide. Instead of carrying the limited tradition of one lineage, he emerges as a virtuosic guide who can help people in their spiritual endeavours like a doctor helping his patients. The environment, where multiple initiations had become a norm, facilitated this newly articulated role.³⁰⁶

The texts discussed in this chapter indicate that this was not merely an ideal and that Chishti Nizami masters did indeed guide disciples of other Sufi sheikhs. For example, *Aḥsan al-shamāʿil* mentions a person who was a disciple of someone else, yet no signs of spiritual experience appeared in him. Once, he had visited the tombs of Burhān al-Dīn Ghārīb and Rājū Qattāl³⁰⁷ in Khuldabad and engaged in *murāqabah* there. He received an indication that Niẓām al-Dīn could assist him in discovering his inner realms. Since he was already a disciple of someone else, Niẓām al-Dīn would only teach him inner practices (*shaghl-i bāṭinī*) that helped him to achieve his goal. Significantly, the discovery of inner realms manifested itself as mystical states during

303 Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 26.

304 Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 90; Kāmgar, *Aḥsan*, 75.

305 See, e.g. Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 22, 26, 67. *Maktūbāt* mentions Naqshbandiyya, Kaziruniyya, Suhrawardiyya, Kubrawiyya and Shattariyya as brotherhoods included in Niẓām al-Dīn's *baiʿat* from Kalīm Allāh. Qadiriyya is not explicitly mentioned, but Kalīm Allāh's followers also evoke a master-disciple chain that leads to ʿAbd al-Qādir Jilānī via Kalīm Allāh and Yaḥyā Madanī.

306 It should be kept in mind that not all Sufis combining multiple lineages in their *silsilah* had acquired multiple initiations from various masters. In most cases, an illustrious master had been initiated in several lineages, all of which he then transmitted to his followers. In the case of the Chishti Nizami Kalīmī *silsilah*, different brotherhoods converged in Yaḥyā Madanī and were henceforward transmitted together.

307 Sayyid Yūsuf Ḥusaini Rājū Qattāl (d. 1330) was the father of Gesūdarāz.

samā'.³⁰⁸ Although the person had visited the tombs of Chishti saints in Khuldabad, his practice of *murāqabah* there indicates that he was in fact a Mujaddidi.

Notwithstanding the caution in the face of Mujaddidi influence, such virtuosic ability to guide people across the borders of different brotherhoods would also manifest itself as a sense of superiority over them. In *Kashkūl*, Kalīm Allāh contests the Naqshbandi adage *al-nihāyah fi'l-bidāyah* ('Beginning in the end') that the Mujaddidis interpreted to imply the superiority of their method: they begin with what represents the highest achievement for the rest of the brotherhoods. However, Kalīm Allāh holds that the *zīkr* of a Naqshbandi novice is different from the *zīkr* of an experienced practitioner belonging to any other order and thus denies claims on the superiority of their method.³⁰⁹

A similar approach is found in *Fakhr al-ṭālibīn*, where Fakhr al-Dīn is reported to have interpreted Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband's statement 'I neither deny it, nor do I practice it' (*inkār mī kunīm na in kār mī kunīm*) to refer only to playing reed pipes (*mazāmīr*), not to the entire practice of *samā'* as it was apparently interpreted by contemporary Mujaddidis. In order to lend authority to his statement, Fakhr al-Dīn refers to *Rashāḥat*, one of the widely read hagiographies about the early Naqshbandis.³¹⁰ Certain contempt towards sheikhs who were averse to *samā'* is also felt in a number of Kalīm Allāh's letters that recommend listening to music (*rāg*) in solitude with close friends because some contemporary Sufis neither observed appropriate *adab* nor were able to properly concentrate on the practice, but nevertheless kept spreading their views in the Mughal army.³¹¹ It is significant that Kalīm Allāh uses here the word *rāg* that has no distinctly Sufi connotations; besides the implied doctrinal opposition, they lacked the ability to appreciate music in general.

The opposition of the Mujaddidis seems to have been most acutely felt in the Mughal army, and Kalīm Allāh's letters advising caution were written during Niẓām al-Dīn's military service. The notion fades away in *Aḥsan al-shamā'il* that describes the period when Niẓām al-Dīn had already settled himself in Aurangabad, and it disappears altogether in *Fakhr al-ṭālibīn* that paints a picture of Fakhr al-Dīn as one of the most influential Sufi sheikhs of Delhi. However, even when *samā'* assemblies were organized in Delhi and Aurangabad, restricting the attendance of outsiders remained an important topic in the sources. The word for an outsider, *be-gānah* (*ajnabī* in Urdu translations), denotes a stranger who does not belong to a certain group. The concept echoes the requirement to reserve the participation in *samā'* only to those worthy of it (*ikhvān*) together with keeping the correct timing (*zamān*) and place (*makān*) in

308 Kāmgar, *Aḥsan*, 143.

309 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 9–10.

310 *Rashāḥat 'ain al-ḥayāt* by 'Alī ibn Ḥusain al-Vā'iz al-Kāshifi (d. c. 1532).

311 Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 94–95. The statement is found almost verbatim in letter 83. See Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 75.

mind.³¹² In the light of these often evoked principles, one would expect the category of outsiders to comprise those who deny the practice or are averse to its effects. Unfortunately, the texts do not explicitly reveal who they were. However, they include some hints as to the reasons behind their exclusion.

Sometimes problems arise when the outsiders fail to conform to the prescribed *adab*. During one of the Friday *samā'* assemblies, Niẓām al-Dīn stopped the qawwals although disciples were on the verge of attaining ecstasy (*vajd*). Kāmgār was left perplexed and Niẓām al-Dīn explained, as if reading his thoughts, that the *adab* followed during the ritual prayer applies to *samā'*, as well, and it entailed no talking. However, he had spotted outsiders conversing with each other, but instead of verbally prohibiting them, he had decided to call the music off in order to avoid hurting or angering them.³¹³

It is significant that the disruption took place in the moment some disciples were about to attain a mystical state. Not only was Niẓām al-Dīn's decision to stop the singers prompted by the violation of *adab*, but also by the delicacy of the moment; had the disciples entered deeper into their experience, such disturbance might have proved fatal. In addition to implicitly casting Niẓām al-Dīn as a guide who takes care of his disciples' well-being, the passage is revealing about his teaching methods. Instead of hurting the outsiders by directly prohibiting them, he discontinued the occasion altogether. The passage does not tell what happened to the outsiders, who probably wondered about the reason behind the abrupt end of the assembly. Did they ever get to know that they themselves were the reason? Did they notice Niẓām al-Dīn's approach to the matter? And if so, did they appreciate it and perhaps become his disciples as would happen in hagiographical texts after such incidents? Although the *malḥūzāt* literature in general contains valuable information that is not found in other genres of Sufi literature, the exclusive focus on the Sufi guide leaves many questions pertaining to the minor characters passing through his *khānqāh* unanswered.

On other occasions, the outsiders are portrayed as people who are unacquainted with the dynamics of *samā'* and hence likely to misinterpret the uncommon behaviours of the listeners, or merely wanting to witness a spectacle of ecstatically dancing Sufis. Niẓām al-Dīn relates in *Aḥsan al-shamā'il* how Kalīm Allāh would listen to *samā'* with his disciples in a closed room when he attended the 'urs of Niẓām al-Dīn Auliya' in Delhi. Their cries, however, attracted the attention of outsiders, and when a disciple arriving late was allowed in, twenty more people forced their way into the assembly. Kalīm Allāh immediately told the qawwals to stop and he left the place. The hapless disciple who had arrived late walked behind him in the bazaar, swooned, fell down on the ground and hurt himself. Kalīm Allāh grew so irritated (*be-lutf*) that he could not

312 *Zamān*, *makān* and *ikhvān* as the primary components of the *adab* of *samā'* are discussed by Kalīm Allāh in *Asharah kāmīlah*. See Kalīm Allāh, *Asharah*, 62.

313 Kāmgār, *Aḥsan*, 282.

even talk.³¹⁴ His *samāʿ* was disturbed and a disciple caused an embarrassing situation in a public place when Kalīm Allāh clearly wanted to keep such behaviours behind closed doors, hidden from prying eyes.

Nizām al-Dīn continued by relating how he had had a similar experience, when people left behind the closed door had started to wail and fall down during *samāʿ*. He, however, had decided to let the outsiders benefit from *samāʿ* by setting a screen between them and those he knew and allowed inside. Thus, the former would be able to hear the singers while their view of Nizām al-Dīn's disciples, who might behave in frightening or bizarre manners, was restricted. According to Nizām al-Dīn, Kalīm Allāh had been pleased with his innovation.³¹⁵

In the above occasions, the outsiders are common people unacquainted with the rules of propriety associated with *samāʿ*. At other times, the desire to safeguard the practice from persons who might use the listeners' behaviour to buttress their criticism leads to curbing unconventional behaviour. This becomes evident in a passage from *Aḥsan al-shamāʿil*, where a book Nūr al-Dīn reads states that a person experiencing a mystical state (*kaifīyyat*) during *samāʿ* might start to speak like al-Ḥallāj. Nizām al-Dīn confirms this to have happened in his assemblies. On one occasion, when a disciple had started to utter ecstatic phrases, Nizām al-Dīn had blocked his mouth because of the presence of outsiders.³¹⁶

It is important to emphasize that, despite the temporary reservation in the face of the Mujaddidi opposition and the wish to hide some aspects of *samāʿ* from outsiders, Kalīm Allāh and Nizām al-Dīn were both staunch advocates of the practice. Kalīm Allāh emphasizes its significance as the food for the spirit (*ghizā-yi rūḥ*) in a number of letters and expresses his regret over Nizām al-Dīn's one-time lack of interest in the practice.³¹⁷ Such references are extremely valuable additions to the hagiographical material, where moments of fatigue and lack of inspiration are faded out from the idealized portrayal of Sufis.³¹⁸

Nizām al-Dīn regained his enthusiasm for *samāʿ* and *Aḥsan al-shamāʿil* abounds in passages that extol its power. A Sufi guide's rank can be deduced from his ability to make his disciples experience mystical states during *samāʿ*.³¹⁹ Those who deny *samāʿ* (*munkir-i samāʿ*) spontaneously retract their opinion, if they attend a musical assembly of a real Sufi just once.³²⁰ In one instance, *samāʿ* convinced a yogi to become a

314 Kāmgar, *Aḥsan*, 216.

315 Kāmgar, *Aḥsan*, 216.

316 Kāmgar, *Aḥsan*, 95.

317 See, e.g. Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 15, 25, 93.

318 See Green 2006: 99–101 for a discussion on nineteenth-century hagiographical portrayals of Nizām al-Dīn in which the streamlined description and emphasis on conformity with sunna has led to omitting references to phenomena like the association with yogis and guiding the bickering disciples.

319 See Kāmgar, *Aḥsan*, 92, 153.

320 See Kāmgar, *Aḥsan*, 99–101.

disciple of Nizām al-Dīn.³²¹ Thus the practice remained a powerful tool for guiding disciples and attracting people to the fold of the Chishti Nizami brotherhood.

Conceptualization of samāʿ

The emphasis on *samāʿ* notwithstanding, the strive to avoid fomenting criticism in the already volatile situation affected the conceptualization of the mystical states associated with the practice in the works of the late Mughal Chishtis. As was noted above, the texts of their Sultanate colleagues do not take an unequivocal stand on whether one should ideally lose one's senses during *samāʿ* or retain them. In practice this meant leaving open the question whether a listener has a license to behave in odd manners or not. During the late Mughal period, the balance tilted in favour of the latter view and the authors emphasized that staying in one's senses best facilitated benefiting from the fruits of *samāʿ* in one's spiritual wayfaring.

Kalīm Allāh initiated a systematic pondering on the mutual dynamics between control (*ikh̄tiyār*) and understanding (*shuʿūr*). The first indicates one's ability to control one's behaviour and reactions, whereas the latter refers to one's ability to understand and perceive what happens within and around oneself. In *Asharah kāmīlah*, Kalīm Allāh lists the combinations of control and understanding in which one or both are missing or present. According to him, the combinations which lack both or feature only control are useless, whereas the presence of both control and understanding does not differ from one's normal state of consciousness. For *samāʿ*, the ideal state would be the absence of control but presence of understanding. A listener has lost the control over him or herself, yet understands the meaning of poetry as well as his or her own state. To elucidate his point, Kalīm Allāh ends the discussion by contrasting *samāʿ* assemblies with the gatherings of drunkards, who deliberately want to lose their senses and understanding.³²²

In analysing the experiences that may occur during *samāʿ*, Kalīm Allāh allows certain license to unconventional behaviour, but does not ascribe much value to it. For instance, he explains *ghulbah* ('assault, predomination') as a state where things that are against *adab* forcibly manifest themselves so that the wayfarer cannot check himself. Instead of either praising or judging this state, he simply notes that after calming down, the wayfarer corrects him or herself. Similarly, he permits *tavājud*. For Kalīm Allāh, *tavājud* is distinct from imitating *vajd* and it emerges as an initial state, where a wayfarer yearns for the divine union and encounters some blessings. He does not enter *vajd* proper, yet he might act as if he was experiencing *vajd*. However, Kalīm Allāh discredits outer expressions of mystical states by noting that the strong ones remain

321 See Kāmgār, *Aḥsan*, 115–117.

322 Kalīm Allāh, *Asharah*, 62–63.

seated in their places, while their hearts keep softening.³²³ The urge to remain outwardly silent is also one of the few facets of *samāʿ* discussed in *Kashkūl*.³²⁴

Fakhr al-Dīn echoes Kalīm Allāh by stating that, in his view, a state where understanding remains but control is lost, is best. The state where both are lost is frowned upon, because it hampers one's understanding of the progress and regression in way-faring and prevents one from deriving joy from *samāʿ*. He implies that such listening is worthless, because it neither facilitates the integration of the listener's experiences into the spiritual development nor gives him pleasure for which understanding is a prerequisite. On the other hand, if both remain, the practice becomes a mere formality.³²⁵

The Sufi guides who were supposed to represent the highest standard of exemplary practice are logically described as fulfilling this ideal. A significant difference in late Mughal sources, when they are compared with Sultanate sources, is the transformation in the role of the Sufi guide in *samāʿ* assemblies. Unlike Niẓām al-Dīn Auliya', whose behaviours during *samāʿ* were in the focus of Amīr Khvurd's remembrances in *Siyar al-auliyā'*, Kalīm Allāh and his followers never succumb to similar states. Their experience is portrayed as completely internalized. It is the disciples who are overtaken by ecstasies while Sufi guides are supervising the occasion from above the clamour and commotion. K.A. Nizami relates that even Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz was impressed by Fakhr al-Dīn's manner of listening to *samāʿ*; except for the changes in his eyes and on his face, he showed no outward signs of ecstasy.³²⁶ Fakhr al-Dīn himself tells how his father used to host two assemblies (*mahfil*) simultaneously. One was for those who were practicing disciples of his, whereas the rest would sit outside, perhaps behind the screen mentioned above. Niẓām al-Dīn would keep moving between the two gatherings, supervising each.³²⁷ This effectively elevates Niẓām al-Dīn above both the adept and novice listeners and underlines his role as a guide who administers their practices and experiences.

This portrayal of a Sufi guide as someone, whose experiences during *samāʿ* are not expressed outwardly and who monitors the practice of the participants is closely associated with the idea that he also controls the occasion on a more subtle level. This role is poignantly illustrated in a passage describing a meeting between Niẓām al-Dīn and people previously unknown to him. One night, Niẓām al-Dīn was strolling the streets of Aurangabad and enjoying the atmosphere, when he chanced upon a group of people celebrating a wedding. When they saw him, the singing of the singers intensified and their vehement yearning (*shauq*) climaxed:

323 Kalīm Allāh, *Asharah*, 65–66.

324 See Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl* 51–52.

325 Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 40–41.

326 Nizami 1984: 211.

327 Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr* 28.

Everyone who was struck by the lightning of his gaze lost his senses and fell down. Who was standing, fell down. Who was sitting, started to roll on the ground. The shouts of those present in the gathering created such ruckus that it reached the skies. As their restlessness exceeded the limits, the singers lost their power and melodies froze on their lips. After that, Ḥaḏrat returned to his house.³²⁸

Without even taking part in the musical assembly himself, Niḏām al-Dīn's presence intensifies the experiences of the participants. He stimulates the singers to sing so that they exhaust themselves and the listeners swoon. He is a catalyst for their experience, which appears extreme and violent. Although the occasion is not a formal *samā'* assembly, the described pattern is repeated in several passages of *Aḥsan al-shamā'il* that discuss the practice.

Such portrayal of a Sufi guide's role also differs from the statement of Niḏām al-Dīn Auliya' that anything happening in a *samā'* assembly depends on the person who first stands up overtaken by a mystical state. This statement is repeated in *Kashkūl*,³²⁹ yet it is quite obvious that attributing the course of a *samā'* assembly to the Sufi guide supervising it has replaced this concept. Although the term *mūr-i mahfil* ('head of an assembly') is not mentioned in the writings of Kalīm Allāh or his followers, the new role corresponds to the modern application of the word in the Sufi context.

Even when retaining one's consciousness had become the ideal state for listening to *samā'* and outward immobility interpreted as a sign of spiritual strength, these qualities were essentially embodied by the Sufi guide. In the case of their disciples and *majzūbs* operating outside the organized framework of Sufi brotherhoods, unconventional and even bizarre behaviour was considered normal. *Majzūbs* were an integral part of the late Mughal Sufi scene, yet they generally lived on the edges of the urban society which Kalīm Allāh, Niḏām al-Dīn and Faḫr al-Dīn inhabited. However, they appear occasionally in the texts. In *Faḫr al-ṭālibīn*, Faḫr al-Dīn relates an anecdote about a person he knew in the Deccan before moving to Delhi. He hailed from among the nobility but became a *majzūb* who spent his time in the wilderness wearing tattered clothes. On one occasion, he attended a function where women were dancing, when

he suddenly jumped up and seized a gold embroidered scarf for himself. That man danced in accordance with all the principles [of the ladies' dance]. The tattered brown dress made this dear one so beautiful that those present could not bear to look at him. He started to cry and everyone present, whether a man or a women, became absorbed and unselfconscious. Even the doors and walls shared in this state. Then, he left the room, reciting this verse:

Everyone who sat down in the dust grew himself leaves and fruits

328 Kāmgar, *Aḥsan*, 67.

329 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 51.

The seed pushed out a sprout when it laid its head in dust.

He went back to the wilderness. I followed him and saw him falling into a pit.
Froth gushed uncontrollably from his mouth. He came to after a few days.³³⁰

The behaviour of the *majzūb* should be scandalizing, since it does not even take place in a *samā'* assembly, where such behaviours were tolerated. The presence of women suggests that the occasion was a family celebration of marriage or circumcision where female dancers were hired to perform. In such a respectable environment, the *majzūb* seized a ladies' scarf for himself and started to dance like an expert dancer. Instead of judging him, Fakhr al-Dīn describes the beauty of his movements and the effect he had on those present. After this brief excursion in organized society, the *majzūb* returns to the wilderness where he falls into a pit after being seized by something that resembles an epileptic fit. Fakhr al-Dīn was curious enough to follow the *majzūb*, to whom he apparently tended until he regained his senses.

Even though the late Mughal Chishtis articulated their stance on certain facets of *samā'* more clearly than their Sultanate counterparts, they did not frame the practice with a clearly articulated theoretical framework. Instead, their discussions remained practical. It is all the more remarkable considering that the writings of Kalīm Allāh, especially the *Kashkūl*, metaphysically contextualized the other key practices, *zīkr* and *murāqabah*. Engagement with these practices is also minutely delineated. They are usually characterized by numerical repetitions that are to take place at different times of day with a certain result in mind. For example, Kalīm Allāh relates that repeating *lā ilāha illā'llāh* a thousand times every morning after the ablutions secures one's sustenance. If recited before retiring in the evening, one's spirit will rest under the divine throne and gain in strength, while a recitation during the appearance of the moon guarantees protection from all kinds of ailments. If recited a thousand times with an intention to achieve the unveiling of the hidden, the result will be the knowledge of all the secrets in material and spiritual realms.³³¹

Different meditative techniques are also organized hierarchically. For example, various methods of *zīkr* begin with the *zīkr* of the tongue and end with the *zīkr* of the inner, hidden essence (*khafī*).³³² Kalīm Allāh also presents a systematic analysis of the phenomena and experiences a practitioner may encounter during the practice. He lists different types of lights that may manifest in different parts of the body. For example, the light appearing near the right shoulder signifies an angel recording the good deeds, whereas its appearance near the left shoulder signifies an angel recording the bad deeds. The light in front of the chest or navel means temptation, whereas in front of the heart it indicates the heart's purity.³³³

330 Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 27.

331 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 8–9.

332 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 4–6.

333 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 12–13.

When it comes to conceptualizing *samāʿ*, the texts say very little directly. The practice is not mentioned in the manuals written by Kalīm Allāh and Niẓām al-Dīn except for a short note in the end of *Kashkūl*. In the passage, Kalīm Allāh touches upon the outward signs appearing in the practitioner of *samāʿ*. Some, such as moistness of eyes, mouth and nose, are common with *zīkr* whereas others like weeping, wailing, restlessness and violent movements are specific to *samāʿ*. In addition to having its particular symptoms, *samāʿ* also has a specific function in his greater scheme of Sufi practice. In the passage on *samāʿ*, Kalīm Allāh states that ‘those who have reached the stage of bewilderment (*taḥayyur*) do not cry out of separation and if they do cry, they cry in union (*viṣāl*).’³³⁴ The statement reveals the mutual relationship of *samāʿ* and other practices when it is related to a discussion on bewilderment – now termed *ḥairat* – found in the introduction of *Kashkūl*. There Kalīm Allāh discusses two different types of bewilderment. The one caused by doubt concerning the true nature of something is useless, whereas the bewilderment caused by the infinite vastness and beauty of a phenomenon is the final stage of the spiritual path.³³⁵ The systematic appliance of techniques described in the two chapters of *Kashkūl* would facilitate the gradual descent to this goal.

The context of the statement about crying in bewilderment during *samāʿ*, significantly appearing in the very end of *Kashkūl*, is markedly different. The final stage has already been reached, perhaps with the help of other practices. *Kashkūl* thus conceptualizes *samāʿ* in a different manner than the systematic practices. Instead of occupying a clearly defined position in the hierarchy of meditative and contemplative practices, *samāʿ* is practiced throughout one’s wayfaring. Instead of being a technique used to achieve a certain goal, it provides an environment where a practitioner can realize and experience the spiritual state he or she has achieved. *Zīkr* and other practices are used for gradually drawing closer to God, whereas *samāʿ* facilitates nurturing the love between the two. While the effect of *zīkr* is gradual, *samāʿ* is sudden, even violent. In this respect, the late Mughal Chishtis crystallize the approach that was emerging in the Sultanate sources, especially in *Siyar al-auliyaʿ*.

The conceptual separation of *samāʿ* from other practices is also evident from the fact that the terminologies used for describing the experiences during *zīkr* and *samāʿ* do not generally overlap. Kalīm Allāh writes in the introduction of *Kashkūl* that the initial experience of becoming effaced in the absolute oneness (*ittilāq*) is unselfconsciousness (*be-khvyudī*) and the absence of sensory perception.³³⁶ This is an experience encountered during *samāʿ* as well, and *be-khvyudī* is one of the most common terms associated with the practice. However, when the discourse becomes more specific, the Chishti Nizami authors employ a specialized terminology. The key terms associated with *samāʿ* are derived from the Arabic root *w-j-d*, ‘to find, experience, feel, exist’. Ex-

334 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 51.

335 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 11–12.

336 Kalīm Allāh, *Kashkūl*, 3.

cept for differentiating the term *tavājjud* from *vajd* by making the former a preparatory stage of the latter, the Sultanate Sufis were liberal in their application of terms derived from this root. In contrast, Kalīm Allāh provides a precise definition of the terms *vajd* and *vujūd* in *‘Asharah kāmīlah*:

Sheikhs call anxiety and grief *vajd* whereas *vujūd* means finding. Both are states generated by *samā’*. Some derive suffering (*karb*) and agitation (*iztīrāb*) [from *samā’*], whereas others derive enjoyment (*‘aish*) and mirth (*ṭarab*) from it. *Vajd* signifies losing ones aim (*murād o maqṣūd*) and *vujūd* finding it. Both transform the qualities (*ṣifāt*) of the seeker, but there is no change in the sought. *Vajd* is a special enigma (*ramz*) between the seeker and the sought and appears on account of the latter. *Vujūd* is a bounty and favour from the beloved. The grief is an important means for transporting the wayfarer to his or her original, real state.³³⁷

The gravitation towards serenity and equilibrium during *samā’* is apparent in Kalīm Allāh’s definition. *Vajd* is characterized by anxiety, grief and loosing the sight of one’s aim. *Vujūd*, on the other hand, signifies finding it and it emerges as a serene state. *Samā’* is a powerful transformative technique that capitalizes on the feelings of grief as its essential tool.

Despite the fact that the late Mughal Chishti writings are specific in defining certain terms and, furthermore, evidence a development towards more controlled practice of *samā’*, they deliberately seem to avoid analysing it in minute detail. While this may partly be a literary convention of the Sufi practice manuals,³³⁸ I believe that the decision to refrain from integrating *samā’* with the techniques designed to facilitate gradual development is fully in congruence with the characteristics of the practice. The main components of *samā’*, music and poetry, call for a response that is immediate and impossible to reduce into a straightforward model. Leaving the practice, so to speak, untamed, is a decision that serves the purpose of supplementing the minutely delineated techniques with a practice that is spontaneous and can yield unexpected results.

The decision not to integrate *samā’* into the systematized structure of Sufi practice entailed a certain risk. As a practice without a clearly defined written constitution, its transmission remained the responsibility of living masters. In conditions where validity of religious ideas and practices was increasingly articulated in expository prose evoking foundational scriptures and legalistic arguments, dismissing *samā’* would

³³⁷ Kalīm Allāh, *‘Asharah*, 65.

³³⁸ For example, the celebrated Indian Sufi manual, *Javāhir-i khamsah* of the Shattari master Muḥammad Ghaṣṣ Gvāliyarī includes no reference to *samā’*. This trend has persisted to the present. *Majmū‘ah-yi ‘amalīyāt* (2009), a recent manual by a Hyderabad Sufi master Moulana Ghousavi Shah (b. 1955), covers practices from various *du‘ās* and different *zīkrs* to mystical diagrams. It even includes detailed information about the use of precious and semiprecious stones, benefits of different varieties of meat and the usages of commonly prescribed medicines. Although the author is favourably disposed towards *samā’*, the text is silent about the practice.

have been easy. In the face of the increasing Mujaddidi opposition, it would have also computed to give up *samāʿ* and concentrate on practices like *zīkr*, which enjoyed universal approval among different brotherhoods. In addition to the more theoretical conceptualizations, ample evidence of the actual practice of *samāʿ* in the late Mughal sources makes it clear that this was not the case. Instead of curtailing the practice, the three Chishti Nizami masters consciously strove to uphold its vitality.

2.4 Music, poetry and the settings of a *samāʿ* assembly

None of the texts discussed in this chapter is exclusively devoted to *samāʿ*, yet even the scattered passages make it possible to construct a comprehensive picture of the practice during the time of their writing. This applies also to its tangible dimensions such as poetry, music and the physical settings of the occasion. Poetry was widely appreciated and quoted even outside *samāʿ*. In accordance with the common literary convention, the late Mughal Chishtis interspersed their prose writings with copious verses. Poetry was also a common topic of discussion in the assemblies of the Sufi guides. For example, *Fakhr al-ṭālibīn* shows Fakhr al-Dīn and his poet-disciple Amīr Qamar al-Dīn Minnat pondering over an ostensibly irregular rhyme (*radīf*) of a ghazal written by Ḥāfiz.³³⁹ A passage that shows Fakhr al-Dīn evoking the musical puritanism of the high-ranking vocal soloists, *kalāvants*, as an ideal of the single-mindedness that should characterize all activities of a Sufi, reveals his acquaintance with the musical scene as well.³⁴⁰ However, the most interesting passages relate to the actual practice of *samāʿ*.

Settings of a samāʿ assembly

When late Mughal texts discuss *samāʿ*, the most common term for a musical assembly is *majlis*. In this respect, the texts follow the convention established by the Sultanate Chishtis. However, *majlis* does not refer exclusively to a musical assembly, but can also denote an informal meeting of a Sufi master and his disciples. Occasionally, the latter type of gathering is also called *jalsah*, a term derived from the same Arabic root as *majlis*. For instance, *Aḥsan al-shamāʿil* relates how Niẓām al-Dīn and his disciples once started a gathering (*jalsah*) by the tomb of Muntajib al-Dīn Zarzārī Zarbakhsh in nearby Khuldabad. Suddenly, the disciples were overcome by a mystical state (*vajd*) without any apparent reason. Later, Niẓām al-Dīn explained this state to have emanated directly from the tomb.³⁴¹ Here the word *jalsah* is used to emphasize the fact that there was no music or other impetus for the experience and the only possible source was the tomb itself.

339 See Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 17.

340 See Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 6.

341 Kāmgār, *Aḥsan*, 73.

Majlis is occasionally substituted with *mahfil* derived from the Arabic root *h-f-l* denoting gathering together. This word specifically refers to musical soirées. Sometimes the meaning of the words *majlis* and *mahfil* is made explicitly clear by qualifying them with the phrase *surūd o samāʿ* ('music and listening').³⁴² Interestingly, this pair of words was not exclusive to Sufi parlance, but constituted a general term for music.³⁴³ Nonetheless, the texts sometimes use the expression *surūd o samāʿ* when referring to the Sufi practice.³⁴⁴ The same applies to the occasional appearance of the term *majlis barāg* ('an assembly for raga'), which is used for *samāʿ* even if the expression bears no religious connotations in itself.³⁴⁵ The fluidity of terminology probably indicates that there was no clear-cut difference between the musical assemblies of Sufis and, for example, urban nobility, when it came to the musical element. Corresponding to the situation during the Sultanate period, the late Mughal sources give no indication as to the existence of a specific genre of Sufi music.

Although musical assemblies were an important part of devotional life in the late Mughal Chishti *khānqāhs*, it is important to bear in mind that they were only one part of the daily or weekly routine and by no means constituted the only or even the most important activity. Kalīm Allāh does not appear to have organized *samāʿ* on regular basis, as he writes in one of his letters to Nizām al-Dīn. He explains that other practices have similar splendour and then describes his devotional routine, which includes different meditative practices after five obligatory prayers and the three supererogatory prayers at daybreak (*ishraq*), mid-morning (*cāsht*) and between two sleeps in the night (*tahajjud*). He always remains engaged in *murāqabah* from the morning prayer to daybreak and from the afternoon prayer to the evening prayer. The time between the evening prayer and the night prayer is devoted to various supererogatory devotional activities. In addition, he practices vocal and silent *zikr*, reads books on hadith, *fiqh* and wayfaring.³⁴⁶ Keeping *samāʿ* separate from the daily routines is likely to have only underlined its novelty and enhanced its potential to affect the listeners.

Nizām al-Dīn organized a *samāʿ* assembly every Friday after the communal prayer and it would occasionally continue until the evening prayer. He avoided organizing more than one musical assembly each week, and *Aḥsan al-shamāʿil* relates how he declined to listen to qawwals who arrived at his *khānqāh* on some other day and how he would postpone the Friday assembly if an *ʿurs* took place during another day of the week.³⁴⁷ As for the other activities, *Aḥsan al-shamāʿil* mentions a gathering for contemplation (*ḥalqah-yi murāqabah*) taking place every Monday, while vocal *zikr*

342 See, e.g. Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 27.

343 Cf. with Mullā Tarzī's use of the term in his collection of moral tales entitled *Maʿdan-i javāhir* and written in 1616. See Delvoye 2010: 50.

344 See Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 65.

345 See Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 51.

346 Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 17.

347 Kāmgār, *Aḥsan*, 234, 299.

took place on several different weekdays. The only information about the activities in Fakhr al-Dīn's *khānqāh* comes from *Fakhr al-ṭālibīn*, which mentions that he led vocal *zīkr* twice a week.³⁴⁸

Occasionally, the descriptions of the gatherings in Nizām al-Dīn's *khānqāh* are extremely detailed and provide valuable information about the settings and the course of events during such occasions. The following passage describes an evening of listening to poems recited in praise of the Prophet (*milād sharīf*).

Ḥaẓrat [Nizām al-Dīn] turned towards the virtuous Miyān Muḥammad Fāzil Jī'ū and said: 'Today is the fourteenth night. If 'Abd Allāh Khān Zākīr arrives, we will listen to *milād sharīf*.' That day, I arrived to kiss his threshold during the afternoon prayer. After the prayer, a floorcloth was spread in the courtyard of the *khānqāh*. Ḥaẓrat inspected the flooring and said to Shaikh Pīr Muḥammad: 'I feel pebbles under the floor cloth. The floor clothes should be removed, pebbles picked away, the ground made even and the flooring spread again. No person who enters a mystical state (*shauq*) should experience any inconvenience.' Accordingly, Miyān Pīr Muḥammad and other disciples raised the floor cloth from the courtyard and evened the ground. Ḥaẓrat himself was sitting inside the *khānqāh*. He turned to brother Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn and said: 'Empathy demands that one should be considerate towards those who experience pain. If pebbles remained under the cloth, they might harm the people experiencing ecstasy (*vajd*).'

Right then, the muezzin gave the call to the evening prayer and Nizām al-Dīn got ready to pray. After praying, he went to his blessed room. Brother Muhammad Nūr al-Dīn lead those who were present in vocal *zīkr*. After the *zīkr*, Maṭlab Khān, brother of Mīrzā Abū Ṭālib came to greet Nizām al-Dīn. When Ḥaẓrat came out from his room, disciples swarmed to kiss his threshold. After four hours had passed, 'Abd Allāh Khān Zākīr arrived and offered his greetings. He was given the order [to recite] *milād sharīf*. Because of our guide, many disciples benefited from mystical states (*shauq o zāuq*). Especially the mystical state of Mīrzā Bandah 'Alī and Mīrzā Nāṣir 'Alī exceeded all the limits in the blessed gathering and they lost their consciousness. When the enchantment of their ecstasy (*vajd*) abated somewhat, they sat down.

Our respected guide turned towards this lowly person and asked: 'How much of the night has passed?' This worthless answered: 'It must be three in the morning.' Ḥaẓrat said: 'Tell 'Abd Allāh Khān to complete *milād*.' *Milād* was completed in accordance with the command. All the ecstatic disciples got up from their places and fell to the feet of Ḥaẓrat. He lifted every disciple up and increased his honour by embracing him. Then the *ḥāfiẓ* was told to recite the five verses (*panc āyāt*). A prayer (*fātiḥah*) was read for the spirits of the great

348 Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 26.

ones of the Chishti, Qadiri and Naqshbandi brotherhoods and the assembly was over. Nizām al-Dīn gave his disciples and others the permission to go home. He returned to the *khānqāh*, sat down and turned towards the virtuous Miyān Muḥammad Fāzil and said: 'Many outsiders attend the night of *milād sharīf* and enjoying a secluded assembly is impossible. Tonight, mystical state (*shauq o zauq*) became apparent in two or three disciples and their restlessness was excessive. They came and clang to me. I was forced to embrace them, although embracing young disciples denotes something else [to the outsiders]. But if a chest is not pressed against the chest of a person overcome by such a state, it may cause him harm. Under these circumstances, I was helpless.' Muḥammad Fāzil J'ū said: 'How many outsiders were there be in your assembly tonight?' He answered: 'There were no outsiders among the participants of the assembly. They were standing in the periphery and I recognized them.'³⁴⁹

It was apparently Nizām al-Dīn's habit to listen to the recitation of *milād* by his disciple 'Abd Allāh *Khān* on every full moon night. While the disciples wait for 'Abd Allāh *Khān*, who is a reciter of poems of praise (*zākir*), they prepare the venue. It is touching, how Nizām al-Dīn attempts to protect the people who might experience an uncontrollable mystical state. He orders his disciples to remove the pebbles from under the flooring so that they would not hurt anyone. When 'Abd Allāh *Khān* finally arrives and begins the recitation, two disciples lose their consciousness and move about. The text gives the impression that it was soon after this that Nizām al-Dīn concluded the assembly. He embraced each of his disciples. A prayer was read and the merit transferred to the spirits of the masters of the three most important lineages Nizām al-Dīn had received in his initiation from Kalīm Allāh. Unlike in the letters of Kalīm Allāh, Qadiriyya is also specifically mentioned.

It is fortunate that Kāmgar recorded the discussion between Nizām al-Dīn and his disciples that followed the gathering. Nizām al-Dīn reveals the uneasiness he felt because of the presence of outsiders hovering in the periphery of the gathering. He was ill at ease when he had had to embrace young ecstatic disciples, because the onlookers might have interpreted it as immoral behaviour. Although *shāhidbāzī* was never a common practice among Indian Sufis, associating *samā'* with beardless youths seems to have persisted in eighteenth-century India.

In addition to providing an idea of a night in the *khānqāh* with practical preparations of the venue and long hours spent in waiting for the reciter, the passage also refers to two types of assemblies. It has been noted above that Kalīm Allāh and Nizām al-Dīn preferred gatherings that were attended only by their disciples. However, in the

349 Kāmgar, *Aḥsan*, 176–177.

case of the more festive occasions, like the full moon night, it was apparently impossible to limit the attendance of the outsiders.

In addition to the full moon night, large-scale gatherings were organized during different 'urs festivities. Kalīm Allāh instructed his disciples to celebrate the 'urs of the Prophet and Yaḥyā Madanī and also organize a gathering on the eleventh of each month.³⁵⁰ The latter refers to *gyārahvīn sharīf* ('the Noble Eleventh') commemorating 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī. In addition to the gatherings in the *khānqāh*, Kalīm Allāh and his followers visited different shrines, where they had their private assemblies. However, broad attendance was also encouraged by Kalīm Allāh, who instructed Niẓām al-Dīn to invite everyone, both men and women, to the festivities in his *khānqāh*.³⁵¹ This would no doubt help involving more people with the brotherhood, but it also necessitated curbing the most extreme behaviours. Fakhr al-Dīn advised caution during festivities, where 'knowing and ignorant, learned and unlearned, faqirs and worldly, Sufis and law-abiding scholars (*mutasharri'*) as well as those who are friends of Ḥaẓrat Maulānā gather. [...] And there may also be children in the gathering.'³⁵²

Similar broad attendance is described by Dargāh Qulī Khān, a close attendant of Niẓām al-Mulk, in his travelogue *Muraqqa'ī Dihlī* written during a sojourn in the Mughal capital in 1737-1740.³⁵³ Dargāh Qulī's vivid description of Sufis, poets, courtesans, dancers and musicians has made this work an often quoted source in the studies of eighteenth-century Delhi. His memoirs attest to a broad attendance in the festivities organized in various shrines of the city. Especially the 'urs at the Nizamuddin shrine emerges as a significant cultural event. Inside the shrine, qawwals sing in a manner that entices mystical states in the listeners and the pilgrims spend their nights in contemplation and reciting the Koran. However, the shrine is surrounded by gardens and bazaars, where the goods of master-craftsmen as well as performances of singers, musicians, mimics and dancers vie for the attention of visitors.³⁵⁴ It is worth noting that such occasions were attended and sponsored by the urban elites and characterizing them as popular Sufism would be misleading. Also Fakhr al-Dīn notes the presence of the nobility of Shahjahanabad at the 'urs festivities of the Nizamuddin shrine. Although closely associated with a number of noblemen, he nevertheless finds mass attendance somewhat shallow.³⁵⁵

350 Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 50, 100, 105.

351 Kalīm Allāh, *Maktūbāt*, 50.

352 Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 40.

353 *Muraqqa'ī Dihlī* refers to the passages describing Delhi found in an extensive memoir-cum-travelogue titled *Risalah-yi Sālār Jang*. It is unfortunate that Dargāh Qulī Khān's sojourn in the Mughal capital took place when none of the three Chishti Nizami masters discussed in this chapter was present there. Kalīm Allāh and Niẓām al-Dīn had already passed away and Fakhr al-Dīn had not yet arrived in the city.

354 Dargāh, *Muraqqa'ī*, 54-55.

355 Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 68.

Music, poetry and the performers

The texts also include information concerning the musical practices during *samā'* assemblies. In contrast to the Sultanate texts that convey an impression of informal and spontaneous *samā'* assemblies, the late Mughal sources paint a picture of more structured occasions. Kalīm Allāh writes in *Asharah kāmīlah* that a musical assembly should open with the Sura of Opening, some other sura and copious praise for the Prophet (*durūd*). Similar procedure should end the gathering.³⁵⁶

The most detailed information on how to organize a *samā'* assembly is found in a slightly later text, entitled *Maṭlūb al-ṭalībīn* ('Goal of the Seekers'). It is also a Chishti Nizami text, a hagiography of Niẓām al-Dīn Auliya' written in his shrine by Khvājah Muḥammad Bulāq Niẓāmī Kāshānī during the reign of Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1719–1748). The author belonged to the hereditary custodians of the shrine, and his work derives material from various sources ranging from *Favā'id al-fu'ād* and *Siyar al-auliya'* to the oral sources. In most occasions, the author names the sources he cites and when no source is named, the data is probably derived from the oral lore. However, a part of the latter material can be traced to contemporaneous works that were circulating among the Chishti Nizamīs of the Mughal capital. For example, the delineation of the *adab* of *samā'* assemblies follows the text of *Asharah kāmīlah* almost verbatim.³⁵⁷ *Maṭlūb al-ṭalībīn* is also known as *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī* ('Nizami Evidences') after the Urdu translation that has been used in this study. The translation was commissioned in 1900 by Ghulām Niẓām al-Dīn, a book seller from Chandni Chowk, and prepared by Zāmin 'Alī Niẓāmī, a hereditary custodian of the Nizamuddin shrine.

The description of a proper procedure of a *samā'* assembly found in *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī* is more detailed than that of Kalīm Allāh. The participants should begin by reciting the Five Verses (*panc āyāt*) or all the thirty parts (*sī pārāh*) of the Koran. This should be followed by a prayer for the benefit of the spirit of the great one whose 'urs is being commemorated. This statement gives the impression that in the eighteenth century, *samā'* assemblies were organized, at least in the shrine of Niẓām al-Dīn, during the 'urs festivities and not as spontaneous gatherings. After the preliminary rituals, it is the turn of the singers (*gāne-vale*) and qawwals.³⁵⁸ Significantly, the text names two groups of performers: the general category of singers and the specific group of qawwals. By the time of writing, the latter were already identified as a distinct class of performers who possibly specialized in a specific genre of music.

The qawwals should begin with one of the *qauls*. According to *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī*, *qauls* are sayings (*qaul*) of the companions of the Prophet or Sufi sheikhs, which were set to music by Amīr Khusrāu. The *qaul* is the only item that has a prescribed place, since after it the qawwals are to sing whatever the master of the assembly (termed

356 Kalīm Allāh, *Asharah*, 62, 64

357 See Kalīm Allāh, *Asharah*, 62–64; Bulāq, *Shavāhid*, 99.

358 Bulāq, *Shavāhid*, 99.

ṣāhib-i majlis) or people experiencing ecstasy (*ahl-i vajd*) tell them to sing. The assembly should conclude with another *qaul* and the recitation of the Koran. Framing the musical performance with Koranic passages is sanctioned by a quotation from a work entitled *Ādāb al-sālikīn*, according to which the practice was revealed in dream by the Prophet himself to Mumshād ‘Ulvī Dīnavarī, an early Chishti master.³⁵⁹

The Sufi texts discussed in this chapter make no mention of the qualities of a good qawwal or his social standing. *Muraqqa’-i Dihlī*, on the other hand, refers to a number of qawwals praised for their beautiful voices that ‘hold thousands of charms in their hems like the pen of Bihzād.’ Tāj Khān was celebrated for his ability to make the listeners forget even hunger and thirst by singing a short line of poetry in different ragas whereas Jaṭā Qavvāl had a phenomenal memory for the sayings and poetry of Sufi sheikhs.³⁶⁰ As will become clear in Parts II and III of this study, similar qualities still determine the success of an individual qawwal.

It is impossible to reconstruct the stylistic features of the qawwals’ singing from the texts or to determine whether it resembled the present-day musical genre called qawwali. What is clear, however, is that singers called qawwals were associated with notable Sufis. Sometimes they performed in the musical assemblies of their patrons. Shāh Ghulām Muḥammad organized a musical assembly at his *khānqāh* every Tuesday whereas Shāh Bāsiṭ opted for Sundays. Noting the mass appeal of these events, Dargāh Qulī Khān writes that the gatherings of Shāh Bāsiṭ were attended by poor and rich, as well as spectators and so many beauties that the place appeared like a fairy house. A few qawwals were also among the most celebrated singers of the city. The musical soirées they arranged in their respective houses attracted the participation of Sufi sheikhs, fellow-musicians and members of the nobility.³⁶¹

When it comes to the three Chishti Nizami masters, the information about their patronage of certain singers is almost inexistent, and the only reference to the economics of the patronage is the lone mention of one gold or silver coin (*tankah*) being the fee of the qawwals recorded in *Fakhr al-ṭālibīn*.³⁶² The term *mu’tād* (‘fixed allowance’) used in the passage suggests a regular stipend rather than a one-time payment.

In contrast, *Shavāhid-i nizāmī* includes elaborate information about the qawwals of Nizām al-Dīn Auliya’ and their descendants performing at the shrine. The author claims that Nizām al-Dīn had two hundred expert qawwals in his service and that they were all his stipendiaries (*vazīfakhvyur*). Describing the musical assemblies of Nizām al-Dīn, Khvājah Muḥammad Bulāq tells how Amīr Khusrau, Amīr Ḥasan and Khvājah Mubashshir would always begin by singing a ghazal. They were then joined by Miyān Ṣāmit, Ḥasan Bhedī, their sons and the rest of the two hundred qawwals. Occasionally Khvājah Muḥammad and Khvājah Mūsā, the grandsons of Bābā Farīd, would also sing,

359 Bulāq, *Shavāhid*, 99.

360 Dargāh, *Muraqqa’*, 91–92, 100.

361 Dargāh, *Muraqqa’*, 91–92, 94, 100.

362 See Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 28.

overshadowing the professional qawwals.³⁶³ The author collates various *samāʿ* assemblies described in *Siyar al-auliyaʿ* into a model that is supposed to represent Niẓām al-Dīn's gatherings in general. The number of the qawwals is also considerably floated echoing the contemporary perception of Niẓām al-Dīn as an influential patron of arts in Sultanate Delhi. As the description of Dargāh Qulī Khān suggests, this role was in the eighteenth century assumed by his shrine.

Shavāhid-i niẓāmī also offers a detailed account on the entrance of Ṣāmit to Niẓām al-Dīn's service. Citing a text entitled *Firdausiyyah qudsiyyah*, the author relates that an unnamed ruler once became envious of the Sufi master on account of his *samāʿ* assemblies and forbade qawwals from attending them. The text does not explicitly state the reason behind the jealousy, but Bulāq's overall portrayal of Niẓām al-Dīn's generous patronage indicates that the ruler may have felt his own position as the greatest patron of arts threatened. Whatever the case, Niẓām al-Dīn wished to listen to *samāʿ* one day, but no qawwals were to be found. However, at that precise moment, a singer called Miyān Ṣāmit arrived with his wife and children on the banks of Yamuna opposite Niẓām al-Dīn's *jamaʿatkhānah*. With the blessings of Niẓām al-Dīn, they were able to cross the river without a boat. Ṣāmit's graceful manners pleased the Sufi master, who gave him a bit of paan from his mouth. This purified the heart of Ṣāmit and inspired him to compose a ghazal that he sang on the spot.³⁶⁴ He became a disciple of Niẓām al-Dīn and, together with Ḥasan Bhedī,³⁶⁵ he learned the art of qawwali (*fann-i qavvālī*) from Amīr Khusrau. The latter taught them the Persian *qaul* and *tarānah* as well as Hindi *sohlah*, *badhāvah* and *bār*, the compositions considered specialities of the Delhi qawwals in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources.³⁶⁶ Bulāq ends the passage by stating that the descendants of these qawwals, who perform at the Nizamuddin shrine, are the only singers who still perform these songs.³⁶⁷

Bulāq's description considerably elaborates the brief mention of Ṣāmit's and Ḥasan Bhedī's talents found in the Sultanate sources and weaves them into a record of the mythical beginnings of the musical tradition of the Nizamuddin shrine. It gives the qawwals of the shrine a special role as the guardians of Amīr Khusrau's musical legacy. At the time of writing, the passage no doubt acted as an advertisement of the shrine in the cultural scene of Delhi. It also provides a written record of the origins of this performing lineage that is today known as *qavvāl baccon kā gharānā* ('the lineage of the children of the qawwals').

³⁶³ Bulāq, *Shavāhid*, 94.

³⁶⁴ The ghazal is preserved in an anthology of poetry compiled by Meraj Ahmed Nizami, a contemporary qawwal claiming descent from Ṣāmit. See Meraj 1998: 122.

³⁶⁵ As was noted above, his name appears in different forms in the Sultanate sources. The discrepancy is clarified in *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī*, where the name Bhedī is derived from the Hindi word *bhed* ('secret') and explained to denote a person who is intimate with the secrets of the pure Sufis. See Bulāq, *Shavāhid*, 97.

³⁶⁶ See, e.g. Brown 2010 and Trivedi 2010.

³⁶⁷ Bulāq, *Shavāhid*, 97.

Such patronage of music is not surprising considering the Sultanate antecedents of the late Mughal Chishtis and their own attitudes to music that inevitably influenced the musical element of *samāʿ*. Their attitude to music from a purely aesthetic point of view was considerably inclusive. Kalīm Allāh boldly writes that he considers listening to music – and here he uses the word *rāg* that bears no Sufi connotations – allowed to even those who listen to it only for pleasure (*nishāṭ*). He thus indicates that listening to music is approvable even when it is not a part of spiritual practice but a pleasant aesthetic experience. He disapproves listening to music only in the case of those who do not appreciate even its aesthetic dimensions.³⁶⁸

Kalīm Allāh's attitude towards musical instruments is likewise approving and clearly defined. In *Asharah kāmīlah*, he interprets the prohibition to use reed pipes (*mazāmīr*) to denote only reed pipes and not other instruments.³⁶⁹ His Sultanate predecessors were more ambiguous in this matter and it is difficult to unequivocally determine, if they considered *mazāmīr* to denote only the reed pipe or to cover all the musical instruments except the daff, which had an explicit prophetic sanction.

Although Niẓām al-Dīn expressed some ambiguity towards the use of musical instruments by expressing his preference for daff alone, he also allowed rabab and tambura. Only if someone in the gathering was against the instruments, he would forbid using them.³⁷⁰ In a passage from *Aḥsan al-shamāʿil*, a certain Mīrzā Muḥammad Jaʿfar arrived from Hyderabad with a group of rabab-playing qawwals. When he asked for Niẓām al-Dīn's permission to introduce them in his next *samāʿ* assembly, Kāmgār declared that rabab effects the listeners more than any other instrument. Niẓām al-Dīn approvingly replied with a verse:

*I was bestowed a blessing from the cup³⁷¹ of rabab
Everyone who drew a particle from it, became a sun.*

The verse moved the author to tears and Niẓām al-Dīn recited two further verses featuring musical images:

*Dry is the string, dry is the wood and dry is the skin
From where did this voice of the friend come?*

*Not from the string, not from the wood, not from the skin
This voice of the friend appeared by itself.³⁷²*

Besides expressing Niẓām al-Dīn's appreciation of the musical instrument and revealing the mystical associations of the rabab that mediates the voice of the friend, the verses are significant, because they are one of the rare poetic texts mentioned in the

³⁶⁸ Kalīm Allāh, *Asharah*, 61.

³⁶⁹ Kalīm Allāh, *Asharah*, 61.

³⁷⁰ Kāmgār, *Aḥsan*, 75.

³⁷¹ *Kāṣah*. The word appears in Persian expressions denoting generosity (*safedkāṣah*) or miserliness (*siyāhkāṣah*), but it also refers to the soundbox of a musical instrument.

³⁷² Kāmgār, *Aḥsan*, 303–304.

texts discussed in Part I of this study that belong to the contemporary qawwali repertoires. At present, the two verses are considered to constitute a quatrain by Rūmī.³⁷³

Another incident relating to musical instruments is also connected with Rūmī, when Fakhr al-Dīn organized a musical assembly during his *ʿurs*. He asked a disciple to find someone who played the reed flute (*nai*), the instrument hallowed by the opening verses of the *Maṣnavī*. Another disciple recites the *Maṣnavī*, whereas a young newcomer recites Hindi poems.³⁷⁴ Unlike rabab, which seems to have been commonly used in *samāʿ*, playing *nai* was something novel, since finding a flautist was not taken for granted.

None of the instruments mentioned above has retained its position in Indian *samāʿ*, yet certain other aspects described in the texts prefigure contemporary practices. The qawwals performed in groups (*caukī*), not as solo vocalists, and in grander assemblies several groups performed in a row.³⁷⁵ In addition to the *qauls* mentioned in *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī*, the song texts continue to be predominantly Persian ghazals such as the following text attributed to Amīr Khusrāu:

*Loving the beauties is my work
Deviating from the road of love has wounded me.*

*Muslims! What do I have to do with religion?
Everyone who practices the religion of love is my friend.*

*Cold sigh, pale face and moist eyes
These wares of love are available in my bazaar.³⁷⁶*

Like a number of poetic texts attributed to Khusrāu and sung by contemporary qawwals, these verses are not found in the *divāns* of the poet. An orally transmitted poetic corpus distinct from the literary tradition seems to have existed already in the eighteenth century. As has been noted above, Hindi poetry is also mentioned in the discussions on *samāʿ*, but no song texts in this language are preserved in contemporary Sufi sources.

In addition to recording stray verses sung by the qawwals, the texts provide some information about the ways poetic text was treated in the course of a performance. In *Asharah kāmīlah*, Kalīm Allāh advises the listeners to be patient if a person who is overcome by ecstasy (*vajd*) orders the qawwals to repeat a certain verse (*bait*) or a quatrain (*rubāʿī*). He further adds that the qawwals should constantly monitor the state of such a person in order to see which word, line or verse affects his heart and to then keep repeating it without needing to be commanded to do so. Discussing the favourable state for listening to *samāʿ*, Kalīm Allāh also notes that retaining one's under-

373 See, e.g. Meraj 1998: 77.

374 Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 79.

375 Kāmgār, *Aḥsan*, 291.

376 See Kāmgār, *Aḥsan*, 206.

standing (*shu'ūr*) provides the advantage of being able to comprehend the meaning of the song texts.³⁷⁷

The texts written by and about Kalīm Allāh, Niẓām al-Dīn and Fakhr al-Dīn reveal the vitality of the practice of *samā'* in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Despite the Mujaddidi opposition and the Chishti masters' own predilection for more limited access to *samā'*, it was becoming a widely popular phenomenon where people from all walks of life participated as either practitioners or mere spectators. The interest of the Chishti Nizamīs was naturally in the first group of listeners, and they used *samā'* to supplement the rigidly organized and laborious practice of *zīkr* and *murāqabah* with an environment where spiritual states could be experienced in a more direct manner. To preserve the spontaneity required for experiencing the immediate effect of music and poetry, they significantly refrained from breaking down the practice into minute details.

Despite the emphasis on *samā'* as a meditative practice, the late Mughal Chishtis were not indifferent to its aesthetic dimensions. However, it is *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī* and *Muraqqa'-i Dihlī* that portray singers and poets operating in Sufi environment as a significant cultural force. Together the texts portray *samā'* as an institution that was simultaneously a potent means to entice spiritual experiences and an aesthetically enjoyable occasion. The presence of these two dimensions was essential for the continued success of the practice.

³⁷⁷ Kalīm Allāh, *Asharah*, 63-64.

3 REDEFINING SUFI PRACTICE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY INDIA

3.1 Religious Currents

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed a blooming of the religious trends that had begun to emerge in late Mughal Delhi and further developed in the *qaṣbahs* of north India. Valī Allāh's traditionalist views had in the 1820s coalesced with jihadist tendencies in the activities of Sayyid Aḥmad Barelvī and Shāh Ismā'īl, a great-grandson of Valī Allāh. They led their followers to Afghanistan, in order to launch a battle against the Sikhs and the British. However, their efforts were frustrated by the mutual disagreements of the local Pashtun tribes and both were killed together with their followers, on the battlefield of Balakot in 1831.³⁷⁸ The bloody suppression of the 1857 uprising by the British, and the transfer of the rule of their territories directly under the crown ended the symbolic, yet significant Mughal kingship. Since then, armed battle as an effective means to protect religion was ruled out by most Muslims. Instead, religious scholars channeled their energies to either modernizing or reforming the religious outlook and practice of their co-religionists.

The reformist trend that claims to represent Valī Allāh's legacy is best known from the religious school, Darul Uloom, founded in 1867 in the *qaṣbah* of Deoband 150 kilometres north of Delhi. The founding figures Muḥammad Qāsim Nanautavī (d. 1877) and Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī (d. 1905) were inspired by their Chishti Sabiri Sufi guide Ḥājjī Imdād Allāh (d. 1899). The latter incorporated in his persona the roles of an *ʿālim* and a Sufi sheikh. Among his widely read works is *Ziyā' al-qulūb* ('The Brilliance of Hearts'), which was the most influential manual of Sufi practice written since the days of Kalīm Allāh.³⁷⁹ Although Imdād Allāh represented reformist views in respect to religious scholarship, it is important to note that the *'ulamā'* of Darul Uloom are not his only heirs. Another side of his legacy was embodied by the Sufi master Z̄auqī Shāh (d. 1951) who, among other things, was a passionate advocate of *samā'*.³⁸⁰

Darul Uloom differed from the earlier educational institutions in its distinctly modern organization. Instead of individual books, the studies were organized into successive courses studied at a prescribed pace. However, in respect to the subjects, the school assumed a distinctly traditionalist outlook. They purged *dars-i niḡāmī* – that had thus far dominated the education of learned Muslims and, to a certain extent, Hindus as well – from most of the books dealing with logic, mathematics and philo-

³⁷⁸ On Sayyid Aḥmad Barelvī and the messianic expectations associated with him, see Gaborieau 2010. On the campaign of him and Shāh Ismā'īl, see Jalal 2008: 58–113.

³⁷⁹ For a discussion on the techniques included in the manual, see Kugle 2009: 221–264.

³⁸⁰ On Z̄auqī Shāh and his Sufi tradition, see Ernst & Lawrence 2002: 118–127, 134–137; and Rozehnal 2007a.

sophy, substituting them with works on *fiqh* and hadith studies. Persian language gave way to Arabic, while the teaching was given in Urdu. Since both the founders had a Sufi background, they also acted as Sufi sheikhs and did not condemn Sufism in general, but strove to reform what they deemed as innovations that had seeped into it from local customs. Among them were visiting the shrines, celebrating the death anniversaries of saints and listening to music as part of the religious practice.³⁸¹

Darul Uloom soon evolved into a network of schools covering most of South Asia. The network enjoyed the patronage of the emerging Muslim middle classes and began to attract students from abroad as well. While education and religious literature constituted the essential means of the Deobandi '*ulamā*' to promulgate their teachings, an organization called Tablighi Jamaat ('Missionary Society') was founded sixty years later by Muḥammad Ilyās Kandhlāwī (d. 1944) to spread the Deobandi ideals and reform the Indian Muslims on the grassroots level.³⁸² Both the Deobandi '*ulamā*' and Tablighi Jamaat posited that Islam should be followed in the confines of the Hanafi *fiqh* and the piety of an individual believer would protect the Muslims and their faith in politically unstable conditions. Other groups like Ahl-i Hadis adopted the more radical outlook of Valī Allāh and rejected the legal schools altogether. Instead, they claimed the Koran and hadiths as the sole basis for the commandments of sharia.³⁸³

The above-mentioned groups were not alone in their attempt to redefine the boundaries of Islamic orthodoxy and correct practice. The approach that emphasized scriptural scholarship as a means to lend support to religious practices and dogmas was adopted by Sufis belonging to traditional *silsilahs* as well. They studied the very same formative texts as their rivals, but reached opposite conclusions when it came to the so-called customary practices. Aḥmad Rizā Khān Barelvī (d. 1920) emerged as the fiercest opponent of the Deobandis and he levelled accusations of infidelity against them because of their denial of the Prophet's ontological existence as the first creation and his intercessory powers. He emphasized the love for the Prophet (*'ishq-i rasūl*) as the most important element in the faith of the Muslims. Aḥmad Rizā Khān himself was a Qadiri initiate, and he emphasized the significance of Sufi saints as well.³⁸⁴

³⁸¹ On the early decades of Darul Uloom, see Metcalf 2005.

³⁸² On Tablighi Jamaat, see Metcalf 1993. On the experiences of the Tablighi Jamaat members of their reforming work, see Metcalf 2003.

³⁸³ On Ahl-i Hadis, see Metcal 2005: 268–296.

³⁸⁴ On Aḥmad Rizā Khān, known as A'lahāzrat among his followers, and his movement, see Sanyal 2006 and 2010. In popular usage, in media and occasionally in scholarly literature as well, South Asian Muslims are divided into Deobandis and Barelwis depending on if they follow a scripturalist or customary approach to religion. Not only is this divide inaccurate, since several scholars have given scriptural support to many practices considered customary, but also offhand, since it posits the Sufis belonging to the traditional *silsilas* to the latter group, although most of them do not consider Aḥmad Rizā Khān as an authority in their matters.

None of the groups mentioned above endorsed the practice of *samāʿ*, and its defence was assumed by Sufis belonging to the Chishti, Qadiri and Naqshbandi Abu'l-'Ula'i brotherhoods. A number of legal treatises defending the practice were written after the mid-twentieth century. However, what makes the debate especially intriguing in South Asia is that both sides were obliged to extend their argumentation beyond the legal discourse to cover also the historical trajectory of Sufism. Because of their own Sufi affiliation, the early Deobandi '*ulamāʿ*' and the leaders of Tablighi Jamaat could not simply ignore the earlier Indian Sufi masters who had practiced *samāʿ*. This led to a situation where they were forced to selectively quote them in their works in order to show that for them, the practice had meant something else than listening to music and sung poetry dealing with passionate love, intoxication and infidelity or experiencing mystical states that could manifest themselves in dance-like movements. Such discourse was integrated into the debates about *samāʿ* by the Deobandi '*ālim* Ashraf 'Alī Thānavī (d. 1943) – called 'the most influential Sufi of his day' by Robinson³⁸⁵ – in his *Ḥaqq al-samāʿ* ('The Reality of Listening').³⁸⁶ To support his view that music is prohibited, he, for example, contested on the authority of Niẓām al-Dīn that Bābā Farīd had prohibited music and all kinds of instruments.³⁸⁷ Even if such a selective approach does not bear a closer scrutiny, berating music and poetry performed in *samāʿ* nonetheless contributed to downplaying their cultural and artistic significance. Instead of being part of the high culture as they were in late Mughal India, they came to represent something cheap and vulgar in the eyes of many Muslims, something a good Muslim should avoid.

Niẓāmī bansurī, the work discussed in this chapter, represents a diametrically opposite trajectory envisaged by Khwaja Hasan Nizami. Nizami was Ashraf 'Alī Thānavī's junior contemporary, a Sufi guide and religious scholar who belonged to the *silsilah* of Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn. *Niẓāmī bansurī* was written in 1941, and it narrates the life story of Niẓām al-Dīn Auliya'. The work is based on the allegedly contemporaneous diary of Niẓām al-Dīn's Hindu disciple, Prince Hardev, and it is this first person narrative framework that makes *Niẓāmī bansurī* unique among the numerous accounts of the master's life. Hand in hand with the historical narrative, the text also strives to offer scriptural authorization for many of the practices (*samāʿ* being one of them) that were denounced by the '*ulamāʿ*' of Deoband.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ Robinson 2001: 37–38.

³⁸⁶ See Thānavī 1904: 8–20, 22–27. His stance has been replicated in a number of subsequent works. See, e.g. Husain, *Qavvālī aur islām*, 118–149. The author even quotes Zarrādī's *Risālah* in support of the ban on music.

³⁸⁷ Thānavī 1904: 24.

³⁸⁸ For a more detailed discussion on the historical trajectory of *Niẓāmī bansurī*, see Viitamäki *forthcoming* b.

Khwaja Hasan Nizami

The author, Khwaja Hasan Nizami was born in 1878 into a family of hereditary custodians of the Nizamuddin shrine in Delhi. Orphaned at an early age, he spent his youth in impoverished conditions. Yet he became an influential figure in twentieth-century Muslim India: a versatile author, an activist campaigning against the Ārya Samāj, a social reformist and educator, an outspoken supporter of the Sufi practices condemned by the Deobandis and a spiritual guide to numerous disciples. His training took place in the traditional environment of his home and the *khānqāh* of Pīr Mihr ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1937) in Golra as well as in Darul Uloom Deoband, where the Sufi influence was still strongly felt. As a Sufi sheikh he combined classical Sufism and traditionalist religious learning with progressive modernism. This helped to endear him to those Indian Muslims, who were in favour of modern education and secularism but at the same time unwilling to turn their backs to Sufism.³⁸⁹

Nizami was a prolific author. In the foreword to *Nizāmī bansurī*, fourteen years before his passing away in 1955, he claims to have written about two hundred books in addition to newspaper articles and other short pieces.³⁹⁰ The appraisal of his works by the literary critics has varied greatly: some have lauded his flowing, accessible prose while others have accused him of publishing books written by his associates and disciples as his own.³⁹¹ Whatever the critics’ opinions on the literary merit of his writing, the books were Nizami’s primary means of effectively engaging in discussions on various topics relevant to contemporary Indian Muslims. The books were also an important medium to communicate with the disciples who, he estimated, numbered hundreds of thousands and were spread throughout the Subcontinent.

Compared to earlier centuries, producing books for wider circulation had in the course of the nineteenth century become easier thanks to the introduction of lithography from England in the beginning of the century. Presses using movable types had been established already in the eighteenth century, but Urdu and Persian publishing took off in earnest only along with the introduction of lithography. As for the reasons, Francesca Orsini points out that lithography was not only considerably cheaper and easier to operate than movable types, but it also facilitated the reproduction of the elegant hand of the calligraphers so that the result bore resemblance with manuscripts.³⁹² By 1886, there were already 1094 presses in India.³⁹³ Many of them were small-scale and often short-lived enterprises, whereas others grew into significant businesses. Matḥa‘-i Muṣṭafā’ī in Kanpur, for example, was able to tap the possibilities

³⁸⁹ For more information on Nizami, see Hermansen 2001 and Ernst & Lawrence 2002: 113–118. For his ‘official’ biography, see Vāḥidī 1957, and for a discussion of his literary activities, see Deobandi 2007 and Bakhsh 2012.

³⁹⁰ Nizami, *Nizāmī bansurī*, 9.

³⁹¹ See Hermansen 2001: 328–329 and Ernst & Lawrence 2002: 115–116.

³⁹² Orsini 2004: 109.

³⁹³ Gupta & Chakravorty 2004: 11.

of the market by producing both expensive editions of religious and medical texts, in addition to the popularly demanded and cheap almanacs and Urdu fiction. One important aspect of the nineteenth century print culture in India was also the production of books by order of the author or his patron. Such titles constituted a significant number of books published before the 1860s in north India.³⁹⁴

Nizami and his contemporaries took full advantage of the print in the promulgation of their ideas.³⁹⁵ The topics Nizami discusses in his works include modern applications of sharia,³⁹⁶ Sufi practice³⁹⁷ and current political issues.³⁹⁸ He also translated the Koran into Urdu and Hindi³⁹⁹ and claimed to have introduced the diary as a genre of Indian literature. He wrote diaries to document the events of his life in India,⁴⁰⁰ as well as his journeys to Afghanistan⁴⁰¹ and the Middle East.⁴⁰² His best-known works are his autobiography,⁴⁰³ the twelve historical books describing the events and aftermath of the 1857 uprising⁴⁰⁴ and the topic of this chapter, *Nizāmī bansurī*. It is interesting to note that, contrary to the common practice among his contemporaries professing literary ambitions, Nizami concentrated on writing prose instead of poetry. What connects him to the contemporary literary scene, on the other hand, is the exclusive use of Urdu instead of Persian and the experimentation with literary genres adopted from European literature.

Provenance of Nizāmī bansurī

The peculiar title of the book, *Nizāmī bansurī* ('The Bamboo Flute of Nizām [al-Dīn] or The Nizami [Brotherhood] Bamboo Flute'), alludes to the Sufi master Nizām al-Dīn and to the flute-playing god Krishna, who are part of a mystical experience of the protagonist, Prince Hardev. *Nizāmī bansurī* is a reworked Urdu translation of a Persian text called *Cihal rozah* ('Forty Days') that is supposed to be a fourteenth-century diary of a

³⁹⁴ Orsini 2004: 110–111, 113.

³⁹⁵ An attempt to determine the audience of a printed book in mid-twentieth-century India remains incomplete, if the fact that books were often read aloud to the illiterate is overlooked. The author acknowledges the practice by invoking blessings for both the readers and hearers in the beginning of *Nizāmī bansurī*. See Nizami, *Nizāmī bansurī*, 3.

³⁹⁶ On taxation, see Nizami, *Khudā'ī inkum ta'iks*.

³⁹⁷ See Nizami, *A'māl-i hizb al-baḥr*, for a lengthy discussion on Hizb al-Baḥr, the celebrated prayer composed by Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 1258).

³⁹⁸ He usually debated these in the pages of the Urdu newspapers *Ṣūfī*, *Munādī* and *Zamīndār*.

³⁹⁹ See Nizami, *Tartīlī tarjumah-yi qur'ān majīd (urdū)* and *Tartīlī tarjumā-e qur'ān majīd (hindī)*, respectively.

⁴⁰⁰ See Nizami, *Tārīkhī roznāmcah: 1931*.

⁴⁰¹ See Nizami, *Qadīm o jadīd Afghānistān ke do safarnāme: Ek har (sic) majastī Ghāzī Muḥammad Bādshāh Tājdār-i Afghānistān kā, dūsra Muṣavvir-i Fiṭrat Khvājah Ḥasan Nizāmī Dihlavī kā*.

⁴⁰² See Nizami, *Safarnāmah: Hijāz, Miṣr, Shām, Filasṭīn o Lubnān*. For a discussion on the Middle East travelogue, see Viitamäki 2013.

⁴⁰³ See Nizami, *Āpbītī*.

⁴⁰⁴ Published recently in one volume. See Nizami, *1857: Shams al-'Ulamā' Ḥazrat Khvājah Ḥasan Nizāmī ki bārah qadīm yādgār kitābeñ*. On the historical discourse in these works, see Schleyer 2012.

Hindu prince Hardev, describing his experiences with Niẓām al-Dīn in Delhi. Nizami relates how he came across this book in Bharatpur, where it had ended up after Sūraj Mal Jāṭ had ransacked the Nizamuddin shrine during Muḥammad Shāh's (r. 1719–1748) reign. Studying the book, he discovered it could help him fulfil a long-cherished dream: writing a comprehensive life story of Niẓām al-Dīn that would cover his teachings (like the *malḡūzāt* genre), historical context (like the *tazkirahs* and dynastic histories) and, simultaneously, address modern concerns. He had the text copied and set to work in 1941.⁴⁰⁵ A second, enlarged edition was published in 1945 and the book has been in print since, the sixth edition being published in 2009. *Niẓāmī bansurī* is also among the author's few books that have been transliterated into Devanagari script in an attempt to reach Hindi speaking audiences. In addition, it has been recently translated into English.⁴⁰⁶

Niẓāmī bansurī documents the life of Hardev in Delhi before he entered the lime-light of history as Aḥmad Ayāz *Khvājah-yi Jahān*. According to *Niẓāmī bansurī*, Hardev received the name Aḥmad Ayāz when he was initiated by Niẓām al-Dīn, whereas the sobriquet *Khvājah-yi Jahān* ('Master of the World') was earned in the service of the sultans.⁴⁰⁷ Historical chronicles like *Tārīkh-i fīrozshāhī* and *Tārīkh-i Firishtah* record Aḥmad Ayāz's actions as the commander of the army in Gujarat and, later on, as the prime-minister of Muḥammad ibn Tughlaq (r. 1325–1351). They also give a detailed account of his attempted rebellion against the new monarch Fīroz Shāh Tughlaq (r. 1351–1388), and his subsequent killing.⁴⁰⁸

The events covered in *Niẓāmī bansurī* take place between Hardev's arrival from Deogir to Delhi in 1297 and the death of Niẓām al-Dīn in 1325. The subsequent events that include Hardev's political career as Aḥmad Ayāz are only briefly summarized in the footnotes. It is unclear how Aḥmad Ayāz has become identified with the converted Hindu prince of *Cihal rozah*. Baranī even mentions Aḥmad Ayāz's father who is not a member of Deogiri nobility but 'Alā' al-Dīn Ayāz, the chief of police at the Siri fort built by 'Alā' al-Dīn *Khaljī* (r. 1296–1316).⁴⁰⁹ Furthermore, considering Baranī's attitude towards converted Muslims, whose emergence in the Delhi Sultanate he perceived 'as a perverse burlesque of the society,'⁴¹⁰ it is unlikely that he would have refrained from

⁴⁰⁵ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 11.

⁴⁰⁶ See Nizami, *A Diary of a Disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya*.

⁴⁰⁷ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 291.

⁴⁰⁸ See Baranī, *Tārīkh-i fīrozshāhī*, 481, 491, 509, 520, 539–548 and Firishtah, *Tārīkh-i Firishtah* I, 449, 470, 475–476, 483–486. For Nizami's more lenient interpretation of Aḥmad Ayāz's rebellion, see Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 53–54.

⁴⁰⁹ Baranī, *Tārīkh*, 278.

⁴¹⁰ Aquil 2004: 218.

commenting on the background of Aḥmad Ayāz had he originally been a Hindu.⁴⁴¹ It is telling that *Siyar al-auliya'*³ mentions neither Hardev nor Aḥmad Ayāz.⁴⁴²

However, there is no reason to challenge Nizami's claim that *Nizāmī bansurī* is based on a text entitled *Cihal rozah* considering the literary strategy he uses in most of his books. The author rarely writes purely fictional text. Instead, he takes historical or contemporary events as a starting point and then embellishes them with Sufi meaning and dramatizing literary touch.⁴⁴³ What remains unclear is the provenance of *Cihal rozah* and the reason for Aḥmad Ayāz's identification with Hardev. If Nizami's account on how the text ended up in Bharatpur is correct, the answer may lie in the largely unexplored literary production of the hereditary custodians of the Nizamuddin shrine. These works include practice manuals, poetry, as well as *tazkirahs* like *Shavāhid-i nizāmī* that incorporate material not found in the earlier works like *Siyar al-auliya'*. As will become clear, also *Nizāmī bansurī* is part of this literary tradition.

3.2 Nizām al-Dīn's life retold for modern readers

The speculations about the provenance of Hardev's story are further frustrated by the fact that it is practically impossible to tell the voice of Nizami apart from that of Hardev. In the process of writing *Nizāmī bansurī*, the author reworks the original so thoroughly that the book becomes essentially a literary product of his own. For this reason, *Nizāmī bansurī* is best analysed as a twentieth-century text. From the point of view of this study, questions about the origins of *Cihal rozah* and the historicity of Hardev's narrative are irrelevant. It is more rewarding to inquire what the author wanted to communicate to his contemporary readers by this retelling of medieval history.

The story of Hardev

Hardev's story begins in 1295 with a description of the future sultan, 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī's attack on Deogir. This time, the ruler of Deogir, Rāmdev, was able to save his territories from annexation by paying a ransom and promising to pay tribute to the sultan. However, the growing might of the sultan encouraged him to have a few

⁴⁴¹ For a detailed discussion on Baranī's attitude towards Hindus and converted Muslims, see Aquil 2009: 48–75.

⁴⁴² Both Baranī (*Tārīkh*, 389) and Firishtah (*Tārīkh*, 416) as well as Amīr Khusrau (*The Nuh Sipīhr of Amīr Khusrau*, 191–202) mention a certain Harpal Dev who rose against the Sultan Quṭb al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh (r. 1316–1320) in Deogir. He was soon defeated and Deogir was forced to pay heavy tribute to the Sultan. In his account of the events in *Nuh sipīhr*, Khusrau occasionally portrays Hindus in a favourable light, yet commonalities between Harpāl Dev and Hardev do not go beyond the similarity of the name and the connection with Deogir. It is thus difficult to conceive Harpāl Dev as an inspiration for Hardev's character. For a discussion of the Turk and Hindu in *Nuh sipīhr*, see Gabbay 2010: 66–85.

⁴⁴³ Nizami's Sufi interpretation of the abdication of Edward VIII in 1936 is a fascinating specimen wherein this literary strategy is utilized. See Nizami, *Ex-King Edward's Diary of the Ten Eventful Days*.

princes – Hardev among them – tutored in Persian language in order to better communicate with the enemy, if the need rose.⁴¹⁴

After two years, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ascended to the throne in Delhi and sent Amīr Ḥasan as his emissary to Deogir to ensure the continuation of paying the tribute. Amīr Ḥasan happened to be also a close disciple of Niẓām al-Dīn who would record the discussions of his master in *Favā'id al-fu'ād*. During his sojourn in Deogir, he used to tell stories about Niẓām al-Dīn to Hardev. He thus kindled a desire to meet him in the latter's heart. Obtaining permission from his parents, Hardev traveled to Delhi with the returning delegation.⁴¹⁵

In Delhi, the narrative revolves around Hardev's meetings with Niẓām al-Dīn and his disciples. During their first encounter, the prince was warmly welcomed and over the following months, he visited Niẓām al-Dīn on a regular basis and had long discussions with him. He attended the assemblies of the master, on the course of which the participants discussed religious topics and experienced mystical states induced by *samā'*. Over the years, Hardev became a close associate of Niẓām al-Dīn, so much so that he was regularly invited to meet him together with the dearest disciples Amīr Khusrāu and Sayyid Muḥammad Imām, a grandson of Bābā Farīd living in Delhi.

In Hardev's view, Niẓām al-Dīn was a paragon of human virtue: truthful, free from scheming and false pretensions. He was a person who saw everyone as equal regardless of his background.⁴¹⁶ But he was also a spiritual stalwart capable of performing miracles (*karāmāt*, *kharaq-i 'ādāt*). The miracles are essential to the narrative, since they feed Hardev's fascination and pull him closer to Niẓām al-Dīn. The first miracle Hardev witnessed took place soon after he had arrived in Delhi and is, by coincidence, connected with the practice of *samā'*. He had just met Niẓām al-Dīn for the first time and was wandering around the bazaars of the capital city, marvelling at the goods available for purchase. In a shop trading arms, he encountered a vendor who criticized Niẓām al-Dīn's practice of *samā'* and how he allowed the disciples to prostrate in front of himself. After a heated argument, Hardev succeeded in persuading the vendor to visit Niẓām al-Dīn's *jamā'atkhānah*. There, Niẓām al-Dīn explained these controversial topics to the vendor before even being asked about them. The vendor repented and became his disciple.⁴¹⁷

Notwithstanding the lack of pressure to become a Muslim, Hardev converted in due course. When he inquired about converting from Niẓām al-Dīn, the latter answered that the right faith was more important than repeating certain formulaic words. Niẓām al-Dīn went on to ask, if Hardev believed God to be one, Muḥammad to be his last prophet and if he would refrain from worshipping idols. When he answered

⁴¹⁴ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 16–19.

⁴¹⁵ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 23, 26.

⁴¹⁶ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 31.

⁴¹⁷ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 40–41.

in the affirmative, Niẓām al-Dīn noted: ‘See, you are already a Muslim.’⁴¹⁸ When the formal conversion later takes place, it is described as a simple, almost commonplace occurrence lacking any traces of triumphalism that by the time of writing had come to characterize the activities of several religious organizations engaged in missionary activities. Subsequently, Hardev was also initiated into the Chishti Nizami brotherhood and given the name Aḥmad Ayāz by Niẓām al-Dīn.⁴¹⁹

Towards the end of the diary, political events are given more attention, and Hardev’s ties with the court become firmer. Hardev’s narrative ends with the building of a dome over Niẓām al-Dīn’s tomb and Hardev’s marriage with the daughter of the new sultan, Muḥammad ibn Tughlaq, marking his rise to power.⁴²⁰

From Cihal rozah to Niẓāmī bansurī

Niẓāmī bansurī is not a straightforward translation of *Cihal rozah*. In the course of the writing process, Nizami has edited, commented on, elaborated, annotated and added appendices to the text. The main narrative summarized above includes only those parts of Hardev’s diary that discuss Niẓām al-Dīn, while the remaining portions have been omitted.⁴²¹ Since the diary was written over a period of 28 years and hence fragmentary, it had to be reworked into a consistent narrative. So the author filled in the gaps concerning Niẓām al-Dīn’s life with material derived from the two collections of the master’s discussions,⁴²² the comprehensive biography *Siyar al-auliā’*, as well as from the works of the Sultanate historians.⁴²³ In addition to the literary sources, the author seems to have drawn from the oral tradition connected with the Nizamuddin shrine. Consequently, the narrative is interspersed with lengthy passages discussing the historical context of the events, Niẓām al-Dīn’s life before Hardev’s arrival in Delhi and Niẓām al-Dīn’s predecessors. These sections are normally integrated into the narrative as extensive responses by Niẓām al-Dīn or one of his disciples to Hardev’s inquiries.⁴²⁴ The main body of the text is further augmented with copious notes in which Nizami discusses some historical discrepancies or comments on the contemporary relevance of the events described in the text. In addition to the annotated narrative running for 363 pages, *Niẓāmī bansurī* includes a two-hundred-page appendix that covers the lives of the important disciples of Niẓām al-Dīn as well as the history of the shrine where he is entombed.

Although the author included historical background information into *Niẓāmī bansurī* in the hope of reaching also those without particular interest in Sufism,⁴²⁵ the

⁴¹⁸ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 192.

⁴¹⁹ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 209, 291.

⁴²⁰ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 341, 350, 362.

⁴²¹ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 363.

⁴²² I.e. *Favā’id al-fu’ād* by Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī and *Afzal al-favā’id* attributed to Amīr Khusrau.

⁴²³ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 12, 15.

⁴²⁴ See, e.g. Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 19–23, 57–68 and 101–148.

⁴²⁵ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 15.

core readership of the text has most probably consisted of the disciples in his Sufi lineage. The main function of the text seems to be instructing them through a spiritually nourishing narrative that reads like a historical novel and is both entertaining and educating. *Nizāmī bansurī* is a fine specimen of Nizami's literary style. He eschews florid parlance and refrains from using complicated Arabic and Persian vocabulary in favour of lucid and accessible Urdu expressions. His narration is straightforward, almost colloquial, and the rhythm of his writing is akin to spoken language.

The inclusion of footnotes and appendices as well as lengthy passages from other literary and oral sources into the text brings the author's voice forcibly into the work. Through these elaborations, he enters into a dialogue with the past and succeeds in making the medieval events highly relevant to twentieth-century Sufi disciples. Nizām al-Dīn's Sufi practices that were contested by religious scholars in the fourteenth century were also a subject of the criticism of the Deobandis, Tablighi Jamaat and Ahl-i Hadis. The warm welcome extended to Hardev by Nizām al-Dīn challenged the idea of clearly defined religious boundaries that had gained currency in twentieth-century India. Nizami also describes the *samā'* inquest in which Nizām al-Dīn was involved in great detail and evokes the arguments he had used while speaking to contemporary disciples who might recoil in front of the forceful criticism of the Deobandis.⁴²⁶ The passages boldly defending other controversial Sufi practices and the exploration of similarities between Islam and Hinduism resonate more strongly with the writing context of the book than with the medieval period.

In addition to debating with contemporary adversaries through the means of historical fiction embellished with scriptural arguments, *Nizāmī bansurī* is remarkable for its novel approach to *samā'*. The text includes anecdotes that are not found in any of the earlier sources, but feature prominently in the oral traditions that circulate around the Nizamuddin shrine. Furthermore, one anecdote about experiences during *samā'* is, possibly for the first time in India, recorded as a first person narrative from the point of view of the individual who undergoes the mystical experience.

3.3 Oral traditions on *samā'* in *Nizāmī bansurī*

Nizāmī bansurī includes many orally transmitted anecdotes that are commonly known to both the hereditary custodians of the Nizamuddin shrine and to its pilgrims. To my knowledge, *Nizāmī bansurī* is the first text to incorporate them into a broader hagiographical framework. On the one hand, this lends them historical credibility and, on the other, boosts the author's claim that his work is a previously unknown document through which he can engage in the debates about correct Sufi practice. During the following discussion, one should keep in mind that these anecdotes may have entered the oral tradition from *Nizāmī bansurī*. However, considering that the author seldom

⁴²⁶ See Nizami, *Nizāmī bansurī*, 302–312.

fabricated his material, it is likely that they existed and circulated already at the time of writing.

Samā' by the well

One story often heard at the Nizamuddin shrine describes a spontaneous *samā'* assembly of Niẓām al-Dīn. In *Niẓāmī bansurī* this anecdote, like so many others, is told to Hardev by his host, Sayyid Muḥammad. One day, Niẓām al-Dīn was on his way to the tomb of Quṭb al-Dīn with his closest disciples, when they passed by a well from which water was being withdrawn with the help of an ox-driven water wheel. The Hindu who was standing in the vicinity of the well's mouth said each time a leather bucket emerged from the well: '*Bārah lā'īyyo rām manā'īyyo!*' Hearing the words, Niẓām al-Dīn inquired their meaning from Sayyid Muḥammad and Amīr *Khusrau*, both of whom, he said, knew Hindi. They volunteered the meaning 'Raise water and celebrate God!'⁴²⁷ It is not surprising that here the word *rām* is translated as *khudā*, as Nizami had already drawn parallels between some Muslim and Hindu concepts such as *murāqabah* and *samādhī* as well as the idea of God's essence (*zāt*) and qualities (*ṣifāt*) and the concepts of *nirgun* and *sagun*.⁴²⁸

Although the Hindu's call attracted Niẓām al-Dīn's attention already before he understood its meaning, upon learning it from his disciples, he cried out 'Allah!' and started to dance overcome by a mystical state (*vajd*). When Sayyid Muḥammad, Amīr *Khusrau* and Amīr Ḥasan saw this, they begun singing the phrase, combining with it Arabic and Persian verses 'which had the same meaning as the Hindi expression.' The retinue halted and the always practical Iqbāl, Niẓām al-Dīn's personal servant, returned to the *jamā'atkhānah* and brought with him food and sheets to be spread on the ground. Qawwals arrived with him and the occasion turned into a proper *samā'* assembly that continued for three days and three nights. After that, Niẓām al-Dīn concluded his pilgrimage and returned to Ghiyaspur.⁴²⁹

The passage bears striking similarities with an anecdote told by Gesūdarāz in *Javāmi' al-kalim*. The setting is similar, but the person who raises the water keeps saying '*bāhurī ho bāhur*' which, according to the text, means 'turn back, turn back.' Niẓām al-Dīn does not require an explanation about the meaning of the phrase, but is overcome by mystical state (*zauq*) immediately. His servants Iqbāl and Mubashshir set the phrase into a musical tune and accompany their master, singing, to his destination, which appears to be his *jamā'atkhānah* instead of the tomb of Quṭb al-Dīn.⁴³⁰ The story is repeated in *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī* in the chapter on *samā'*, where the words '*bāharā'ī bhaiyyā bāharā'ī*', interpreted to mean 'come back, brother, come back' are now intoned by a man driving the ox. Again, Niẓām al-Dīn is affected by the words and he

⁴²⁷ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 86.

⁴²⁸ See Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 75.

⁴²⁹ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 86–87.

⁴³⁰ Ḥusainī, *Javāmi'*, 150.

starts to cry. Iqbāl and Mubashshir, whose voices equal the melody of David (*lahn-i dā'ud*), start to sing the verse. They accompany Niẓām al-Dīn back to his abode, where his entire day is spent in a mystical state (*shauq o zāuq*) and 'not a single breath was bereft of crying and sighing.'⁴³¹

Although *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī* adds some details to the account of *Javāmi' al-kalim*,⁴³² such as the duration of Niẓām al-Dīn's mystical state and the beauty of Niẓām al-Dīn's servants' voices, both are rather vague in comparison with the anecdote of *Niẓāmī bansurī*. The latter text sets the incident in the context of Niẓām al-Dīn's well-known habit of regularly undertaking a pilgrimage to Quṭb al-Dīn's tomb and also floats the chance encounter into a full fledged *samā'* assembly with sheets, food and qawwals. More notable, however, is the phrase of the Hindu by the well. In *Javāmi' al-kalim* and *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī*, he simply asks his companion or the ox to turn or come back. In *Niẓāmī bansurī*, his words have a distinctly religious tone as they exhort to celebrate God (Ram/Khuda) while raising water. The elaboration of the anecdote is probably part of the regular hagiographical process, but rephrasing the man's call reveals a conscious attempt to root Niẓām al-Dīn's religious views in the Indian soil. The story about the origins of the spring festival *basant* is even more revealing in this respect. It is also more striking in a sense that, to my knowledge, it has no textual antecedents.

Celebrating the spring

On the day of *basant*, Hardev is standing at the door of his house. He watches the Hindus who are on their way to the temple of Kalka Devi carrying mustard flowers. Suddenly, he spots Amīr Khusrau who also has a pot of flowers in his hand. He is on his way to meet Niẓām al-Dīn, who is brooding over the premature death of his sister's grandson and designated successor Taqī al-Dīn Nūḥ in a place called *Cabūtrah-yi yārān* ('The Pavilion of Friends').⁴³³

Hardev joins Amīr Khusrau with Sayyid Muḥammad and Sayyid Mūsā. At *Cabūtrah-yi yārān*, they find Niẓām al-Dīn sitting alone, head lowered on a stone-slab. In order to cheer him up, Khusrau tilts his cap and starts to sway in front of Niẓām al-Dīn as if dancing. Niẓām al-Dīn raises his glance, a smile spreads on his face and he asks what it is all about. Khusrau places the mustard flowers on the feet of his Sufi guide and says in Hindi (no translation is required this time): 'Arab friend, I celebrated your *basant* ('*arab yār torī basant manā'ī*)! Today, Hindus offer flowers of spring to their idols. I have come to offer mustard flowers to my idol:

⁴³¹ Bulāq, *Shavāhid*, 90.

⁴³² Misspelled *Jāmi' al-kalim* in the text.

⁴³³ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 218–219. In the text, Amīr Khusrau explains *Cabūtrah-yi yārān* to lie by 'the bond (*talāb*) that is near Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī's Koshak Lal, around which my Ḥaẓrat has had nine pavilions built, and where the relatives and friends of Ḥaẓrat lie buried.' At present, *Cabūtrah-yi yārān* is understood to denote the elevated ground opposite the stepwell on western side of the Nizamuddin shrine.

People say that *Khusrau* is worshipping idols
Oh yes, yes, I do, I have no use for the people and the world.⁴³⁴

Khusrau then recites another verse:

Shedding tears, the clouds and spring have arrived
Saqi! Scatter flowers and bring wine!⁴³⁵

Amir *Khusrau* is joined by Sayyid Muḥammad and Sayyid Mūsā, and Niẓām al-Dīn stands up and starts to dance. According to the text, the three disciples kept combining verses in Hindi and Persian with Amir *Khusrau*'s verse they were singing. After the Sufi master had calmed down somewhat, he placed the mustard flowers on the tomb of Taqī al-Dīn Nūḥ. After standing there silently for some time, Niẓām al-Dīn turned to *Khusrau* to inquire how he was.⁴³⁶

Basant is a Hindu festival of spring that takes place on the fifth day of Megh in the Hindu calendar. Hindus worship the goddess Sarasvati on that day, but the festival has also non-religious aspects, such as flying kites and wearing something yellow as a part of one's attire, in which many South Asian Muslims participate. Such inclusive festivals are targeted by the more puritan religious scholars. In Pakistan, they have rallied for banning the festival evoking the official excuse of protecting people from falling off the roofs while flying the kites. However, in Chishti shrines, the festival acquires distinctly religious connotations.

The account of the legendary origins of the festival included in *Niẓāmī bansurī* differs in some respects from another version also circulating in the oral lore. In this version, Taqī al-Dīn Nūḥ has just passed away and Niẓām al-Dīn is depressed on that account. It happens to be *basant* and Amir *Khusrau* sees some Hindu women carrying mustard flowers. This inspires him to dress up as a woman and dance in front of Niẓām al-Dīn in order to cheer him up.⁴³⁷ Scott Kugle has remarked how contemporary custodians of the Nizamuddin shrine de-emphasized the erotic undertones of the story by describing *Khusrau*'s dance like that of a leaping monkey and turned it into a comic performance, when they related it to him.⁴³⁸ *Niẓāmī bansurī* makes no reference to cross-dressing, yet it locates the anecdote firmly into the context of Persian love poetry. Amir *Khusrau*'s tilted cap and addressing Niẓām al-Dīn as the 'Arab friend' (*'arab yār*) both evoke erotic poetic images. If cross-dressing was part of the oral lore at the time

⁴³⁴ The verse remotely resembles the closing verse of a ghazal found in *Khusrau's dīvān*. See *Khusrau, Kulliyāt-i 'anāšir-i davāvin-i Khusrau*, 49. The word to word variant is found in twentieth-century anthologies of qawwali poetry. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmat al-samā'*, 48–49; Fārūqī, *Naghmat al-samā'*, 39; Meraj, *Surūd-i Rūḥānī*, 121.

⁴³⁵ Although sung by the contemporary qawwals and classical vocalists, the verse does not appear in any of *Khusrau's* ghazals.

⁴³⁶ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 220–222.

⁴³⁷ For this version on the origins of *basant*, see, for example, the film by an Indian documentarist Yousuf Saeed (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2zLN88unuI>). Kugle records the anecdote without a reference to *basant*. See Kugle 2010b: 252.

⁴³⁸ Kugle 2010b: 262

of writing, omitting it is perhaps meant to avoid vulgar and comic connotations. However, this does not result in divesting the anecdote from erotic nuances. On the contrary, they become even more pronounced during the ensuing dialogue between Nizām al-Dīn and Khusrau.

When Nizām al-Dīn enquires after Khusrau's health, the latter answers by expressing his wish to find repose in the feet of his guide after sleepless nights spent in the agony of love:

*Poor Khusrau has not slept since many nights because he wishes
To fall asleep with his eyes on your feet.*

Nizām al-Dīn answers with a verse that plays with the words *tark* ('forsaking'), *turk* ('a Turk') and *tārak* ('the crown of the head') and expresses a deep affection for his disciple:

*If they bring a saw upon the crown of my head in order to make me leave my Turk
I will forsake the crown of my head, but never leave my Turk.*

He then continues with a famous line describing the union of the Sufi guide and the disciple:

I became you, you became me. I became the body, you became the soul.

Hearing this, Khusrau bows down to the feet of Nizām al-Dīn and completes the verse, seizing the feet of his guide:

So that no one would say after this, I am someone else, you are someone else.

Nizām al-Dīn tells Khusrau to get up and says that on the day of judgement, when he is asked to tell what he has brought with him from the world for God, he will present the burning of Khusrau's heart. Hearing these words, Khusrau cries out and starts to circumambulate Nizām al-Dīn. Sayyid Mūsā and Sayyid Muḥammad sing the above verse, while Hardev, his breath choking, looks upon.⁴³⁹

Like the incident by the well, the *basant* anecdote describes spontaneous reactions of Nizām al-Dīn to poetic statements. His disciples expertly seize the moment and enhance his mystical state by turning the occasion into an extemporaneous *samā'* assembly. Both anecdotes naturalize such incidents as a part of the hagiographical accounts on Nizām al-Dīn's life and argue for the significance of the practice. However, the ramifications of the *basant* anecdote are more far-reaching. It provides aetiology for the celebrations of the festival in the Sufi shrines. Nizami also asserts in a footnote that the incident gave rise to the tradition of celebrating the festival among South Asian Muslims in general, not only among the Sufis.⁴⁴⁰ He thus manages to advocate both the practice of *samā'* and the celebration of an originally Hindu festival by Muslims, both being practices demurred by his Deobandi contemporaries.

⁴³⁹ Nizami, *Nizāmī bansurī*, 221–223.

⁴⁴⁰ Nizami, *Nizāmī bansurī*, 224–225.

3.4 A subjective description of a mystical state

None of the texts discussed thus far has described the mystical experience enticed by *samā'* from the point of view of the person who undergoes it. No text tells what he might have felt, seen or thought. Instead, they concentrate on the outward behaviour. *Nizāmī bansurī* is a remarkable text in the sense that it relates one such incident from Hardev's point of view.

The incident took place early during Hardev's stay in Delhi. It is among the key passages of *Nizāmī bansurī* and its significance is underlined by the fact that the book derives its title from it. One day, Hardev and Sayyid Muḥammad were summoned by Nizām al-Dīn. The passage resembles the *malfūzāt* genre as it begins with noting who was present and describes the details of the discussion between the Sufi guide and his disciples. The topics – poetry and theology – are also typical to the genre. When Hardev arrives, Nizām al-Dīn is explaining to Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd that Muslims do not consider the qualities (*ṣifāt*) of God separate from God's essence (*zāt*). Naṣīr al-Dīn replies by saying that he has expressed the same idea in poetic language: 'He is in me, and I am in him like fragrance inside the rose.' The line pleases Nizām al-Dīn and he asks Naṣīr al-Dīn to recite the rest of his poem. A touch of realism is added to the passage, when Hardev fails to record the entire ghazal, because he has forgotten part of the verses. Instead, *Nizāmī bansurī* includes only three of its five verses that were certainly known to Nizami.⁴⁴¹ This may be a literary trope, but it may also indicate that he is now actually translating the older Persian text.

*I am useless and useful like madd in reckoning*⁴⁴²

I speak and I am silent like a letter in a book.

Sometimes I am happy, sometimes sorrowful, unaware of my condition

I cry and I laugh like a sleeping child.

The chest of Naṣīr al-Dīn contains nothing but love

*Look at this surprising spectacle: an ocean is inside a bubble.*⁴⁴³

When Nizām al-Dīn hears the ghazal, his eyes fill with tears. Sayyid Muḥammad interrupts by summarizing a discussion he had had with Hardev earlier that day, saying that according to the Hindu faith (*hindū 'aqīdah*), God has distributed his qualities to gods and goddesses. He wonders if this corresponds to the Islamic concept the mas-

⁴⁴¹ The ghazal is the only poem attributed to Naṣīr al-Dīn Mahmud and it is a stock item in qawwali repertoires. It is already included in an anthology of qawwali poetry published in 1935. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naḡhmāt*, 156–157.

⁴⁴² The line refers to the fact that although *madd* (ّ) written above the letter *alif* turns it into a long ā, it does not affect its numerical value in the *abjad* system.

⁴⁴³ Nizami, *Nizāmī bansurī*, 80–81.

ter just discussed? Nizām al-Dīn brushes such cerebral speculations aside and says that it is better to be intoxicated by the bewilderment over an ocean being inside a bubble than to try to fathom such theological dilemmas. He then addresses Hardev directly saying that the most important thing is to know oneself and the paradox pertaining to the self: although it perceptibly exists, it is imaginary and lacking real existence, because everything is a manifestation of a single essence.⁴⁴⁴ Nizām al-Dīn's words and Naṣīr al-Dīn's ghazal are completely in line with the *vijūdī* concepts. This is somewhat anachronistic, since the ideas expounded by Ibn 'Arabī and his disciples reached India only during the latter part of the fourteenth century, after Nizām al-Dīn's passing away.

Everyone present is touched by Nizām al-Dīn's words. When Nizām al-Dīn then looks towards Hardev, tears in his eyes, the latter's report of the events turns into a very personal description of a mystical state that is worth quoting in full because of its uniqueness in Indian Sufi writing. Recording visionary experiences has been an established practice among Indian Sufis. For example, the Shattari master Muḥammad Ghaus Gvāliyarī wrote a detailed record about his ascension to heaven (*mi'rāj*) he contested to have accomplished in his physical body.⁴⁴⁵ However, such passages had never appeared in the context of *samā'*.

Ḥaẓrat [i.e. Nizām al-Dīn] raised his glance towards me and there were tears in his eyes. It seemed as if the entire universe was appearing to me in those tears in an agitated condition. Ḥaẓrat merely looked at me, he did not say anything. But I started to tremble. And I saw everything in the tears of Ḥaẓrat. Loosing my self-consciousness, I went forward in order to kiss the feet of Ḥaẓrat. But as soon as I stood up, something inside me started to dance. Instead of laying my head on his feet, I started to dance in the midst of the assembly. I wish I could have controlled myself and refrained from such insolent and rude behaviour, but I had no control over myself. I saw sky and earth moving, jumping and dancing. I had not lost my consciousness, I saw everything and understood everything. But what was happening inside me and why was I dancing, that I am not able to write, because I do not know the reason behind it. Seeing me dancing, my Ḥaẓrat stood up and so did everyone who was present. Khvājah Sayyid Muḥammad started to sing the closing verse of Shaikh Naṣīr al-Dīn Mahmud with exceedingly beautiful voice:

*The chest of Naṣīr al-Dīn contains nothing but love
Look at this surprising spectacle: an ocean is inside a bubble.*

Khvājah Muḥammad was repeating the words '*contains nothing but love*' time and again. I had never known that he had such a beautiful voice and that he sings so well. Tears were flowing from the eyes of my Ḥaẓrat and my steadfast gaze was fixed on his blessed face. Such visions were appearing to me in each

⁴⁴⁴ Nizami, *Nizāmī bansurī*, 82.

⁴⁴⁵ See Kugle 2007b: 136–160.

one of his tears that I cannot explain them in words. I saw my country in those tears. I saw my parents. I saw an image (*mūrtī*) of Krishna, I saw him playing the bamboo flute (*bansurī*).⁴⁴⁶ The notes of the bamboo flute seemed to merge with the sound of Khvājah Muḥammad's voice. And I understood that Krishna was playing the bamboo flute and dancing with me and I was dancing inside Ḥazrat's tears with Krishna. I was repeating '*contains nothing but love*' and Krishna was also repeating '*contains nothing but love*'.

After some time I lost my consciousness and fell down. When I came to, the assembly had dispersed and Khvājah Muḥammad and Shaikh Naṣīr al-Dīn were sitting close to me. My head was on the knee of Khvājah Muḥammad and he was softly singing:

The chest of Naṣīr al-Dīn contains nothing but love

Look at this surprising spectacle: an ocean is inside a bubble.

After regaining my consciousness I felt as if I had been drinking. There was a wonderful feeling of elation inside me. I sat up and then stood up. Shaikh Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd and Khvājah Muḥammad caught my both arms and took me to the latter's house. And even there, the same voice kept coming to me as if the doors and walls were singing '*contains nothing but love*'.⁴⁴⁷

At Sayyid Muḥammad's house, Sayyid Mūsā recited Hardev the Sura of Yusuf which upheld the latter's enchanted mood (*kaiḥyiyat*) even though he did not understand the words. Sayyid Mūsā explained that Niẓām al-Dīn had instructed him to recite this specific sura because Hardev was affected by the poetic theme (*mazmūn*) of love, which is the topic of this particular sura as well. He then enlightened Hardev that if the qawwals unexpectedly swift the theme of poetry they are singing when someone is experiencing a mystical state (*kaiḥyiyat*), the latter may be harmed or even die out of shock.⁴⁴⁸

The passage summarizes many of the themes that have already appeared in the Sultanate and late Mughal Sufi texts. It describes the *adab* of a *samā'* assembly: Hardev attempts to hold himself at bay, but is forced to surrender in front of the urge to dance that rises from inside him. It tells how all the participants stood up in order to conform to Hardev's experience. It attributes Hardev's mystical state to poetry and describes how the phrase is being repeated in order to uphold his state. It warns against the dire consequences of a sudden change in the singing or in the song text. The passage also evokes a distinctly anti-intellectual approach to *samā'*. Instead of trying to grasp theological concepts, one should feel one's own existence (or lack thereof) through the poetic metaphors.

⁴⁴⁶ This is the only instance the word *bansurī* appears in the book apart from the title.

⁴⁴⁷ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 82–84.

⁴⁴⁸ Nizami, *Niẓāmī bansurī*, 84–85.

The description of Hardev's state echoes the writings of Shāh Kalīm Allāh and Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn discussed above. Before collapsing, Hardev remains conscious of what is happening to him and around him. He understands the meaning of the poem, but loses control over himself. Had he lost his consciousness right in the beginning, he would not have been able to describe the visions he saw in the tears Nizām al-Dīn, where his country, his parents and, finally, an image of Krishna appeared to him. And all the time, everything kept repeating the phrase 'contains nothing but love' in unison.

The inclusion of the passage in *Nizāmī bansurī* and giving it such lengthy treatment achieve several different goals. On the one hand, the passage speaks for the presence of Hindus in the circle of a Sufi master in a time, when the demand for exclusive religious identities was being voiced more vehemently than ever before. It also portrays the Sufi master as a religious specialist of the highest rank; after all, he is able to bestow an experience of divine reality to anyone according to his or her religious outlook. Hardev's visionary experience is a means to provide a first-hand testimony to that. And, finally, it casts aspersions on the listening of sung poetry, which has a potential to evoke such experiences, in an absurd light.

What is significant in the passage is that Nizami does not interpret it to his readers. He makes no effort to justify the appearance of Krishna in Nizām al-Dīn's tear, but lets the description speak for itself. The text contains certain hints, such as emphasizing that Hardev saw an image of Krishna, not Krishna himself, that indicate to readers that the vision was purely subjective and does not imply, for instance, the divinity of Krishna in any ontological sense. However, while Nizami's disciples would have been literate enough to read the passage in a manner the author had meant, it will have offered grounds for criticism to his adversaries. In this sense, Hardev's experience represents one more instance of the boldness with which Nizami advocated the Sufi practices that were seen as controversial by the traditionalist, puritanical 'ulamā'. For him, *samā'* was a natural component of the Sufi practice. As a handbook for a Chishti Nizami disciple to the history of the brotherhood, *Nizāmī bansurī* forcefully states the case of *samā'*: it is not an excuse for frivolous, immoral entertainment as it was envisioned by his ideological opponents. On the contrary, it is an integral part of Sufi practice and part and parcel of the *vujūdī* vision that sees the manifestations and hears the echoes of the one existence everywhere. The poetic words and melodious voice⁴⁴⁹ only offer these manifestations a comprehensible form. The more attractive this form is, the greater its effect on the listeners.

⁴⁴⁹ Nizami does not mention musical instruments in *Nizāmī bansurī*. However, he was fond of classical Hindustani music – both instrumental and vocal – and allowed instrumental accompaniment in his *samā'* assemblies.

PART II: POETIC REPERTOIRES AND QAWWALI MUSIC

4 QAWWALI REPERTOIRES

4.1 Classifying the poems: languages, genres, authors

Before entering a detailed discussion on individual poems in the performance context, it is helpful to form a general idea of the poetry sung in *samā'* assemblies. The task is daunting, since the sheer vastness and fluidity of the qawwals' repertoires threaten to frustrate any attempts to characterize this corpus in a meaningful way. Repertoires vary from one period, one geographical location and one performer to another. This lack of standardization stems from the fact that only two items bear a connection with regulated ritual setting. These two items, *Qaul* and *Rang*,⁴⁵⁰ will be discussed in detail below. Now, suffice it to say that they are always performed in connection with a commemorative prayer called *fātiḥah* that is read on the death anniversary of a Sufi saint. However, when a *samā'* assembly is not connected with the commemorative ritual, these two items can be omitted and the qawwals are free, even obliged, to adapt their performance to the occasion and the audience.

Even if the performers are given such a license, the religious context of performances could have led to formalization of the practice. It would, for example, be natural for the disciples of a certain *silsilah* desiring to keep the memory of their departed Sufi guide alive to instruct the qawwals to sing his favourite poems after his death. However, such formalization has had only limited influence on the *samā'* assemblies I have observed. It is also telling that only a few poems that are mentioned in the Sultanate or late Mughal Sufi texts analysed in the first part of this study have remained part and parcel of the qawwali repertoires to the present.

To further complicate the situation, the range of poetic texts available for qawwals to select from is vast. In addition to texts by poets recognized as Sufis, it covers poets whose links with Sufism have been nominal or inexistent. The content of the texts written by both kinds of authors is so uniform that in practice the divide of poetry into Sufi and non-Sufi, or mystic and profane, is irrelevant in the context of Indian practice of *samā'*. In the case of Persian poetry, this has been the case since the twelfth century when Sufis adapted the imagery of profane love poetry into their discourse of divine love. Later, in turn, other poets embraced the conventions of Sufi writers which resulted in an amalgamation of the levels of human, metaphorical (*majāzī*) and divine, real

⁴⁵⁰ Both *qaul* and *rang* are names for certain song types with associated textual content. However, in the contemporary context, both have come to denote one specific item. Hence, the use of capital letter.

(*ḥaqīqī*) love in Persian and, later, in Urdu poetry. As a result, there is no specific style of mystical or profane poetry. Instead, the poetic style is generic and both profane and mystical poetry share the same imagistic repertoire and pronouncedly metaphorical language. In both, for example, the human or divine beloved is absent and the union between the lovers is seldom described. The absent beloved is also an abstraction; although there are descriptions of his or her physical appearance, they remain general and can be interpreted as purely metaphorical in the mystical framework.

Occasionally, the life of the poet adds to the ambiguity of his poetic works. Amīr Khusrau, for example, was both the closest disciple of Nizām al-Dīn, but simultaneously a successful court poet. It is impossible to determine which poems he wrote to be performed in the *jamā'atkhānah* of his master and which ones in the soirees of the sultan. Sa'dī (d. c. 1291), whom Sunil Sharma calls unequivocally 'a purely romantic, non-mystical poet',⁴⁵¹ is in South Asia, as well as in Iran, generally reckoned among the Sufi poets and called Shaikh Sa'dī. As the frame of reference of a poem is not conclusively determined by the poetic text itself or by the biographical data of the author, the interpretation of each poem is ultimately defined by the context in which it is cited or performed. The qawwals make use of this ambivalence in their performances, and they are in practice able to sing any poetic text as long as its content fits the performance occasion.

This freedom of selection also leads to a situation where many items of the qawwali repertoires are not exclusive to this particular musical genre. Perhaps the most extensive convergence occurs with *na'tkhvānī*, another religious genre of music, which consists of unaccompanied recitation of poems in praise of the Prophet Muhammad.⁴⁵² Another genre that has much common with qawwali is *ghazal*.⁴⁵³ Especially many classics of Urdu poetry are shared by both qawwals and *ghazal* singers. More rarely, the qawwals sing song texts that are also performed by classical singers. It is generally impossible to determine who borrows from whom, yet the qawwals seem to be especially open to adopting song texts from other genres.

The general classification of poems in qawwali repertoires

From these premises, it is not surprising that only one scholar, Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, has attempted to categorize the items in the qawwals' repertoires. She divides the repertoire performed at the Nizamuddin shrine into four groups: first, songs specifically associated with Nizām al-Dīn; second, Sufi classics known to Sufis and qawwals all over India; third, songs that form part of the performers' personal repertoire, and fourth, songs with popular success.⁴⁵⁴ The classification is concerned with the repertoire of qawwals of a single shrine, but even so it presents certain problems.

451 Sharma 2012: 80.

452 On *na'tkhvānī*, see Qureshi 1990: 479–481.

453 On *ghazal*, see Manuel 1988–1989 and Qureshi 1990: 483–491.

454 Qureshi 2006: 19–20.

To begin with, categories one and two overlap. Nizām al-Dīn is one of the best-known Sufi saints in South Asia, and poems linked with him and his poet-disciple Amīr Khusrau are known to and frequently performed by most qawwals. This is true especially in the case of the ritually prescribed *Qaul* and *Rang*, which are both attributed to Khusrau.

The first category, however, is helpful in discussing smaller shrines attracting limited following. In such shrines the poems connected to and written by the saint and his followers are performed by local qawwals but are rarely heard outside the shrines. Such is the case, for example, in Hyderabad, where many of the *khānqāhs* are self-sufficient with respect to poetry. The founding saints and their disciples have written enough poems to suffice for the needs of their *samāʿ* assemblies and the qawwals are expected to limit their choice to them. On the other hand, their texts are rarely heard outside their *khānqāhs*. It should be noted that sometimes poems of local renown may enter into the universally shared repertoire. This has probably been the case with texts associated with Khusrau and Nizām al-Dīn, or with the poems by the Hyderabadī Sufi master Kamil (d. 1976) which are performed throughout the Deccan and, occasionally, elsewhere as well.

Qureshi's division of the repertoires into classics and personal songs can be contested as well. It is true that most qawwals have a selection of signature songs they are credited with singing particularly well, which the audience has grown accustomed to expect from them. However, many such poems are also classics in their own right and thus commonly known among the qawwals. Sometimes another qawwali group may intentionally appropriate such an item, if their turn to perform occurs before the group who usually sings these songs, or if the customary performers are simply absent and the audience still wants to hear the specific poem.

Qureshi's fourth category, popular songs, is perhaps the most elusive. At present, popular poems are often adopted from qawwali recordings to the performances that take place in the shrine compounds. During normal days, the audience consists predominantly of regular pilgrims with little interest in or aptitude for listening to difficult poems loaded with complicated metaphors. Performing poems with popular appeal is a way to ensure a flow of monetary gifts (*nazrānah*, *nazr*) on such occasions. The success of these poems is often short-lived and new poems are frequently adopted to repertoires. In case of sustained success, however, a popular poem may acquire a status of a classic. The younger generation tends to perform popular songs more readily than their elders. At the Nizamuddin shrine, for instance, the younger qawwals prefer the version of *Allāh hū* made popular by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan⁴⁵⁵ to the more traditional *Allāh hū* written by Zāmin 'Alī.⁴⁵⁶ The latter version features in the repertoires of the senior members of the performing community.

455 See, e.g. Nusrat, *Traditional Sufi Qawwalis* I, track 2.

456 For the text, see Meraj, *Surūd*, 125–126. For the performance, see Meraj, *The Lyrical Tradition of Qawwali*, CD 1, track 1.

The process of adopting popular poems into qawwali performance has in all probability been a normal procedure as long as *samāʿ* has been practised by Indian Sufis. The qawwals seem to have always been on the cutting edge of developments in the poetic scene, and an individual qawwal's repertoire is affected by his musical training and personal poetic sensitivity. The poetic knowledge is usually transmitted with musical training in the family. As a child learns to sing by observing and accompanying his elders, he also absorbs their poetic repertoire. While some qawwals find the inherited repertoire sufficient even after they have themselves assumed a role of a leading vocalist, others strive to expand their repertoire by introducing into it new items. They may achieve this by extensively reading poetry, but also by performing in musical assemblies of Sufis who are established poets. The leading qawwal of the Nizamuddin shrine in Delhi, Meraj Ahmed, exemplifies such an approach. He was initiated into Sufism by the Hyderabadī Sufi master and poet ʿAbd al-Qadīr Ṣiddīqī Ḥasrat, and he performed and learned poetry in his musical assemblies.⁴⁵⁷ In addition, Meraj Ahmed has always kept a keen eye on contemporary Urdu poetry, and he owns *dīvāns* of several authors. Regula Qureshi has noted that it was the “intelligent understanding and remarkable memory for Sufi poetry” that made Meraj's father to train him as his main successor instead of his brother who had a far superior singing voice.⁴⁵⁸

Thus, every qawwal has his own repertoire that depends on his education, personal proclivities, family background, mobility between shrines and the requirements of his respective audiences. The repertoire of a qawwal who hails from a traditional performing lineage and commutes between the major *ʿurs* festivities of the Subcontinent is likely to be broader than that of a non-professional qawwal who remains attached to a local shrine where he performs a limited set of poems.

Furthermore, poems enter the repertoires and fall out of use constantly, and each poem's ability to outlast the test of time over the following centuries determines, if they earn a permanent position as classics in qawwali repertoires or cease to feature in performances. At present, the impoverished literary standard of many popular poems has rendered their entrance to the *samāʿ* proper more difficult than it probably was before.

Because of this variation, I suggest that a simple division of the repertoires into core section and varying section would be both tenable in the view of the vastness of the repertoires and fruitful as an interpretive tool. The core section covers the items that all qawwali groups who want to perform in a major shrine or *khānqāh* can be expected to know. These include the items with ritual connection as well as commonly performed classics and popular songs. The varying section covers the items that are idiosyncratic to the repertoire of an individual qawwal or specific to a particular shrine, *khānqāh* or occasion. To this section belong also the special items (*khāṣṣ cīz*),

457 Devos, “Peshlafz”, 31.

458 Qureshi 2006: 102.

which are considered exceptional due to their musical setting or poetic content or merely because they are known to have a long history but are performed rarely. The repertoire of each qawwal consists of items from both groups in varying proportions. Thus, they share certain items with other qawwals while others are performed solely by them or only in certain shrines.

Languages and their mutual hierarchy

The poems in the qawwali repertoires are written in several languages and in performances these languages can be mixed. Most items exist as literary texts in poetic collections (*dīvān*), but after being adapted to the qawwali repertoires they are generally mediated orally and come to occupy a place somewhere between written and oral traditions. The poems also change from one performance to another through the appliance of various textual techniques utilized by qawwals and discussed below.

The core section of the repertoires includes poems in three languages – Persian, Urdu and Hindi. Persian was the *lingua franca* of the pre-modern Indo-Persian culture since the thirteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century. Initially a literary language of the Turkish elite in the Delhi Sultanate, it became the official administrative language in the Mughal domains during the reign of Akbar (r. 1556–1605). In the cultural sphere, it received almost exclusive patronage under the rulers of the dynasty. Persian was popularized among the state officials and to acquire an education in the language was common even on the lower rungs of the administration.⁴⁵⁹ Persian skills were increasingly acquired by Hindus who worked for the Mughal state. The often quoted letter from the *munshī* and poet Candrabhān Brahman to his son written in the early seventeenth century reveals how well-read the members of this class could be. In order to become successful in the profession, Candrabhān writes, his son should first learn the Mughal system of norms from the books on ethics and morals (*akhlāq*) and then acquire a training in writing in a graceful and coherent manner. To learn Persian, he should start with Sa'dī's *Gulistān*, *Būstān* and the letters of Jāmī and then proceed to history in order to become conversant in the social milieu of Mughal nobility. In the end, Candrabhān lists altogether seventy Persian poets from India, Iran and Central Asia whose *dīvāns* and *maṣnavīs* he has studied in his strive to gain mastery over the language.⁴⁶⁰

The use of Persian connected Indian rulers, scholars and writers with the broader Persian-speaking (or at least Persian-reading) world. The educated elite from Ottoman Istanbul to Safavid Isfahan and Mughal Delhi would read the same books. By the eighteenth century, Persian had become more widely used in India than ever before. According to Francis Robinson, this period also saw the peak of Hindu involvement with the language and it was furthermore used in the administration by Sikhs, Marathas

459 Alam 1998: 325, 328.

460 For the English translation of Chandrabhān's letter, see Alam & Subrahmanyam 2004: 63–64.

and the British in addition to the Muslim ruled states.⁴⁶¹ The nineteenth century saw a rapid decline in the use of Persian both in literature and in administration. In 1837, the British replaced it with Urdu in North-Western Provinces, and the most important of the Muslim princely states, Hyderabad, stopped using Persian for administrative purposes in 1883.⁴⁶² Despite the relatively quick decline of Persian skills in general, Indian and Pakistani Sufis have strived to keep the language alive in their limited circle, because they cherish its association with legendary Sufi saints and poets. Although in-depth acquaintance with the language is rare even among the Sufis, basic skills required for understanding poetry, for instance, are not uncommon. This is also the reason why qawwals regularly sing Persian poetry. In its use of Persian song texts, qawwali is unique among the contemporary genres of Indian music.

The decline of Persian went hand in hand with the emergence of Urdu, an Indic language written in Perso-Arabic script. Urdu combines Indic grammar with a mixture of Persian, Arabic and indigenous Indian vocabulary. In addition to becoming the administrative language in the nineteenth century, it developed into an important medium of religious and rationalist scientific discourse during the first half of the century. Initial impetus for this development was a wide-scale translation of Arabic and Persian religious and scientific texts into Urdu. In the field of religion, the vernacular translation was spearheaded by the emerging Islamic reformist movements that aimed at educating the broader reading public through printed works. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Persian publishing had been all but overshadowed by Urdu. During the first decade of the century, 281 Persian-language books were published in the United Provinces (an area called ‘the heartland of Perso-Islamic civilization’ by Robinson), whereas Urdu books numbered 3547.⁴⁶³

As a medium of poetry, Urdu had gained momentum already at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the imperial capitals of Aurangabad and Delhi. In respect to the poetic forms and images, Urdu poets of the period followed the Persian models. To a certain extent, this represented a rupture with the works written prior to the systematization of the language in Delhi, in the Deccani Urdu that had freely mixed Indian poetic images with Persian ones. As the conventions of Persian poetry were transported to Urdu, the overlapping of human and divine was consolidated. The Sufi affiliation of a number of leading Urdu poets only furthered the process. The pioneer Urdu poet Valī Dakkanī (d. 1707), who was born in Aurangabad but migrated to Delhi, had close contacts with the Suhrawardis in Ahmedabad and the Naqshbandis in Delhi.⁴⁶⁴ Sirāj Aurangābādī, another Deccani from Aurangabad, was a disciple of ‘Abd al-Rahmān Cishtī.⁴⁶⁵ Among the Delhi poets, *Khvājah Mīr Dard* and *Mīrzā Mazhar*

461 Robinson 2001: 20–21.

462 Robinson 2001: 33; Stark 2009: 31.

463 Robinson 2001: 32.

464 Schimmel 1975: 153

465 Kugle 2007a: 599.

Jān-i Jānān were prominent Mujaddidis. In the case of some major Urdu poets who themselves were not practising mystics, the channel of acquiring intimate knowledge of Sufism is well demonstrated. Mīr Taqī Mīr (d. 1810) was a son of a Sufi master. Even if the poet's father was not such a celebrated mystic as he wants the readers of his autobiographical *Zikr-i Mīr* to believe, the fact remains that he lived in a household frequented by his father's disciples. In his self-portrayal, Mīr claims to have had an innate spiritual disposition that was recognized by the Sufis he met. Although he had no formal Sufi initiation, his poems bear a distinctly mystical tone.⁴⁶⁶ Mīrzā Asad Allāh Khān Ghālib (d. 1869) and Jigar Murādābādī (d. 1961) were not famous for an exactly pious lifestyle, yet, the former was a friend and follower of Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn's grandson Naṣīr al-Dīn Kāle Miyān whereas the latter maintained close ties with the Sufi poet Aṣghar Gondavī (d. 1936).⁴⁶⁷ In the case of Jigar, his alleged repentance before passing away has sometimes been voiced as an argument for the mystical tone of his poetry. However, the inclusion of his Persian poems in an anthology of qawwali poetry almost thirty years prior to his demise speaks against this argument. In general, it seems that the knowledge of Sufi teachings and practices was not confined to those who were initiated into one or another brotherhood and were committed to regular practice.⁴⁶⁸ Instead, it was widespread among the educated classes, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and they were able to draw from it in their writings.

Although Urdu has become the *lingua franca* of Muslims in contemporary South Asia, it is a relatively new entrant among the Indic languages. From the Sufi point of view, it lacks the long and hallowed history of Persian and among the languages employed by the qawwals, it has a lower status. It may come as a surprise that also another language, Hindi, surpasses Urdu in the esteem it is accorded by the Sufis. Poetry written in this language has a history that reaches back to the thirteenth or fourteenth century and this raises it on a par with Persian.

The form of Hindi employed in the poems performed by qawwals is variously called *hindavī*, *pūrābī*, *bhākā*, *bhāshā* or simply *hindī* by the poets. Hindavi is usually understood to denote the vernacular of the Delhi region and the language of vernacular poems attributed to Khusrāu is commonly called Hindavi by the scholars.⁴⁶⁹ The term, which simply means 'an Indian language,' is also used to denote any indigenous Indian language. Muzaffar Alam points out that in Bijapur of the Adil Shahis (r. 1490–

466 Mīr, *Zikr-i Mīr: The Autobiography of the Eighteenth Century Mughal Poet: Mīr Muhammad Taqī Mīr' (1723–1810)*, 12, 16; Islam & Russell 2004: 207.

467 Green 2006: 94–95; Matthews, Shackle & Husain 1985: 124.

468 The works of contemporary Urdu poets Shakeel Badayuni (d. 1970) and Faiz Ahmed Faiz (d. 1984), for instance, are permeated with poetic images that betray acquaintance with Sufism that goes beyond merely mastering stock poetic motifs. See Shakeel, *Kulliyāt-i Shakīl Badāyūnī*; and Faiz, *Nuskahā-yi Vafā*.

469 Sharma 2006: 74.

1686), it meant Marathi whereas in Golconda of Qutb Shahis (r. 1518–1687) it referred to Telugu.⁴⁷⁰ Later Sufi poets rarely employ the term.

Instead, they use various other terms in referring to their vernacular writings. For instance, Bedam Shāh Vāriṣī (d. 1936), a native of Etawah in the Braj Bhasha region and a disciple of Vāriṣī ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1905) of Dewa in the Awadhi region, called his poems in dialects of Hindi variously as *bhāshā*,⁴⁷¹ *bhākā*,⁴⁷² and *pūrabī bhāshā*.⁴⁷³ The first two refer to Braj Bhasha while the latter, ‘eastern language,’ indicates dialects of the eastern Indo-Gangetic plain, especially Awadhi. Yet Bedam’s language does not unequivocally represent either of the languages nor is there any discernible difference between the poems classified as *bhāshā* or *bhākā*, on the one hand, and *pūrabī bhāshā* on the other. Ḥabīb ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1905) and ‘Abd al-Qadīr Ṣiddīqī Ḥasrat (d. 1962), both from Hyderabad, call the language simply ‘Hindi’ in their *dīvāns*.⁴⁷⁴ Thus, the language of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poems emerges as an essentially literary medium not based on a particular spoken dialect in a manner similar to the Hindi poetry employed in *ṭhumrī* performances and studied by Lalita du Perron.⁴⁷⁵

It should be noted that in the Sufi circles of Pakistan, old Punjabi and Siraiki hold a status similar to that of Hindi. Their use as the media for poetry by the Qadiris Sulṭān Bāhū (d. 1691) and Bullhe Shāh (d. 1757) as well as the Chishtis Khvājah Ghulām Farīd (d. 1901) and Mihr ‘Alī Shāh (d. 1937) has ensured them a prominent place in qawwali repertoires in Pakistan. The urge to establish a cultural identity for post-partition Pakistan has significantly contributed to the promotion of these authors by the state authorities as well.⁴⁷⁶ Poems in old Punjabi and Siraiki are, however, confined to the repertoires of qawwals based in Pakistani Punjab and Karachi whereas they are rarely performed in Indian shrines.

The use of vernaculars since the earliest days of Sufism in India⁴⁷⁷ and the incorporation of indigenous images and poetic forms into its literary culture has intrigued scholars more than the use of Persian and Urdu. Even though using the vernaculars in Sufi poetry has been a common practice in Turkey and Western Africa, for example, in the case of India it is sometimes perceived as an anomaly that demands an explanation, whereas the use of Persian and Urdu is expected from Muslims. Some scholars have assumed vernacular poetry to have been a tool for spreading the

470 Alam 1998: 344.

471 See Bedam, *Dīvān-i Bedam: Karishmah-yi vāriṣī ma’rūf bi-ṣaut-i sarmadī*, 129.

472 See Bedam, *Phūloṅ kī cādar: Guldastah-yi vāriṣī*, 71.

473 See Bedam, *Nūr al-‘ain al-ma’rūf muṣṣhaf-i Bedam*, 162.

474 See Ḥabīb, *Dīvān-i mubārak-i avval*, 216; Ḥasrat, *Kulliyāt-i Ḥasrat*, 166.

475 See du Perron 2007: 8.

476 On Khvājah Ghulām Farīd in post-partition Pakistan, see Shackle 2006.

477 The earliest Hindi verses written by Sufis are the so called Farīd verses attributed to Bābā Farīd and found in *Gurū granth sāhib*. Despite the initial doubts as to their authenticity among the scholars, Carl W. Ernst has been able to lend credence to the accurateness of their attribution by analysing the *malfūzāt* literature written in fourteenth century Khuldabad. See Ernst 2004: 167–168. The first extensive narrative poem, *Candāyan* was finished in 1379 by the Chishti sheikh Maulānā Dā’ud in Awadhi.

message of Islam to the masses in a language and idiom with which they were familiar.⁴⁷⁸ According to them, the Sufis' motivation was to thus liberate the Hindus, who were slaved by the rigid caste system.⁴⁷⁹

Together with the language, the Sufis adopted its poetic conventions. In the case of North Indian vernaculars, this meant, among other things, assuming a female heroine as the poetic subject. This has led certain scholars like Shemeem Burney Abbas to argue that vernacular Sufi poetry was poetry of subaltern resistance. On the one hand, it represented the fight against the patriarchal system and social injustice directed towards women.⁴⁸⁰ On the other, it was directed against the repressive elite. She summarizes: '[t]he fact that they wrote and composed in Hindi, Braj, Gujarati, Sindhi, Saraiki and Punjabi vernaculars bringing the spiritual metaphor to their audiences was in itself a political act for Sufis'. She continues that their choice of language indicated a challenge to the claims of religious orthodoxy and cultural elite through the rejection of Arabic and Persian.⁴⁸¹ Her argument that such poetry has acquired political significance in contemporary Pakistan is validated by her interviews with various performers, yet its projection to the time when the poems were written is anachronistic.⁴⁸²

No doubt, these poems have potentially egalitarian and gender-sensitive elements. Yet the analysis of these poems in the historical context requires a more nuanced approach. It should be kept in mind that the poems were written by male authors for an audience that probably mostly consisted of other males. Furthermore, most Sufis who wrote vernacular poetry utilized the more cosmopolitan languages of Arabic, Persian and Urdu in their other literary works written in prose and verse.

When it comes to the portrayal of pre-modern Sufis as missionaries, most vernacular poems would have been inefficient tools for this kind of work. Carl W. Ernst notes that Sufism was, during its early phase in the Indian Subcontinent, essentially a way of deepening the basic Islamic rituals by adding an inner dimension to them. It required deep acquaintance with the basic tenets of Islam, and could hardly be described as a simplification of Islamic doctrines having a mass appeal. In discussing vernacular poetry, he points out that most of the Sufi poems in Hindi are devoid of overtly Islamic themes and didactic passages and sometimes they employ overtly religious imagery connected with Krishna. Distinguishing them from other Hindi poems and ren-

478 See, e.g. Schimmel 1975: 128 and Abbas 2002: 114, 136.

479 See, e.g. Abbas 2002: 14, 19.

480 Abbas: 2002: 86, 119.

481 Abbas 2007: 628.

482 It should be further noted that while Abbas' argument that the performers like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Abida Parveen used vernacular texts in the 1980s to protest against the Zia-ul-Haq regime (1978–1988) sounds reasonable, the performers interviewed for the article never actually make such a statement themselves. Instead, they refer to generic oppression of masses by the elites. When the oppressors are specified, they belong to the pre-Islamic era (Tartars and Sassanids) or to the land-owner class. See Abbas 2007.

dering them meaningful in the Sufi context would require in-depth background knowledge of the tenets of Sufism. Writing in vernaculars, according to Ernst, simply stems from the fact that Sufis lived in the Indian environment and were influenced by it. They adopted from it what they found to be pleasing and in congruence with their devotional practice and aesthetic taste.⁴⁸³ The term ‘parallel enjoyment’ used by Francesca Orsini in her analysis of a sixteenth-century treatise *Ḥaḡāʾiq-i hindī* discussing the imagery of Hindi poetry in the Sufi framework best captures the situation. Same poetic images were used by authors belonging to different communities but were interpreted in varying ways by respective authors and audiences.⁴⁸⁴

Sufis’ enthusiastic embrace of vernaculars also indicates a desire to find new means to make their practices effective, in this case through a new literary medium that could be incorporated into the devotional regime through *samāʿ*. Gesūdarāz was fond of Hindi poetry because its softness was a potent means of evoking the feelings of helplessness (*ʿajz*), desolation (*kharābī*) and abjectness (*inkisārī*) in the listeners.⁴⁸⁵ Contrary to the interpretation of Syed Shah Khusro Hussaini, this statement does not seem to indicate an attempt to render Sufi ideas or the practice of *samāʿ* accessible ‘to the local inhabitants’ and thus spread Islam.⁴⁸⁶ Instead, it indicates the Sufis’ readiness to adopt aspects of Indian culture they found useful.⁴⁸⁷

Discussing the hierarchy of these languages, Qureshi notes that, theoretically, Urdu has no place in a *samāʿ* assembly of high status. She also reports an incident from the 1970s when a group attempting to sing Urdu verses was made to leave the principal *samāʿ* assembly during the *ʿurs* festivities in Ajmer.⁴⁸⁸ Although the incident was partly due to the newly invested diwan’s desire to demonstrate his power over his predecessor who had allowed singing in Urdu, it also reveals how easily Urdu verses could be dismissed in favour of Persian and Hindi. In his study of a contemporary Chishti Sabiri lineage in Pakistan and Malaysia, Robert Rozehnal notes that Urdu poems have never been allowed in the musical assemblies of Zauqī Shāh and his *khalīfahs*.⁴⁸⁹

However, this attitude does not apply universally. In the Sufi poetic and musical scene of the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Hyderabad, where many Sufi masters were accomplished poets and avid practitioners of *samāʿ*, Urdu was the preferred

483 Ernst 2004: 166–168.

484 See Orsini 2014.

485 See Ḥusainī, *Javāmiʿ*, 311; Sāmānī, *Siyar*, 90.

486 See Ḥusainī, *Javāmiʿ*, 179.

487 Although the use of vernacular poetry was essentially a result of aesthetic and spiritual considerations, its use may have played a limited role in the Islamization of certain segments of Indian population. Richard M. Eaton has pointed out that vernacular Sufi poems performed in Sufi shrines may have inadvertently helped to Islamize people in the edges of the established Hindu social system who visited the shrines in hope for saintly intercession. Many of these people were women, who would learn the poems sung in the shrines and then transmit some Sufi teachings to their children by singing them. See Eaton 2000: 191, 198–199.

488 Qureshi 2006: 188.

489 Rozehnal 2007a: 221.

linguistic medium. Celebrated Sufi poets like Shāh Khāmosh (d. 1871), Mīr Imdād ‘Alī ‘Ulvī (d. 1901), Shāh Karīm Allāh ‘Āshiq (d. 1902), Ḥabīb ‘Alī Shāh, Iftikhar ‘Alī Shāh Vatan (d. 1906), Ghauṣī Shāh (d. 1956), ‘Abd al-Qadīr Ṣiddīqī Ḥasrat and Shah Shaikhan Ahmed Quadri al-Shuttari Kamil adopted Urdu as the primary language for their poetic expression.⁴⁹⁰ The profusion of Urdu poetry by influential Sufis has apparently affected the attitude towards languages employed in *samā’* in Hyderabad, where I have never observed any objection to singing Urdu poetry. The Muslims rulers of the Deccan were also more open towards the use of vernaculars than their Mughal contemporaries, and Persian never became the single dominant language in their dominions.⁴⁹¹

In North India and Pakistan the case has been different due to the small number of Urdu poets who would have been recognized as Sufi masters and who would have been influential enough to change the attitudes by their example. Yet in the light of my fieldwork, the approach described by Rozehnal seems extreme. I have attended only a handful of *samā’* assemblies where all the performed items have been in Persian or Hindi. Even the most discernible and elitist listeners I have encountered would never frown upon Urdu poems by Sufis like Shāh Niyāz Aḥmad or Bedam Shāh Vārīsī. Ironically, the only time when I witnessed censoring a qawwali performance on linguistic grounds, the qawwals attempted to sing a Persian text. This happened in Delhi, when Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami, an influential Sufi sheikh and a hereditary custodian of the Nizamuddin shrine, told a qawwal to desist from singing a Persian poem, because no one would understand it. Although this may have only been a pretext for avoiding this particular singer – another performer was allowed to sing in Persian later the same evening – it shows that at present, Persian is not automatically well received in all *samā’* assemblies.

Poetic forms

In respect to the poetic form and literary genre, the overwhelming majority of the Persian and Urdu texts in qawwali repertoires are ghazals. As a literary form ghazal has been so influential that even many Hindi poems follow its formal requirements even if their imagery and subject matter may differ from Persian and Urdu texts. A ghazal consists of a number of verses, usually called *shī’r* or *bait*, which are primarily connected together by the common metre and rhyme. The rhyme of a ghazal consists of the end rhyme, *radīf*, which is repeated throughout the verses unchanged. The *radīf* is preceded by *qāfiyah*, a varying rhyme word.⁴⁹² In the following verse, attributed to

490 For the *dīvāns* of these Sufis, see Khāmosh, *Dīvān-i Shāh Khāmosh*; ‘Ulvī, *Khumkhānah-yi ‘Ulvī: Majmū’ah-yi muntaḥab-i kalām-i ‘Ulvī*; ‘Āshiq, *Dīvān-i ḥazrat ‘Āshiq*; Ḥabīb, *Dīvān-i mubārak-i avval; Vaṭan, Bustān-i taṣavvuf ya’nī dīvān-i Vaṭan*; Ghauṣī, *Tāyyibāt-i Ghauṣī*; Ḥasrat, *Kulliyāt*; Kamil, *Vāridāt-i Kāmil*.

491 Alam 1998: 343–344.

Khvājah Mu‘īn al-Dīn, *dīdam* (‘I saw’) is the *radīf* and the words *jamāl-e* (‘beautiful’) and *zulāl-e* (‘limpid’) act as the *qāfiyah*.

andar ā‘īnah-yi jān ‘aks-i jamāl-e dīdam
hamcū khvurshīd kih dar āb-i zulāl-e dīdam⁴⁹³

*I saw a beautiful reflection in the mirror of the soul
[It was] like the sun I saw in limpid water.*

The rhyme of the ghazal follows the pattern AA, BA, CA, DA etc. The first verse – like the one quoted above – establishes the rhyme with both lines. In the consequent verses, the rhyme features only in the second line. A ghazal normally consists of five to thirteen verses, each of which is a complete and independent whole. The opening verse, *maṭla‘*, and the closing verse, *maqta‘*, are easily identifiable, since the former has the rhyme in both lines whereas the latter includes the poet’s pen name, *takhalluṣ*. *Qiṭ‘ah*, a fragment, resembles ghazal in structure, but is shorter and frequently omits the *maqta‘*.

The structure of a single verse in a ghazal is binary in respect to both meaning and form. Regarding the meaning, the first line describes a situation or poses a question that requires a solution of the second line. This binary semantic complementarity is reinforced by the rhyme-pattern. The first line is devoid of the *radīf*, which characterizes only the second line in all but the first verse. Both lines of a verse are, moreover, often divided into two semantically meaningful halves of approximately the same length and separated by the caesura in the poetic metre. These four parts carry the meaning of the verse towards the climax in the final fourth.

In addition to ghazals and *qiṭ‘ahs*, the items in qawwali repertoires include *tazmīns* and *mustazāds*. *Tazmīn* refers to poems where verses of another poet are inserted to the new poetic product. In the context of qawwali, the *tazmīn* normally takes the form of a five line verse called *mukhammas*. In it, a verse of the original poem constitutes the last two lines. The three preceding lines derive their rhyme from the first line of the original verse. Thus the rhyme scheme is AAAAA, BBBBA, CCCCA etc. The *tazmīns* are often macaronic, written in Urdu or Hindi on Persian poems. In *mustazāds*, augmented poems, each line of the ghazal is augmented with an additional half line which rhymes with the preceding line. The *mustazād* should be a perfect poem even if read without the additional half-lines which only serve to add a new shade of meaning.

492 The rhyme-pattern is universally employed in Persian and Urdu poetry, whereas it is not a necessity in Arabic ghazals. Occasionally, Persian poets seem to have taken recourse on the Arabic convention and written ghazals that do not follow the regular rhyme-pattern. Michael Boris Bednar, for instance, has noted that Amīr Khusrau calls certain passages in his *Duval rānī khiz̄r khān* ghazals even though they follow the rhyme-pattern of the *maṣnavī*. Bednar argues that instead of the poetic form, Khusrau has here understood the ghazal to denote the contents and poetic themes. Using the term ghazal, Khusrau separates the main historical narrative whose outline was dictated to him by Khiz̄r Khān from his own romantic elaborations. See Bednar 2014.

493 Mu‘īn al-Dīn, *Kalām-i ‘irfānṭarāz*, 206.

A majority of Hindi poems consist of *gīts*, songs, which are metrically very free, lyrical poems. No uniform rhyme scheme is applied in the *gīt*, and the first line serves as a refrain throughout the poem. Since at least the late eighteenth century, Indian Sufis have also written *gīts* that employ the formal structure of a ghazal. In addition to *gīt*, qawwali repertoire includes Hindi poems that are classified by the name of a musical genre as *horī*, *ṭhumrī* or *dādrā*, yet they are performed in accordance with the musical conventions of qawwali.

While the longer poetic forms listed above constitute the salient text in the performance, the repertoires include a vast array of so called adjunct items that are combined to the salient text in the performance. The most common adjunct item is *rubāʿī*, a quatrain. *Rubāʿīs* are written using specific metres and the traditional rhyme scheme is AABA. The rhyme scheme of a quatrain is closely tied to the meaning. The first two lines build a situation, a kind of thesis. The third line offers an antithesis to it, while the fourth line, which returns to the original rhyme, presents a synthesis. In Hindi, *dohā*, a couplet, is the most common adjunct item. Both lines of a *dohā* have thirteen syllables and the same rhyming word. In addition to *rubāʿīs* and *dohās*, one or more verses from ghazals and *maṣnavīs* are used. *Maṣnavīs*, long narrative or didactic poems, consist of rhyming couplets (AA BB CC DD) often written in *ramal musaddas* or some related meter. Verses written in different languages can be combined in a single item of performance.

Poetic anthologies for performers and listeners

To get a better idea of the formation of qawwali repertoires that alter constantly and can in principle include any poem written over the past millennium in several languages using different forms, one needs to turn to poetic anthologies that were written for the purposes of *samāʿ*. As was noted in Part I, the texts written during the Sultanate and late Mughal periods occasionally record what qawwals sung in a particular occasion. However, these short notes constitute only fragmentary information and do not elaborate on the broader poetic context beyond individual verses or poems. It is not until the twentieth century that poetic anthologies compiled for the participants of *samāʿ* assemblies begin to appear. The first of these is titled *Naghmāt-i samāʿ* ('Melodies for Listening') published in Badayun in 1935. It was compiled by a certain Sufi from Bareilly called Nūr al-Ḥasan.⁴⁹⁴ The author describes in the foreword his initial scepticism towards publishing the anthology. However, attending the *ʿurs* of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir in Kaliyar convinced him of the value of his project.⁴⁹⁵

494 The only information on Nūr al-Ḥasan available to me is through his name: his roots in Sahaswan, *sayyid* status, family connection with the saint Maudūd Chishtī (d. 1139 in Chisht), discipleship in Chishti Sabiri lineage as well as in the lineage of Maulānā Faḡl-i Raḡmān Ganjmurādābādī (d. 1880 in Ganj Moradabad). Dedication of the book to 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir seems to indicate the compiler's emphasis on the former link.

495 Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, ii.

The compiler laments the changing times and the change in the type of poetry people relish as well as the absence of qualified Sufi masters, singers and listeners.⁴⁹⁶ It is perhaps not surprising that the anthology includes only Persian poems that Nūr al-Ḥasan wants to save from oblivion. He tells that he has had both the listeners and qawwals in mind when selecting the poems and one of his selection criteria has been to include poems that the qawwals can easily set to the tunes (*āhang*) they use.⁴⁹⁷ *Naghmāt-i samāʿ* provides ample material for performance. It includes a total of 722 longer poems, mostly ghazals and few extracts from *masnavīs*, in addition to 44 *rubāʿīs*. The longer poems are organized in alphabetical order by the *radīf*. Within each *radīf*, the organization seems haphazard. They are not organized alphabetically by the first line, nor by the metre, topic or author. The *rubāʿīs* are appended to the end of the book. After the poems, an essay titled *Majlis-i uns* ('An Assembly of Intimacy') offers the readers information about the Sufi teachings pertaining to *samāʿ* and the appropriate *adab*.

Nūr al-Ḥasan had an intention to publish a second, updated edition of the anthology. In order to realize this project, he solicited the help of contemporary Persian poets and *sajjādanashīns* in identifying the anonymous poems and providing him more texts that deserved to be included.⁴⁹⁸ The second edition never materialized on his initiative. However, *Naghmāt-i samāʿ* got a new life in 1972 when Mushtāq Ilāhī Fārūqī had a new edition published in Karachi. Fārūqī was a native of Kanpur, but prior to immigrating to Karachi he had resided in Hyderabad and he dedicates the book to a local Sufi Muḥammad Muʿīn al-Dīn, also known as Pyāre Miyān (d. 1948). His *Naghmāt-i samāʿ* is a radical reworking of the first one. The author says that he has omitted the more difficult poems that either might be obscure to the readers or difficult to sing. In addition, he has added some contemporary favourites that were not available to Nūr al-Ḥasan.⁴⁹⁹ The result is a collection of 364 longer poems, most of them ghazals, appended with 27 *rubāʿīs*. Thus, Fārūqī has reduced the number of poems to almost half of the original. His additions are usually found in the end of each *radīf*.

Fārūqī had originally borrowed the original *Naghmāt-i samāʿ* from Jaʿfar Ḥusain Nizāmī, a qawwal attached to the Nizamuddin shrine in Delhi and bestowed the title *Tūtī-yi Chisht* ('The Parrot of Chisht') by Qāzī Turāb 'Alī Nizāmī, a hereditary custodian of the shrine. Later a Sufi named Ḥabīb al-Ḥaqq had helped Fārūqī to acquire the pages missing from Jaʿfar Ḥusain's copy.⁵⁰⁰ This is a significant indication that such anthologies were indeed read by both qawwals and listeners. The 1972 edition includes

496 Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, i–ii.

497 Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, ii.

498 Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, iii–iv.

499 Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 3.

500 Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 4.

also a short biography of Fārūqī's Sufi guide as well as an abridged version of the essay *Majlis-i uns*.⁵⁰¹

The diversity of the contents of both anthologies reflects the eclecticism of the qawwals' repertoires. Table 1 shows the ten most quoted poets in the two editions of *Naghmāt-i samā'*. The great classics of Persian poetry, Ḥāfiẓ and Sa'dī, whose works were an important part of the traditional madrasa curricula feature in both lists. The other poets include non-Indian Sufis Ḥusain Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922), Aḥmad Jām (d. 1141) and Shams-i Tabrezi. The poems with the pen name Shams or Shams-i Tabrezi are in the anthologies attributed to him whereas the poems with the pen name Rūmī are attributed to his illustrious disciple. However, the first group of poems bears generally a closer affinity with the literally transmitted oeuvre of Rūmī who often used the pen name Shams, whereas the poems with the pen name Rūmī are adopted from other, possibly orally transmitted sources.

Table 1: Most quoted poets in *Naghmāt-i Samā'* anthologies

Ranking	<i>Naghmāt-i Samā'</i> 1935	Number of poems	<i>Naghmāt-i Samā'</i> 1972	Number of poems
1.	Jāmī	53	Jāmī	32
2.	Ḥāfiẓ	49	Ḥāfiẓ	27
3.	Shams-i Tabrezi	39	Shams-i Tabrezi	22
4.	Aḥmad Jām	31	Aḥmad Jām	21
5.	Amīr <u>K</u> husrau	28	Amīr <u>K</u> husrau	19
6.	Niyāz	28	Niyāz	16
7.	Aḥmad Shāhjahānpūrī	27	Maghribi	12
8.	al-Ḥallāj	19	Sa'dī	11
9.	Sa'dī	19	'Azīz Ṣafīpūrī	9
10.	Shahīd	18	al-Ḥallāj, Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar Sharaf	8

In his *Naghmāt*, Fārūqī has omitted only few poems by Maghribī (d. 1406), who becomes one of the most quoted poets in his anthology. Another dominant group of poets are the Indian Sufis Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar Sharaf (d. 1324), Shāh Niyāz Aḥmad and Amīr Khusrau. Both lists also feature contemporary Sufi poets 'Azīz Ṣafīpūrī and Aḥmad Shāhjahānpūrī, both from Utter Pradesh. Thus far, I have not been able to establish the identity of the poet Shahīd.

Similar distribution characterizes the rest of the poems found in the anthologies. Among the quoted poets are Indian Sufis (e.g. Khvājah Mu'īn al-Dīn, Khvājah Quṭb al-Dīn), non-Indian Sufis (e.g. Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī, Faḥr al-Dīn 'Irāqī), other Persian poets included in the classical canon (e.g. Niẓāmī, Ibn Yamīn), poets hailing

⁵⁰¹ For an English translation of the essay, see Ernst 1999a: 105–117.

from Mughal circles (e.g. Makhfi, the only woman), great masters of *tāzaḡūī* (e.g. Faizī, Fighānī, ‘Urfī) as well as Indian contemporaries (e.g. Jigar Murādābādī, Maikash Akbarābādī). Both collections also include the single surviving poems attributed to the early Chishti masters.

A third anthology of qawwali poetry, entitled *Surūd-i rūḡhānī* (‘Spiritual Song’), was published in 1998 by the leading qawwal of the Nizamuddin shrine, Meraj Ahmed Nizami. The impetus for publishing the anthology came from his close friend, student and researcher Claire Devos. In her own words, it took ten years of recordings and interviews in various shrines and with different musicians, combined with Meraj’s input, to prepare the anthology.⁵⁰² While the two *Naghmāts* contain only Persian poems and aim at preserving the repertoire in this language in the face of Urdu’s growing popularity, *Surūd* represents an actual repertoire of an individual qawwal. In this case, the repertoire consists of poems in Persian, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi. Even though Meraj does not regularly sing all the texts included in *Surūd*, nor does the selection cover all the texts he sings, the anthology nevertheless provides an approximate idea of the size of the repertoire of an established qawwal.

In total, *Surūd* includes 265 poems. Most of them are ghazals, but the anthology includes a few *rubā’īs* and several *gīts*. In keeping with the actual distribution of languages in contemporary *samā’* assemblies, the largest group of poems is in Urdu (132 poems) followed by Persian (75 poems), Hindi (56 poems) and Punjabi (2 poems). The poems are not organized by the *radīf*, but by the language and theme. The first classification principle is the language and the anthology has separate sections for Persian, Urdu and Hindi; the two Punjabi poems are included in the latter category. Within each section, the poems are further classified in accordance with the prescriptive thematic sequence of poems in *samā’*. Thus, poems in each language are further divided into poems in praise of God (*ḡamd*), the Prophet (*na’t*) and the saints (*manḡabat*). The devotional poems in Persian and Urdu are followed by ghazals, which are further divided into groups that deal with love (*‘ishq*), knowledge (*‘ilm*), separation (*firāq*) and oneness of existence (*vaḡdat al-vujūd*).⁵⁰³ In Hindi, the devotional poems are followed by songs (*gīt*), devotional hymns utilizing Hindu imagery (*bhajan*), poems for celebrating the *holī* (*holī*) and film songs (*filmī gīt*). Although the thematic sequence is associated with performance practice, it has its roots in the traditional organization principles followed in *dīvāns*, where each *radīf* often begins with ghazals praising God and the Prophet. In *dīvāns*, these poems are not, however, separately named as *ḡamd* or *na’t*. Language and theme-based classification of poems into separate categories seems to have become a standard procedure during the late

502 Devos, “Peshlafz”, 26.

503 The poems of praise are ghazals in form and, often, in content as well. Here, the classification principle seems to be the religious content of the poems. While poems of praise are unambiguously religious, the poems classified as ghazals utilize the ambiguous poetic motifs like wine, infidelity and passionate love. The same is true in the case of Hindi poems, as poems of praise are predominantly *gīts*.

nineteenth century in the works of Sufi poets who hailed from Hyderabad and were practitioners of *samāʿ*. At least the *divāns* of Ḥabīb, Ghausī and Ḥasrat are organized first by language and then by the theme and *radīf*. In *Surūd*, the final organization principle within a thematic category is not the *radīf*, but the chronology or hierarchy of the poets.

Table 2: Poets in *Surūd-i Rūḥānī*

Ranking	Persian	Number of poems	Urdu	Number of poems	Hindi	Number of poems
1.	Amīr <u>K</u> husrau	16	Kamil	34	Anonymous	17
2.	Jāmī	12	ʿUlvī	9	Amīr <u>K</u> husrau	12
3.	Niyāz	7	Anonymous	9	Ḥasrat	4
4.	Rūmī	5	Ḥasrat	6	Niyāz	4
5.	Ḥāfiẓ	4	Bedam	5	Bhikā, Mirā Bāʿī,	2
6.	Anonymous	3	<u>G</u> hālīb	5	Shailendra, Shāh	
7.	Saʿdī	2	Niyāz	5	Turāb, Vaqār al-Dīn	
8.	Ḥasrat	2	Jigar	4	Aughat, Bedam,	1
9.	Rest of the poets	1	Shakeel	4	Bullhe Shāh, Kabīr,	
10.			Zāfar	3	Luqmān al-Daulah, Mauj, Ṣaḥv	

The distribution of Persian poets in *Surūd* (Table 2) is not radically different from the earlier anthologies, except that Khusrau has become the most cited author. However, Jāmī, Niyāz and Ḥāfiẓ are still close behind him. The significance of Khusrau is probably emphasized in *Surūd* because of Meraj’s affiliation with the shrine where he is buried and where his poetry is frequently heard. The influence of Hyderabadī poetic scene was already discernible in Fārūqī’s *Nagḥmāt* that included poems by the last Nizam, Osman Ali Khan (r. 1911-1967). Considering Meraj’s family background in Hyderabad, the visible presence of the city’s Sufi poets is hardly surprising. Ḥasrat is among the most cited Persian poets with two poems, and the Urdu section is dominated by Kamil, ʿUlvī and Ḥasrat. Other poets include the most widely known Urdu poets Bedam and Niyāz, the classics Ghālīb and Bahādur Shāh Zāfar as well as contemporary poets Jigar and Shakeel. In Hindi, Khusrau is the most quoted individual poet, and only Ḥasrat and Niyāz are quoted more than once or twice. The rest covers a mixed group of poets, from Hyderabadī Sufis Ṣaḥv Abū-l-ʿUlāʿī (d. 1906) and Vaqār al-Dīn (d. 1992) to Bedam and Aughat (d. 1954), and from the Bhakti poet Mirā Bāʿī (d. 1546) and the Sant Kabīr (d. 1518) to the film lyricist Shailendra (d. 1966).

Surūd is possibly the only written text that includes a wide selection of Hindi poems, which are normally transmitted orally among the qawwals. A significant num-

ber of poems in each language is classified as anonymous (*nā-ma'lūm*), indicating the fact that authorship is not the topmost consideration when poetic texts are adopted into qawwali performance. The analysis of the next two chapters makes this evident.

4.2 Jāmī: from ambiguous poetic images to expressions of devotion

Closer analysis of the works by an individual poet in qawwali anthologies can offer some insights into the development of qawwali repertoires over the past century. In this chapter, I discuss the poems by Jāmī in the three anthologies and refer also to the trends followed in *samā'* assemblies and the commercial recording industry.

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492) was a Timurid polymath living in Herat.⁵⁰⁴ His literary output encompasses saintly biographies, a Koranic commentary and a Sufi treatise as well as a series of seven romantic-mystical *maṣnavīs* and three *dīvāns*. He combined a career in the Timurid court with a Sufi discipleship under the guidance of the Naqshbandi master ʿUbaid Allāh Aḥrār (d. 1490). His importance in qawwali repertoires is indicated by his position as the most quoted poet in both *Naghmāt* anthologies. In *Surūd*, he is second only to Amīr Khusrau. It seems probable that his poems were also performed in *samā'* assemblies prior to the twentieth century even if historical evidence to the effect is missing. At any rate, his other works, the collection of saintly biographies, *Nafahāt al-uns* ('Breaths of Intimacy'), and the treatise on *vaḥdat al-vujūd*, *Lava'ih* ('Flashes of Light'), have been widely read by Indian Sufis.⁵⁰⁵ However, a closer analysis of his or any other poet's works in the context of *samā'* becomes possible only in the twentieth century when the qawwali anthologies were published and recording technology allowed for the preservation of actual qawwali performances.

Jāmī in qawwali anthologies

Before entering a discourse that is based on the qawwali anthologies, it is important to emphasize that the two *Naghmāts* are prescriptive in the sense that they want to present the listeners and performers a selection of Persian poetry they could and should employ in *samā'* assemblies. *Surūd*, on the other hand, is prescriptive in its presentation of the repertoire of an individual qawwal. In the foreword to the earlier *Naghmāt*, Nūr al-Ḥasan notes that in the process of searching for poems to be included in the anthology, he consulted *dīvāns* of individual poets.⁵⁰⁶ This gives the impression that the compilation of the anthology was a straightforward process of copying texts from *dīvāns*. However, a closer inspection of the contents reveals that it was much more involved. Generally, the poems are much shorter in the anthologies than they are in the *dīvāns*, and many are not found in the latter at all. Poems in Fārūqī's *Naghmāt*

504 For a recent biography of Jāmī, see Algar 2013.

505 See, e.g. Kāmgar, *Aḥsan*, 145, 310; Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 20; Anvar, *ʿAbd allāh*, 130.

506 Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, ii.

generally follow the model of Nūr al-Ḥasan's edition and only rarely does the compiler complete the poems as he has done, for example, in the case of Ḥāfiẓ's ghazal *Tā zi-maikhānah o mai nām o nishān khvāhad būd* ('As long as the traces of the wine house and wine will remain'). In Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt*, this ghazal includes only five verses – verses 1, 2, 4, 8 and 10 – of the ten found in the *dīvān*.⁵⁰⁷ In Fārūqī's *Naghmāt*, this ghazal has been removed from its original place and added into the end of *radīf* d in an extended form that covers verses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 of the *dīvān*'s version.⁵⁰⁸ It is noteworthy that even after increasing the number of verses from five to seven, Fārūqī still does not include all the ten found in the *dīvān*. The same applies to *Surūd* as well, in which the poems, especially the older Persian ones, are presented in an abridged form.

These tendencies are clearly visible in the case of Jāmī. Out of the 53 of his ghazals found in Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt*, 37 are found in *Kulliyāt-i Jāmī* published by Munshi Naval Kishore in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁰⁹ I have used this particular edition of Jāmī's collected poems, since it is the edition Nūr al-Ḥasan most probably had access to. The publisher favoured relatively large print runs and the editions were affordable to even those who did not belong to the most affluent social strata. Fārūqī's *Naghmāt* includes 32 poems by Jāmī out of which 19 are found in the *Kulliyāt*. Fārūqī has also added two ghazals that are not found in Nūr al-Ḥasan's edition. In *Surūd*, only four out of the 12 poems are found in *Kulliyāt*. These twelve poems include the two additions made by Fārūqī as well as five further poems which are not found in either *Naghmāt*.

When comparing individual ghazals in the anthologies to those found in *Kulliyāt*, almost all the poems appear abridged despite the fact that the ghazals of Jāmī are generally shorter than those written by, for example, Ḥāfiẓ. In Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt*, 18 ghazals are exactly the same as in the *Kulliyāt*, whereas the number in Fārūqī's edition is 10 and in *Surūd* only one. Only on one instance, found in Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt*, the poem in the anthology is longer than the variant found in *Kulliyāt*.⁵¹⁰

The abundance of material attributed to Jāmī not included in *Kulliyāt* confirms the impression of his significance in the qawwali repertoires. Poems would only be attributed to poets who were somehow significant in the context where qawwals performed. The readiness to accept such items also indicates that qawwali repertoires have been formed in the interface of literary and oral traditions. The fact that their proportion in anthologies has kept increasing seems to point at growing divergence between the oral and literary traditions. In Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt* about two thirds of the poems are still found in the *Kulliyāt*. In Fārūqī's *Naghmāt*, the number drops to just

507 See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 119-120; Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān*, 132-133.

508 See Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 87.

509 The edition I am using is printed in October 1912. However, the book had been published for the first time before this date, since it appears in Munshi Naval Kishore's catalogue in 1896. See Shekhar & Rasheed, *Fihrist-i kutub* 1896, 118.

510 See *E dil o didah har do khānah-yi to* in Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 312; Jāmī, *Kulliyāt*, 418-419.

over half whereas in *Surūd* it is only one third. All the more notable is the fact that only one of Jāmī's poems in *Surūd* is exactly the same as in the *Kulliyāt*.

The abridgement of the poems before including them into the anthologies seems arbitrary, and it is impossible to determine if the process has been conscious or purely instinctive. On the whole, it does not appear that the omitted verses could have been considered inappropriate for *samā'*, since many of them can be interpreted as equally haunting expressions of Sufi ideas as the verses retained in the anthologies. Nor do they appear especially convoluted or obscure. If the selection process has been conscious, the reason for omitting certain verses might lie in the performance context. Contrary to Nūr al-Ḥasan's alleged adherence to the literary tradition, I suggest that the variants found in his edition of *Naghmāt* may represent actual performance standards current at the time of compilation, and that this applies to the two later anthologies as well. Following from this supposition, it seems likely that the origins of standard qawwali versions of poems can be traced to qawwals who have at some point in time deemed certain verses unsuited for performance, possibly because they were too difficult to sing. It is also possible that they conceived of other verses as suitable for a particular *samā'* assembly or that some influential Sufi among the audience directed them to omit some verses. The abridged version would have then been passed on orally to the next generation of qawwals with the result of the standardization of this version in the orally transmitted tradition. The fact that the older poems in the anthologies are usually the furthest removed from the literary variants also supports this supposition. In analysing the differences between the literary, textually transmitted and the performed, orally transmitted variants, one should bear in mind that, especially in the case of Indian Sufi authors, the poems may have entered qawwali repertoires before they were codified in the *dīvāns*. In that case, the performed version would become 'the original' instead of the literary version.

Changing themes

Another piece of information pertaining to the development of the qawwals' repertoires that can be gleaned from the anthologies relates to the content of the poems. In Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt*, a considerable number of Jāmī's ghazals, about one fifth, are *na'ats*. The remaining four fifths deal with various aspects of love and employ the poetic images connected to wine and infidelity. Many of these poems are tinged with *vujūdī* metaphysics. The following ghazal is one of the few *vujūdī* poems by Jāmī that are still occasionally performed by the qawwals:

*You made the face of human beauties a means to know beauty
Then you made yourself appear in the eyes of the lovers.*

*From water and clay you made the reflection of your beauty appear
You exalted the candle of the rosy cheek and the moon on the cypress.*

*You scattered the dregs from the goblet of your love to the sand
You made a learned rationalist crazy and infatuated.*

*Though you are the beloved, you clothed yourself as a lover
Then you manifested yourself and yearned for yourself.*

*You tied black locks as musky plaits on your face
You chained the passionate world to the fetters.*

*The earth and heaven cannot contain the procession of your beauty
I am perplexed: how did you find a place in the sanctuary of my chest?*

*Jāmī, you lose your name and manners in love
Bravo to this new manner you have conceived.⁵¹*

On the one hand, the ghazal is replete with the standard depictions of the beloved's beauty from 'the candle of the rosy cheek' to 'musky plaits on your face'. In addition, Jāmī introduces the metaphysical ideas of God manifesting himself in everything and then creating the world in order to be loved. Nevertheless, even when the penultimate verse paraphrases the hadith according to which God, who cannot be contained in the heavens and earth, can still fit in the heart of his servant, the ghazal retains its ambiguity. It is not unequivocally religious, yet would be understood as such by Sufi audience when performed in a *samā'* assembly.

In Fārūqī's *Naghmāt*, the *na'ts* constitute one third of Jāmī's poems and in *Surūd* over half. Out of the seven poems that only appear in the latter two anthologies, six are *na'ts* whereas only one is a ghazal dealing with *vahdat al-vujūd*. The increased emphasis on overtly religious poetry indicates the change qawwali repertoires have undergone during the twentieth century. There are several reasons behind this change. The first is the deterioration of Persian skills among the listeners. Persian ghazals discussing passionate love or metaphysics are difficult to understand without adequate language skills and singing them would unlikely lead to a successful performance. In the case of *na'ts*, on the other hand, the syntax is generally more straightforward and the vocabulary much more limited. *Na'ts* further include several words and expressions that are understood by Urdu, Hindi or Punjabi speaking audiences and enable them to identify the poem as a *na't* and glean an approximate idea of its contents. This is the case with the following popular poem which employs the name of Muhammad as the *radīf*. In addition, the *qāfiyahs* – meeting or union (*viṣāl*), thought (*khayāl*), dis-

⁵¹ Jāmī, *Kulliyāt*, 433–434; Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 337–338; and Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 177–178.

cussion (*qīl o qāl*) and family (*āl*) – are all familiar words and combined with the *radīf*, they form easily understood expressions.

The beauty of Muhammad illuminates the world

My heart came to life from a meeting with Muhammad.

Happy the eye which sees Mustafa

Happy the heart which carries the thought of Muhammad.

Happy the mosque, pulpit and khānqāh

Where people converse about Muhammad.

The poor Jāmī became, sincerely and with pure intentions

A slave of the slave of Muhammad's family.⁵¹²

The second reason behind the changed emphasis relates to the wider transformations of religious attitudes among South Asian Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad has always been at the centre of the religious activities of Muslims. However, his significance has increased since the eighteenth century and the rival views among the reformist movements of the nineteenth century have merely accelerated the process. Those who ascribe to the views promulgated by the Deoband ‘*ulamā*’, Tablighi Jamaat and Ahl-i Hadis all emphasize the Prophet’s role as a moral and legal example. However, they eschew the Sufi concepts of his position as the first created being in the form of Muhammadan light (*nūr-i muḥammadī*), his role as an intermediary (*vaṣīlah*) and intercessor (*shafī*) between human beings and God and his participation in the knowledge of the hidden (*‘ilm-i ghaib*). Such views were vehemently challenged by Aḥmad Rizā Khān Barelvī and his followers, who accused these movements of disrespecting the Prophet and being guilty of infidelity because of their portrayal of him as a mere passive medium for God’s revelation.⁵¹³ Although the Sufi participants of *samā*’ assemblies do not follow Aḥmad Rizā, who condemned the practice, his views are nevertheless closer to theirs and his excessive promotion of the Prophet has affected their religious outlook. In the context of qawwali, this has led to increased emphasis on religious poetry.

The impression that arises from the analysis of the anthologies is further substantiated by a look at the qawwals’ selection of poems in actual performances. During the *samā*’ assemblies I have observed since 2004, I have witnessed a single performance of a love ghazal attributed to Jāmī.⁵¹⁴ This is in a stark contrast with the numerous performances of his *na’ats*. Whenever the qawwals have made commercial recordings of

512 Fārūqī, *Nagh̃māt*, 88; Meraj, *Surūd*, 50.

513 On contradicting views on the Prophet in the nineteenth century, see. e.g. Metcalf 2005: 272–273; and Sanyal 2010: 234–240, 244–264.

514 For this performance, see Khwaja Hall, Item 6 below.

Jāmī's texts, they have opted for a limited number of his *na'ats* such as *Jahān roshan ast az jamāl-i muḥammad* ('The beauty of Muhammad illuminates the world' quoted above), *Tan-am farsūdah jān pārah zi-hijrān yā rasūl allāh* ('My body has grown weak, the soul rend to pieces because of separation, o Messenger of God'), *Cūn māh dar arz o samā tābān tu'ī tābān tu'ī* ('You are shining like the moon on the earth and in the heaven, you are shining') and *Nasīmā jānib-i baṭḥā guzar kun* ('Zephyr, travel towards Batha'). A rare exception is an album by Ghulam Farid Sabri (d. 1994) of the Sabri Brothers, recorded shortly before his untimely demise and released posthumously in 1996 by a German label Piranha. Being given free hands by the producers, he decided to fulfil a long-standing dream and record an album dedicated to Jāmī. The resulting album includes four tracks, two *na'ats* and two ghazals on passionate love, sung to the minimal accompaniment of the *dholak*, tabla and harmonium.⁵¹⁵

Still, the almost exclusive emphasis on *na'ats* has not stagnated the literary activities around the poems of Jāmī. As was noted above, new poems were attributed to him and entered into qawwali repertoires during the past century. In performances, the qawwals keep interlacing his ghazals with verses from other poems in order to render them accessible to the audience. In addition, many Sufi poets have since the nineteenth century written Urdu *tazmīns* on Jāmī's ghazals. The following example, written as a *mukhāmmas* in *rajaz musamman* (- - ~ - - - ~ - - - ~ - - - ~) like the original text, is very recent. It is written by the current *sajjādanashīn* of the *dargāh* of Gesūdarāz, Syed Shah Khusro Hussaini (b. 1945) and published in a selection of *na'tiyyah* poetry appended to an essay on *na'tkhyānī* in a book titled *Wa rafa'nā laka dhikrak: Muḥammad* ('And we raised your fame: Muhammad'). The Persian ghazal (in bold) appears only in *Surūd* and it seems probable that the author of the *tazmīn* has come to know this poem through qawwali performances instead of a written source.⁵¹⁶

*The agony of love was thus evolving towards self-knowledge:
God created a friend from eternal light.
He said to this light of his: 'My Prophet,
You are shining like the moon on the earth and in the heaven, you are shining
Though you are light of God envied by the angels, you are a human, you are a human.'*

*I saw angels in the heaven and on the earth every now and then
Searched ardently for beauty and grace here and there in Canaan
Smitten by your love, the gaze of heart exclaimed:
'Your face illuminates the two worlds, sun and moon reflect your countenance
Oh, you are radiating the light of divine essence, you are radiating.'*

It was asked, if you had many beautiful virtues

⁵¹⁵ See Sabri Brothers, *Jami*.

⁵¹⁶ For further examples of Urdu *tazmīns* written on Jāmī's poems, see, e.g. Bedam, *Phūlon kī cādar*, 3–4; Khāmosh, *Dīvān*, 92–94.

*It was answered that all the attributes can be found in the Koran.
Only in your bondage is the path of mystical knowledge illuminated
Your eyebrows are verses of the Koran, your hair is the commentary of the Koran
Your face is our Koran, you are faith, you are faith.*

*Mustafa, I am bound in your slavery
I do not need to look here and there, I am just a beggar at your door
Every moment, the heart calls out to you:
'The chosen one, the elected one! Be merciful to us, be merciful to us!
[For] the hand of all the helpless, you are the hem, you are the hem.'*

*My heart is yours, my soul is yours, my lineage is yours
Every moment of my existence is an offering to you.
Also, my Lord just needs you as an excuse.
I am a sinner, I am weak, I am destitute, if, o intercessor in the day of retribution
you are asking my condition, you are asking.*

*Khusro, his liver wounded, raised his hands in supplication
As 'Who sees me' illuminated his heart
And he cried out to you: 'Mustafa, Mustafa!
Tears⁵¹⁷ flow from my eyes, by God, show yourself!
I sacrifice my life and heart to you, you are my beloved, you are my beloved.'⁵¹⁸*

The text illustrates the various functions of a *tazmīn*. The Urdu section constitutes a commentary that prefaces the original text and gives it a certain interpretation. In the *maṭla'*, for example, the Persian lines are turned into speech of God directed to the Prophet by the Urdu section that contextualizes it. The *maqṭa'*, on the other hand, is rendered a humble supplication of the poet or a devotee.

The *tazmīn* s are enjoyable on several levels. For those who are well acquainted with Persian and are able to connect the Urdu and Persian sections, they form a coherent whole that frequently adds unexpected shades of meaning to the original poem. For those, whose Persian skills are more limited, Urdu lines can help in throwing some light to the purport of the Persian section. This applies especially well to the second verse of the above example, in which the Urdu section prefigures the topic of incomparable beauty.

However, the *tazmīn* s have the ability to appeal to even the more uneducated listeners, who might have only rudimentary acquaintance with poetical Urdu and a superficial understanding of Sufi concepts. In qawwali performance, a verse or even a shorter semantic unit has the ability to affect the listeners. The above *tazmīn* has a few

⁵¹⁷ Although the meaning of the word *jāmi* is often understood as something connected with the cup (*jām*), that is wine, it is occasionally interpreted to denote any liquid and in this particular case, tears.

⁵¹⁸ Hussaini, *Wa rafa'nā laka zikrak: Muḥammad*, 148–150.

lines that manage to strike a chord with the key religious values of numerous South Asian Muslims irrespective of their education and background. One example is the first line in the fourth verse, '*Mustafa, I am bound in your slavery*', which captures the listeners' affection to the Prophet.

The significance of Jāmī's ghazals in qawwali repertoires, and the continuing poetic activity around them, is all the more remarkable considering that his profile as a Sufi remains unarticulated in the collective imagination of South Asian Sufis. His tomb is in distant Herat, there is no Sufi brotherhood that would trace its lineage to him and very little information about his life circulates among the Sufis. The popularity of his poems – or poems attributed to him – seems to stem solely from their literary qualities and their suitability to *samā'*. The next chapter turns to Amīr Khusrau, whose case is radically different and whose role as a literary and musical genius is complemented by a cornucopia of legends.

4.3 Amīr Khusrau: poetic corpus laced with legends

Amīr Khusrau's significance in the context of qawwali can be hardly overrated. He is popularly considered the inventor of the entire genre and his poems have today a place of pride in qawwali repertoires. In addition, his relationship with Niẓām al-Dīn has immortalized his fame among South Asian Sufis. It is thus no wonder that many of his poems performed by the qawwals are accompanied with legends explaining their writing context. In addition, his legendary fame has led to increasing the number of poems attributed to him. In this chapter, I discuss some of the Persian and Hindi poems famously associated with Amīr Khusrau.

Persian repertoire

Two distinct repertoires of poems are connected with the poet. The first is in Persian and, perhaps surprisingly, is not very extensive despite the fact that Khusrau has written four sizeable *dīvāns*.⁵¹⁹ In Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt* the Persian repertoire consists of merely 28 poems and in Fārūqī's edition of 19 poems. In *Surūd* he is the most quoted Persian poet, yet this position is guaranteed with only 16 poems. When the selection found in the anthologies is reflected against the observations of *samā'* assemblies and commercial recordings, it seems to exhaust the Persian repertoire. I have only once witnessed a performance of a poem that is not included in any of the qawwali anthologies.⁵²⁰ Moreover, several poems included in the anthologies are hardly ever performed, and the selection of Amīr Khusrau's Persian poetry regularly utilized by the qawwals is in practice limited to about a dozen ghazals. It is also noteworthy that even those

519 These were published as one collection entitled *Kulliyāt-i 'anāṣir-i davāwīn-i Khusrau* by Munshi Naval Kishore in 1916.

520 See Khwaja Hall, Item 4 below.

ghazals that appear in Khusrau's *dīvāns* often differ from the literary, textually transmitted versions.

The best known and most often performed of these ghazals is known as *Nah mī dānam* ('I do not know') by its opening words. The following is the standard version sung by qawwals:

*I do not know what was that place where I was last night
Everywhere the slaughtered danced where I was last night.*

*Fairy-faced beloved, body a cypress, face a tulip
From head to toe the doom of hearts where I was last night.*

*Haughtily, the rivals listened to his voice and I was terrified
How difficult it was to speak where I was last night.*

*God himself led the assembly inside the place of no-place, Khusrau
Muhammad was the candle in the gathering where I was last night.⁵²¹*

The ghazal is accompanied by an anecdote describing its composition. Irfan Zuberi relates one version of the legend: one day, Khusrau met the qalandar poet of Panipat, Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar, who said that during his nocturnal flights to the spiritual world, he never saw Nizām al-Dīn there among the spiritual stalwarts he encountered. Nizām al-Dīn advised the dispirited Khusrau to tell Bū 'Alī Shāh to look for a special chamber where the most elect sheikhs sit. And indeed, he saw him there with 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī, Khvājah Mu'īn al-Dīn and the Prophet. Hearing the news after Bū 'Alī Shāh's return, Khusrau was elated and is supposed to have written the above ghazal as a description of the incident.⁵²²

I heard a slightly different version of the story after a *samā'* assembly organized at the shrine of Shāh Rājū Ḥusainī (d. 1682) in Hyderabad, when some local Sufis sat around chatting. One of them related the following variant of the anecdote: Bū 'Alī Shāh used to visit the divine assembly where God himself was the head (*mīr-i majlis*) and the presence of the Prophet illuminated the assembly like the candle, as the last verse of the ghazal states. However, he told Khusrau that he never saw Nizām al-Dīn there. In this version Nizām al-Dīn tells Khusrau to ask Bū 'Alī Shāh to take him with him when he attends the assembly the next time. Once there, he should search the veil of light that is behind the Prophet. Accordingly, Bū 'Alī Shāh and Khusrau went together into contemplation (*murāqabah*). This time, Khusrau knew where to look for and he indeed saw his master in the veil of light, sitting on the left side of the Prophet,

521 The translation is based on the text transcribed from a recorded performance by late Jafar Husain Khan Badauni. See Badauni, *Qawwali* II, track 1.

522 Zuberi 2012: 128.

while the right side was occupied by ‘Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī. According to this story, *Nah mī danam* is Khusrau’s description of his personal experience in that assembly.

Although the outline of both anecdotes is the same, the second includes some significant details that are missing from the first. In it, Khusrau actually attends this assembly in the company of Bū ‘Alī Shāh. As a result, the ghazal becomes an eyewitness’ account of the divine assembly. In the first anecdote, Niẓām al-Dīn is found in a special chamber with other great sheikhs whereas in the second he is in the veil of light behind the Prophet. Limiting the number of saintly personages to three is also significant. This group covers the three persons who are among South Asian Sufis considered to have attained the rank of *maḥbubīyyat* (being the beloved of God). The Prophet is known as *Ḥabīb Allāh* (‘the Beloved of God’), ‘Abd al-Qādir as *Maḥbūb-i Subḥānī* (‘the Divine Beloved’) and Niẓām al-Dīn as *Maḥbūb-i Ilāhī* (‘the Divine Beloved’). Thus, the anecdote has the double function of contextualizing the composition of the ghazal and, in addition, connecting the ghazal to Niẓām al-Dīn’s rank among the most exalted figures of Islam. The anecdote, however, appears somewhat anachronistic, since the fame of ‘Abd al-Qādir had not reached Northern India in the early fourteenth century, nor was Niẓām al-Dīn yet referred to as *Maḥbūb-i Ilāhī*. This concept developed only later.

On the basis of the analysis of the textual sources, it appears that the legendary anecdote and the poem have been joined together fairly recently. The ghazal is not included in the *dīvāns* of Khusrau. When it appears in Nūr al-Ḥasan’s *Naghmāt* in 1935, it lacks the *maqṭa‘* that connects the contemporary standard version to the legend of its composition. Instead, the *maqṭa‘* reads:

Khusrau! The fire of your love burnt my hem

*Muhammad was the candle in the gathering where I was last night.*⁵²³

Omitting the mention of God as the head of the assembly (*mūr-i majlis*) and of Khusrau being beyond the limitations of place (*lā-makān*) makes it difficult to connect the legend and the poem. Now it is Muhammad who ignites the sparks of love and burns the poet’s hem. The assembly, where Khusrau has been, emerges as a poetic metaphor rather than a divine assembly that has been visited in person. The legend connected with the poem has apparently been well known among the qawwals and audiences, and the change in the *maqṭa‘* suggests that forging a link between them has been deliberate.

Khusrau’s Persian poems in qawwali repertoires also include some individual verses, which have acquired legendary fame. Among these is a verse that he is said to have uttered as an illustration of his intimacy with Niẓām al-Dīn:

I became you, you became me, I became the body, you became the soul

So that no one would say after this that I am someone else, that you are someone else.

⁵²³ Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 228. Fārūqī retains the variant found in Nūr al-Ḥasan’s *Naghmāt*. See Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 121–122. Meraj has not included the ghazal in *Surūd*.

One version of its origin is found in *Nizāmī Bansurī*, discussed above, where the verse appears in a discussion between Nizām al-Dīn and Khusrau. Nizām al-Dīn addresses him with the first line of the quoted verse, and Khusrau composes the other line. The verse is no more a disciple's adulation of his guide, but a statement that binds Khusrau and Nizām al-Dīn together as intimately as the two lines of the verse.

In all the qawwali anthologies, the verse is inserted just before the *maqta'* into a famous ghazal by Khusrau, *E cihrah-yi zebā-yi to rashk-i butān-i āzarī* ('Oh your beautiful face, the envy of Azar's idols').⁵²⁴ This iconic verse is not found in the *dīvān* and it appears to be a later addition inserted into an already existing ghazal.⁵²⁵ The *Man to shudam*-verse appears unconnected with the rest of the ghazal, in which Khusrau attempts to praise the beloved, but is each time frustrated by his incomparable qualities. A verse on union between the lover and the beloved is a sudden change to this theme. It also contrasts the *maqta'* in which the distance between the lover and the beloved is again increased and Khusrau is forced to implore the latter to look towards a stranger in his city:

*Khusrau is a stranger and a beggar. He has ended up in your city
Let it be, for the sake of God, that you look towards the strangers.*

Even more iconic than the *Man to shudam*-verse is the so called *Kajkulāh*-verse:

har qaum rā'st rāh-e dīn-e va qiblagāh-e
mā qiblah rāst kardīm bar simt-i kajkulāh-e⁵²⁶

*Every nation has its path, religion and direction for prayers
I direct my prayers towards him who wears his cap awry.*

The verse is quoted by almost everyone writing on qawwali. The legend surrounding it resonates perfectly with the spirit of tolerance and humanism Nizām al-Dīn no doubt advocated during his lifetime, but that has in post-partition India been harnessed for propagation of communal harmony.

The verse is quoted three times by different authors in *Jashn-e-Khusrau: A Collection*, a recent volume celebrating the significance of Khusrau in qawwali music. According to Irfan Zuberi, the lines are 'iconic, because they depict the symbolism underlying the *samā'* experience,' which, according to him, is 'the philosophy of *nisbat* (association with a Sufi figure or lineage).'⁵²⁷ This interpretation stems from the legendary

524 See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 383–384; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 200–201; Meraj, *Surūd*, 84–85.

525 See Khusrau, *Kulliyāt* 456. The ghazal belongs to the *dīvān Baqīyyah naqīyyah*. The qawwali anthologies add another verse to the *dīvān's* version:

*You are more elusive than a fairy, more delicate than a petal of rose
You are better than anything I might say, by God, you are a wonderful sweetheart!*

526 For the variant versions found in scholarly literature, see Qureshi 2006: 42; Kugle 2010b: 259 and Qureshi 2012: 117. Sharma 2012: 80 and Zuberi 2012: 127 follow the variant found in Amīr Ḥasan's *dīvān*. See Ḥasan 1933: 390. The Iranian critical edition follows the same reading, but gives *man qiblah rāst kardam* as a variant reading for the first half of the second line. See Sijzī, *Dīvān-i Ḥasan-i Dihlavī*, 406.

527 Zuberi 2012: 127–128.

anecdote surrounding the composition of the verse. The protagonists of the anecdote are again Khusrau and Nizām al-Dīn and the verse is ascribed to their joint efforts. One day, Nizām al-Dīn was observing Hindu worshippers on the banks of Yamuna and he pronounced the first line, indicating that they also had their religious path to follow. Khusrau, standing nearby, continued with the second line in which he discredits all the other religions in favour of his affiliation with Nizām al-Dīn, described in the verse as the one who wears his cap rakishly awry (*kajkulāh*).

Occasionally, the verse is prefaced with three Hindi lines which are claimed to have been uttered by Nizām al-Dīn, whereas Khusrau responds in Persian:

sansār har ko pūje gur ko jagat sarāhe
makke meñ koṛī dhūñḍhe kāshī meñ koṛī cāhe
dunyā meñ apne pī ke paiyyāñ paṛūñ nah kāhe
har qaum rā'st rāh-e dīn-e va qiblagāh-e
mā qiblah rāst kardīm bar simt-i kajkulāh-e⁵²⁸

*Let the world worship God, let the earth praise the spiritual guide
Someone may search him in Kashi, someone in Mecca
Why should I not fall to the feet of my beloved in this world?
Every nation has its path, religion and direction for prayers
I direct my prayers towards who wears his cap awry.*

In her essay in *Jashn-e-Khusrau: A Collection*, Qureshi overturns the conventional order of appearance by stating that the Hindi part was spoken by Amīr Khusrau to which Nizām al-Dīn responded in Persian.⁵²⁹ She also evokes the most prominent interpretation of the verse by stating that ‘this unique set of verses is inspired by the sight of Hindu worshippers by the river Jamuna and draws from it a profound vision of religious pluralism expressed in a dialogue of both Hindi and Persian.’⁵³⁰ Akbar Hyder, citing only the Persian verse in his work, interprets it in a similar framework by noting that the poet has incorporated into it the religious tolerance that Nizām al-Dīn expressed. Both Hyder and Sharma have also pointed out that in reality, the verse was written by Amīr Ḥasan, not Amīr Khusrau.⁵³¹

Noting that the real author of the verse was Amīr Ḥasan, Sunil Sharma writes in his essay in *Jashn-e-Khusrau* that the association of the verse with Khusrau was already common in the days of the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr (r. 1605-1627), to whom it was recited. Interestingly, the person who explained the story behind the verse to the emper-

⁵²⁸ Transcribed from a recorded performance of Warsi Brohers. See Warsi Brothers, *Qawwali* II track 4.

⁵²⁹ In an earlier work, however, she maintains the conventional order of appearance. See Qureshi 2006: 42.

⁵³⁰ Qureshi 2012: 117.

⁵³¹ Hyder 2006: 118–119; Sharma 2006: 47.

or died on the spot.⁵³² In eighteenth-century Sufi circles of Delhi, the verse was also attributed to Amīr Khusrau. In *Fakhr al-ṭālibīn*, Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn notes that this particular verse, written by respected Amīr (*ḥazrat-i amīr*), caused Naṣīr al-Dīn Maḥmūd to stamp his feet so strongly to the ground that he was left limping.⁵³³ Commenting on the importance of such legendary accounts, Sharma points out that '[w]hether true or not, such anecdotes allow poetry to be supplied with a context, and remain alive in popular memory.'⁵³⁴ Without an anecdote about interaction between two legendary figures, the *Kajkulāh*-verse might have been forgotten like its factual author, Amīr Ḥasan.

It is of course possible that Amīr Ḥasan came to know about the exchange between his Sufi guide and Khusrau and then incorporated the verse into his ghazal. However, when the *Kajkulāh*-verse is read as the part of the ghazal it belongs to in Amīr Ḥasan's *dīvān*, it acquires a completely different shade of meaning:

*Every nation has its path, religion and direction for prayers
I direct my prayers towards him who wears his cap awry.*

*Well, preacher, give every sermon you know
Sight his face! They are like the ʿīd, eyebrows like a place of prayer.*

*If you do not see the cypress and moon suiting each other
Look at his cypress-like stature and a moon on top of the cypress.*

*My heart has forgotten the deviations I have repented for
If I see his lip, I am reminded of sin.*

*If they make fetters from his dark tresses
From every curl will arise a cry for justice.*

*See, how tears appear on my eyelashes every morning
Like dew that falls on the face of grass stalks.*

*God! You keep an eye on my eyes and on the light of my [eyes]
Even if he never bestowed a glance on my condition.*

*The judge will not require a witness for my love-play
He knows there is no need for witness, when both agree.*

532 Sharma 2012: 80. The assembly where the verse was explained to Jahāngīr is recorded in both *Tuzuk-i jahāngīrī* and *Majālis-i jahāngīrī*.

533 Nūr al-Dīn, *Fakhr*, 50.

534 Sharma 2012: 80.

What is the reason of Ḥasan in the presence of love?

*A naïve child in front of the emperor?*⁵³⁵

In the context of the ghazal, the *Kajkulāh*-verse acquires an unabashedly erotic tone. Forsaking the religion in the first verse resonates with discrediting the preacher in the second. However, it is hard to detect traces of religious pluralism in its message. Rather, it becomes a praise of the force of passionate love that has the potential to make the lover reject religion altogether in his pursuit of the beloved. In this context, the *Kajkulāh*-verse refers to “the Beloved” in all its universality and ambivalence,’ as Scott Kugle suggests,⁵³⁶ rather than to religious plurality or even praise for Amīr Ḥasan’s Sufi guide.

When read without the anecdote about its composing, the interpretation of the verse as an advocacy of religious pluralism becomes evident only when the Persian couplet is combined with the three Hindi lines. The literary form of this macaronic verse indicates its textual history. As Qureshi notes, the five line *mukḥammas* appears like a *tazmīn*,⁵³⁷ similar to the poem written by Syed Shah Khusro Hussaini in Urdu on a ghazal by Jāmī quoted above. It is thus possible, that a Hindi *tazmīn* was written on Amīr Ḥasan’s ghazal, but only the first verse has survived in the qawwali repertoires. If it was written after the verse had become associated with *Khusrau* and separated from its original context, the *tazmīn* is unlikely to cover any other verses.

Interestingly, the qawwals often emphasize the erotic dimensions of the *Kajkulāh*-verse in their performances. The macaronic *mukḥammas* verse is, in performances, frequently inserted into *Cashm-i mast-e ‘ajab-e zulf-i darāz-e ‘ajab-e* (‘Wonderful are the intoxicated eyes, wonderful are the long tresses’), a ghazal attributed to *Khusrau*.⁵³⁸ One of its verses includes the phrase *kajkulāh*, and the *Kajkulāh*-verse is commonly inserted after it:

turktāz-e ‘ajab-e shu‘badabāz-e ‘ajab-e
kajkulāh-e ‘ajab-e ‘arbadabāz-e ‘ajab-e⁵³⁹

Wonderful is the plundering expedition, wonderful is the conjuror

Wonderful is he who wears his cap awry, wonderful is the troublemaker.

Combined with this verse, the *Kajkulāh*-verse retains its erotic connotations even with the Hindi preface. The verse of the ghazal praises the roguish beloved, who is charac-

535 The translation is based on the text in Sijzī, *Dīvān-i Ḥasan Sijzī Dihlavī*, 390–391.

536 Kugle 2010: 259.

537 Qureshi 2006: 42.

538 In both *Nagh̃māt* anthologies, the ghazal appears as a *qif‘ah* of five verses and, notably, does not include a *maqta‘* with the poet’s pen name. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Nagh̃māt*, 393–394; Fārūqī, *Nagh̃māt*, 207. In *Surūd*, it appears as a complete ghazal with the *maṭla‘*, *maqta‘* and three more verses in between. The poem is not found in the *dīvāns* and none of the anthologies features the verse including the word *kajkulāh*.

539 Transcribed from the performance of Warsi Brothers. See Warsi Brothers 1992, *Qawwal II*

terized as a plunderer, conjuror and troublemaker wearing his cap awry. The almost violent indifference of the beloved effectively deprives the *Kajkulāh*-verse of any connotations of religious pluralism and universal humanism. Rather, it contrasts the dependance (*niyāz*) of the lover with the coquettish and not-so-tender playfulness (*nāz*) of the beloved and creates a situation where the former is driven to forsake his religion because of the latter in the spirit of Amīr Ḥasan's original ghazal.

Another performance standard where the *Kajkulāh*-verse is regularly employed is a Hindi verse attributed to Khusrau. Here the Persian verses are followed by the Hindi line that acts as a refrain. Interestingly, the *Kajkulāh*-verse is here a *maṭla'* in a three-verse *qit'ah* which is completely different from Amīr Ḥasan's ghazal:

I have clung to your feet
*Master Nijām al-Dīn, lord Nijām al-Dīn.*⁵⁴⁰

Every nation has its path, religion and direction for prayers
I direct my prayers towards him who wears his cap awry.

I have clung to your feet.

My face is towards your face, my dust upon the dust of your lane
Your face is the direction for prayers, your lane is where I prostrate.

I have clung to your feet.

I sit on your lane in a wretched condition
Hoping that you might bestow me a glance.

I have clung to your feet.
*Master Nijām al-Dīn, lord Nijām al-Dīn.*⁵⁴¹

Although the motif of begging on the beloved's lane is often used in romantic ghazals, here it acquires a more devotional tone due to the Hindi text that describes a girl clinging to the feet of Nizām al-Dīn. However, the *Kajkulāh*-verse, which constitutes here a part of the adoration of the beloved, is still devoid of references to religious pluralism. On the whole, the idea was neither evoked when the verse was quoted

⁵⁴⁰ In Hindi, words of Arabic and Persian origin are adapted to its pronunciation. Thus Nizām al-Dīn becomes Nijām al-Dīn, Fakhr al-Dīn becomes Fakhar Dīn etc. I have retained this convention in translation, because it is an important part of the aesthetic effect of the poems. Furthermore, the authors using Perso-Arabic script to write Hindi would have been able to use the original spelling, but consciously decided not to do so.

⁵⁴¹ The text is transcribed from a performance by Bahauddin Qawwal. I thank Scott Kugle for providing me with this recording.

in the Mughal court and in the Sufi *khānqāh*, nor in the original context of the verse in Amīr Ḥasan's *dīvān*, nor when it was adopted to qawwali performances. The idea of religious pluralism in this particular verse clearly has its source outside the context of *samā'* and qawwali.

Hindavi repertoire

The salient text in the last example quoted above is one of the items belonging to an extensive corpus of Hindavi⁵⁴² poems attributed to Amīr Khusrau. In addition to a vast number of *gīts* sung by qawwals, the corpus comprises of lyrics used in classical music (*bandish*), riddles (*pahelī*), bawdry verses that play with double entendres (*kahmukarnī*) as well as a Persian-Hindi dictionary *Khāliq bārī*. Khusrau's alleged invention of Hindi and/or Urdu rests on these works, yet the first available records of them date to the eighteenth century. This is the same period when the invention of sitar and tabla was attributed to Khusrau and when his image as we know it today started to shape.

According to Sharma, Khusrau's Hindavi poems include linguistic traits that refer to the eighteenth century. However, this does not rule out the possibility of oral transmission. What is available today merely represents the last recension before the texts were committed to writing.⁵⁴³ Few scholars are inclined to deny the possibility that Khusrau indeed wrote such texts. His life coincided with the phase in Indian literature, when Bhakti poets and Nath yogis begun to experiment with writing poetry in North Indian vernaculars.⁵⁴⁴ Khusrau's Persian works include Hindavi words and his favourable attitude towards all things Indian is evident in his *masnavīs*. He describes himself as an Indian parrot that answers when it is posed a question in Hindavi and, in another verse, tells that as a Turk from India, he does not have the Egyptian sugar of Arabic, but instead prefers Hindavi.⁵⁴⁵ The most commonly voiced explanation for the lack of contemporary textual evidence usually invokes the inferior status of Hindavi in comparison to Persian and the consequent lack of interest towards it among the rulers who sponsored the manuscript tradition.⁵⁴⁶ As a consequence, the Hindavi poems were preserved by the people of India, who sung them during weddings and other celebrations. When Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād (d. 1910) published his *Āb-i ḥayāt* ('Water of Life'), a history of Urdu literature, in 1880, he still referred to Khusrau's Hindavi poems that were sung, mostly by women, during different ceremonies.⁵⁴⁷

542 Following the scholarly practice, I am referring to Khusrau's vernacular texts as Hindavi poetry. It should, however, be kept in mind that the term Hindavi is not used among the contemporary qawwals or their audience.

543 Sharma 2006: 78.

544 For a comparative study of the poetic images found in Khusrau's Hindavi poems, on the one hand, and in the writings of Bhakti and Nath poets, on the other, see Rizvi 2011: 59–96.

545 See, e.g. Sharma 2006: 78.

546 See, e.g. Panchal 2013: 42.

547 See Sharma 2006: 82.

Unless a previously unknown manuscript is discovered or linguistic and philological analysis of Hindavi texts throws light on their provenance, the questions pertaining to the origins and authenticity will remain moot. Yet, studying Khusrau's Hindavi corpus in qawwali repertoires will shed some light as to the provenance of some texts that are today popularly attributed to him. This Hindavi corpus performed by the qawwals is significantly wider than the selections of *gīts* gleaned from textual sources by, for example, Gopi Chand Narang and Parmanand Panchal.⁵⁴⁸

The twelve Hindavi poems included in *Surūd* perhaps represent the widest, yet by no means exhaustive, available selection of Khusrau's Hindavi texts sung by the qawwals. Otherwise, the poems have been transmitted orally among the qawwals and classical singers of the Delhi *gharānā*. In the case of Khusrau's Hindavi *gīts*, the lack of clearly defined formal structure, the affinity of the language to the spoken dialects as well as the absence of codified literary version have led to a profusion of variant readings which often bear traces of the dialect spoken in the qawwal's home region. It is important to emphasize that the qawwals are not the only singers to perform Khusrau's Hindavi texts. Especially, the classical singers of the Delhi *gharānā* have a wide array of these texts in their repertoires.

Before entering an analysis of individual poems, it is helpful to introduce the term 'Khusrau-esque' (coined by Sunil Sharma) into the discussion.⁵⁴⁹ Sharma suggests that this term could be used in referring to literary texts in analogy with the designation 'Khusrau style' that is applied to certain musical features and accepted and used by the experts of Indian music. More specifically, he suggests applying Khusrau-esque to Hindavi poems that are not included in the *dīvāns* but could have possibly been written by him. The term has the added advantage of deflecting the attention from the often inconclusive debates on the authorship towards the poetic texts themselves. In the context of qawwali repertoires, Khusrau-esque will prove useful in studying the expanding corpus of Hindavi poems attributed to him.

While the authorship of some of Khusrau's Hindavi poems may never be established, in other cases the author or at least the writing context can be traced. As the single textual source that explicitly records Khusrau as the author of certain Hindavi poems, *Surūd* can offer some information about the origins of these poems. At present, there is a demand for Khusrau-esque Hindavi poems among audiences, because he has become an icon of religious tolerance and cultural creativity that is not bound to a single religious or ethnic identity. As fewer and fewer people understand Persian, the corpus of his Hindavi poems has gained in importance. The qawwali repertoires are not closed, and poems Khusrau-esque enough can easily lose their association with the original author and become attributed to Khusrau instead. In qawwali repertoires,

548 See Narang 1998: 242–248 and 2004: 41–49; Panchal 2013: 75–157.

549 See, e.g. Sharma 2012: 75.

there seems to be at least three possible sources from where such poems are being supplied.

The first consists of the poems by less known twentieth-century Hyderabad poets that do not contain the pen name. By less known I refer to authors who may have written only a handful of poems instead of a published *dīvān* or who are not known outside their local context. Thus, a poem written by a poet known only in Hyderabad could well pass as a text written by Khusrau, in Karachi or Delhi. In the case of some authors, there is also a lack of an established Sufi following that would guard their poetic heritage against such reattribution. The contrary is true in the case of ‘Abd al-Qadīr Ṣiddīqī Ḥasrat, for example. His poetic oeuvre includes many Khusrau-esque items, but his successors endowed with poetic acumen have kept his memory alive and his poems closely associated with him.

Two famous Hindavi poems, *Āj badhāvā* (‘Today, [sing] felicitations’) and *Mose nainān mat moṛnā* (‘Do not turn your eyes away from me’), are in *Surūd* attributed to Khusrau. However, in a book written to accompany a CD by Meraj Ahmad, Claire Devos states (on the authority of the qawwal) that these texts were in reality written by Hyderabad poets Amjad Ḥaidarābādī (d. 1961) and Navāb Luqmān al-Daulah Bahādur, respectively.⁵⁵⁰

Āj badhāvā is classified as a congratulatory song (*mubārak*) in *Surūd*.⁵⁵¹ It employs poetic conventions like the female voice, offering oneself as a sacrifice for the sake of the beloved as well as wedding imagery. All these are typical to poems attributed to Khusrau and *Āj badhāvā* is thus Khusrau-esque enough to pass as his text. In addition, it has come to fulfil an important ritual function at the Nizamuddin shrine, where Khusrau lies buried. However, before *Surūd* was published, Devos contested that the author was Amjad Ḥaidarābādī. Amjad was a literary figure best known for his *rubāʿīs* and his lament over the destruction caused by the flooding of river Musi in 1908. Attributing the poem to him seems almost as odd as attributing it to Khusrau. Although Amjad used a wide range of poetic forms, such as *rubāʿī*, *ghazal*, *mukhammas* and *musaddas* (a poem consisting of six-line verses) in addition to prose, none of his major works includes Hindavi poems, and the literary historian Basheer Ahmed makes no reference to Hindavi poems in his entry about Amjad.⁵⁵² However, this does not necessarily mean that Amjad did not write the poem. Instead, it may have never found its way to his collected works but survived only through oral transmission among the qawwals hailing from Hyderabad.

The second poem, *Mose nainān mat moṛnā*, is a remarkable example of how quickly a poem written apparently during the first half of the twentieth century can become associated with Khusrau, if it is Khusrau-esque enough.

550 Devos 1995: 77–80.

551 For the translation of the poem, see below.

552 See Ahmed 2007: 46–52. For the *rubāʿīs*, see Amjad, *Rubāʿīyyāt-i Amjad. Mukammal ḥiṣṣa-yi avval tā sivum*. For the longer poetic forms, see. e.g. Amjad, *Khirqā-yi Amjad* and *Riyāz-i Amjad* I–II.

Do not turn your eyes from me, I have fallen to your feet
As you have made me your own, accordingly, keep your promise
My honour is in your hands, beloved, do not give the people a reason to laugh
I have fallen to your feet
For you there are hundreds like me, but for me you are the only one
Look at your own mercy, not my faults
I have fallen to your feet
I forgot all due to you, do not forget me
If you forget, I shall disappear from the both worlds
*I have fallen to your feet.*⁵⁵³

The text is a *gīt*, but in *Surūd* it is classified as a poem of praise (*manqabat*). This seems strange if one is not familiar with the legendary anecdote attached to the poem. Khusrau is again accompanying his Sufi guide, when the latter halts for a moment, standing on a stone. When he is about to move on, the stone starts to speak asking Nizām al-Dīn not to deprive it from the contact with his blessed feet. The poem is supposed to be Khusrau's depiction of the incident. The anecdote reveals the rationale behind classifying it as a *manqabat*.

The gap between publishing Claire Devos' work and *Surūd*, both of which are based on information relayed by Meraj, is only three years. For some reason or another, Meraj decided to attribute the two poems to Khusrau instead of Amjad and Navāb Luqmān al-Daulah Bahādur during this short period. The legend's prior existence together with the demand of Khusrau-esque repertoire may have prompted the decision.

Also the poem discussed above, *Terī re main̄ to caranan lāgī* ('I have clung to your feet'), into which the *Kajkulāh*-verse is often inserted, resembles another poem by Luqmān al-Daulah – *Lāgī rī main̄ to caran tihārī* ('I have clung to your feet').⁵⁵⁴ The latter is a *manqabat* in praise of Šābir 'Alā' al-Dīn instead of Nizām al-Dīn, but the meaning of the refrain is exactly the same in spite of the slightly different wording. These poems are stock performance standards in the repertoires of qawwals who now reside in Hyderabad, Karachi and Delhi, but whose lineages go back to Tānras Khān's family in late nineteenth century- and early twentieth-century Hyderabad. It seems probable that these qawwals are responsible for introducing such Hyderabadī items into qawwali repertoires and contributing to their subsequent association with Khusrau.

Another possible source predates the immigration of Tānras Khān to Hyderabad and is connected with the Mughal court, perhaps during the reign of the last monarch, Bahādur Shāh Z̄afar. Among the most famous of Khusrau's Hindavi poems is a celebration of spring, *Phūl rahī sarson̄ sakal ban* ('The mustard is blooming in all forests'). The poem describes a girl arriving at the door of Nizām al-Dīn with an earthen pot full of

553 Meraj, *Surūd*, 347.

554 For the text, see Meraj, *Surūd*, 380.

yellow mustard flowers in a manner that resembles the practice followed during the *basant* festival:

The mustard is blooming in all forests.

Flame of the forest⁵⁵⁵ is blooming in my courtyard

Whole herds of koels sing

And a fair beauty decorates herself.

Flower seller brought an earthen pot.

The mustard is blooming in all forests.

Many kinds of flowers she arranged

Took the vessel into her hand and arrived

To Nijām al-Dīn's door.

The colourful lover (‘āshiq rang) told her to come

And many years passed.

The mustard is blooming in all forests.⁵⁵⁶

As has been noted above, it is impossible to exactly determine the beginnings of the celebration of *basant* at the Nizamuddin shrine, although the later hagiographical tradition points to Khusrau as the person who introduced the festival to the Sufis. By the early eighteenth century, when Dargāh Qulī Khān wrote his *Muraqqaʿ*, the celebrations at the Nizamuddin shrine were a part of the six-day festival that took place at different locations of the city.

Although attributed to Khusrau, the poem includes the conspicuous words ‘āshiq rang. They denote a person, whose nature or colour (*rang*) is like that of a lover (‘āshiq), but they also constitute an obvious pen name. Occasionally, the guardians and qawwals at the Nizamuddin shrine acknowledge that the poem’s attribution to Khusrau is inaccurate and that it was written by Bahādur Shāh instead. He signed his Hindavi poems as Shokh Rang (‘Playfully coloured’), but their assumption may in any case point to the right direction. Pen names ending with *rang* (‘colour’) gained frequency among the musicians and poets connected with the Mughal court during the early eighteenth century and remained in vogue until the end of the dynasty in 1857.⁵⁵⁷ The above poem was probably written during the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries by a poet who was connected with the Mughal court and familiar with the *basant* cel-

555 *Ṭesū*, i.e. *Butea frondosa*. Powdered flowers of this plant used to be a source of yellow colour thrown during *holī*.

556 Meraj, *Surūd*, 374.

557 The practice has continued among modern classical musicians. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan (d. 1968) used the pen name *Sabrang* (‘All-coloured’) and Acharya K.C.D. Brahaspati (d. 1979), a court musician in the erstwhile Rampur state, called himself *Anangrang* (‘Bodiless Colour’ or ‘Coloured Like Kama’).

celebrations at the Nizamuddin shrine. Since the poem is an integral part of the repertoire of both the contemporary *qavvāl-bacchoṅ kā gharānā* and the Delhi *gharānā*, Bahādur Shāh's court – from where both stem – seems a likely context for its writing. Furthermore, the monarch himself was initiated in the Chishti Nizami brotherhood and it was in the shrine of Nizamuddin he chose to hide before being captured by the British. As in the case of Hyderabad poets, it is the musicians who are apparently behind forging a link between Khusrau and the poems written in the Mughal court.

A third possible source for Amīr Khusrau's Hindavi poems consists of texts written in honour of Nizām al-Dīn Aurangābādī. In some cases, a mention of his son and successor, Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn, makes it clear that the texts are addressed to him instead of his Delhi namesake. One instance is the following text, *Mose bol nah bol merī sun yā nah sun* ('You may speak to me or not, you may listen to me or not'):

*You may speak to me or not, you may listen to me or not
I will not let you go, dearest.*

*If my mother-in-law and sister-in-law turn away, let them
Why should not the entire village forsake me?*

*You alone did not turn away from me, my beloved
I have also come under your shade.*

*Darling of Nijām, lovely Fakhar Dīn
You tell me, where I should go.*

*If the men and women of the town⁵⁵⁸
Put my name at stake, I will marry again!*

*I will now stay in your company, ecstatic (mauj se)
Staying here, I will not go astray, [if you] shield [me].⁵⁵⁹*

The poem is written by a poet who calls himself Mauj. Although *Surūd* includes the text, it does not provide further information about him and merely calls him Miyān Mauj or Maulānā Mauj. His dates are not provided unlike in the case of most authors included in the anthology. The pen name together with the mention of Fakhr al-Dīn clearly indicates that the poem was not written by Khusrau, however, it has now become a part of his Hindavi repertoire. It appears on an album by a Pakistani Sufi singer Abida Parveen titled *Abida Sings Amir Khusrau* with the verses including the au-

⁵⁵⁸ *Surūd* reads *nijām ke* ('of Nijām'), but I have followed here the more commonly sung version. It would seem odd that the people of the beloved would set to malign the female protagonist, whereas a public humiliation is a common poetic motif.

⁵⁵⁹ Meraj, *Surūd*, 378.

thor's pen name and the mention of Fakhr al-Dīn intact.⁵⁶⁰ Late Munshi Raziuddin, on the other hand, changed Fakhar Dīn into Naṣīr al-Dīn, Niẓām al-Dīn Auliya's famous *khalīfah*, on an album titled *A Tribute to Amir Khusroo*.⁵⁶¹ Further, he omits the verse with the pen name Mauj and substitutes it with the verse mentioning Niẓām al-Dīn and Naṣīr al-Dīn. He creates an impression of a poem that was written in honour of Niẓām al-Dīn Auliya' and his deputy, and thus makes the attribution of the poem to Khusrau more plausible.

Another item belonging to the same group of poems is often sung during the 'urs festivities at the Nizamuddin shrine.

*In the town of Chisht, the lovely Nijām
Is the princess bride among the masters.*

*Oh friend, how fortunate is indeed the one
Who has found the lovely Nijām.*

*It was a spell, nothing else, I do not know my heart
The name of the Fakhar is my refuge.*

*By this very name, show me the vision:
Nijām is the king, Naṣīr the bride.*⁵⁶²

Again, the mention of Fakhr al-Dīn indicates that the poem was originally written in honour of Niẓām al-Dīn Aurangābādī like *Mose bol nah bol*. However, the last verse refers to Niẓām al-Dīn Auliya' and Naṣīr al-Dīn, and it is possible that it was added later to the poem, in order to integrate it more closely to the rituals of the Nizamuddin shrine.

In the cases discussed above, entire poems were attributed to Khusrau. In other cases, the textual bulk of a brief poem is increased by inclusion of verses from the works of other poets. Inserting verses from other poems into the salient text is in the qawwali performance called *gīrah lagānā* ('tying a knot'). However, in performance the inserted verses are usually marked apart from the salient text by different rhyme struc-

⁵⁶⁰ See Parveen, *Abida Sings Amir Khusrau*, track 4.

⁵⁶¹ See Niazi, *A Tribute to Amir Khusroo*, track 2. The cover of the album published by EMI Pakistan informs that the singer is Manzoor Ahmed Niazi, a cousin of Munshi Raziuddin. However, the voice of the leading qawwal belongs unmistakably to the latter. I was puzzled by this until Regula Qureshi informed me that Munshi Raziuddin used to record in the name of his cousin, who had considerably better voice, when he was taken ill in the 1970s. In the album, Munshi Raziuddin adds one verse not found in *Surūd* to his performance:

*What is there to discuss about honour and chastity
Now that I have found earthen jars of love to drink from.*

⁵⁶² The translation is based on the performance of the qawwals at the Nizamuddin shrine during the *baṛā qul* ritual on 19 February 2014.

ture and poetic metre. This distinction is made explicit by performing them in recitative instead of setting them into the melody and rhythm of the salient text.

If the inserted verses share the rhyme and the metre with the salient text, it is possible that they become assimilated with it and the new version becomes a performance standard. This has happened in the case of Khusrau's most famous Hindavi poem, *Chāp tilak* ('Sign and mark'). When the text of the standard version of this *gīt*, which is classified as *manqabat* in *Surūd*, is compared with a *dādrah* written by Bedam, the similarities (in bold) are striking even if the order of verses is different:

<i>Chāp tilak</i> in <i>Surūd</i> ⁵⁶³	<i>Dādrah</i> in <i>Dīvān-i Bedam</i> ⁵⁶⁴
1 He robbed me off from the signs and marks by glancing at me By glancing at me, dispatching an army He said inexpressible words By glancing at me.	He robbed me off from the signs and marks by glancing at me He spoke in an unspeakable manner ⁵⁶⁶ By glancing at me.
2 I sacrifice myself to you, time and again, dyer He dyed me like himself By glancing at me.	I was just left staring He made me suffer from separation By glancing at me.
3 Making me drink the liquor from the distillery of love He made me drunk By glancing at me.	Dyer! I sacrifice myself to you, time and again He dyed me like himself By glancing at me.
4 I was just left staring He made me suffer from separation By glancing at me.	Without liquor, he made me drink toddy He made me drunk By glancing at me.
5 White, white arms, green, green bangles He caught my hand and took me away By glancing at me	I sacrifice my body and soul to my master He robbed the very basis of the soul By glancing at me
6 You, darling, charmed the heart ⁵⁶⁵ You made me breathless (<i>be-dam</i>) By glancing at me.	You, Vāris, charmed the heart You made me breathless (<i>Bedam</i>) By glancing at me.

⁵⁶³ Meraj, *Surūd*, 343.

⁵⁶⁴ Bedam, *Dīvān*, 141.

⁵⁶⁵ *Bane manmohan*, lit. 'become/became the heart-ravisher'.

⁵⁶⁶ *Akath kathā kah dīnī*, lit. 'he spoke an unspeakable speech,' i.e. through the eyes, the beloved was able to communicate a message that could not be spoken due to the social norms.

7 Khusrau sacrifices himself for Nijām time and
again
He made me the bride
By glancing at me.

It is possible that *Chāp tilak* existed as a short song text consisting of the first, fifth and seventh stanzas of the *Surūd* version and that Bedam based his *dādrah* on it. However, the sixth stanza of the *Surūd* version implies a borrowing from Bedam's *dādrah*. It corresponds almost verbatim to Bedam's closing stanza. The only exception is that the conspicuous reference to Bedam's Sufi guide, Vāriṣ 'Alī Shāh, has been substituted with the generic term *saiyyān* denoting darling. Bedam's pen name is slightly too Persian to be a Hindavi word, yet inconspicuous enough to be left in its place, where it acquires its literal meaning 'breathless'.

The discussion of the possible sources of Khusrau's Hindavi corpus reveals the fact that the reattribution of poems is an ongoing process. The qawwals have been successful in obscuring the original authorship of certain poems and associating them with Khusrau. This way, they influence the literary culture without being poets themselves. In the case of the poems discussed in this chapter, the attribution process is distinctly different from, for example, the case of *rubā'īs* in the early Persian literature. Many *rubā'īs* that were originally attributed to several authors were ultimately associated solely with 'Umar Khayyām. Such verses are called 'wandering quatrains' by modern scholars.⁵⁶⁷ This denotes that their authorship was often unclear already when they were committed to writing and as a consequence they wandered from one poetic collection to another before finding a permanent place in one of them. In the case of Khusrau's Hindavi poems, the authors are often known, but they are not as famous as Khusrau. As a response to the increased demand for Khusrau's Hindavi repertoire, the qawwals added new items to it. The favourable response from the audience ensured that they became firmly associated with him. Occasionally, they even acquired legendary anecdotes about their composing.

The process resembles in some respects the textual history of Ismaili *ginans* discussed by Ali Asani. The *ginans* are vernacular works that end with a mention of the name of one of the Ismaili *pīrs* who lived between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries. However, the linguistic and philological analysis of the texts has revealed that the present form dates back only to the period between 1500 and 1850. Asani holds that the texts were written by the followers of the *pīrs* and evoking their names in the signature verses (*bhanitā*) is a means to indicate affiliation with and devotion to them. The 'grammatical hiatus' that precedes the signature verses sets them apart from the rest of the text and thus indicates that they are not meant as forgeries. The responsibility of

⁵⁶⁷ See, e.g. de Bruijn 1997: 10.

hearing the signature verse as an indication of the authorship is left to the community of believers, who ultimately invest the text with religious meaning.⁵⁶⁸

Not all the poems discussed above include a reference to Khusrau, and the factor that determines their attribution is their literary style. The contemporary context and the demand for Hindavi poems have led the audience of qawwali music to perceive them as his writings. However, the initial impetus for ascribing the poems to Khusrau has come from a clearly identifiable quarter, the qawwals. The process of reattributing texts, whose authorship has been known, to Khusrau has been a conscious decision that has followed from an attempt to meet the demand of listeners. The agency in the process belongs essentially to the performers, not to the community of believers or to the audience.

The discussion about the poems of Jāmī and Khusrau illustrates the changes that have taken place in qawwali repertoires in respect to the poetic texts of the two authors. Qawwals adapt, borrow and omit individual verses and entire poems. Operating on the interface of literary and oral traditions together with certain practicality that characterizes *samāʿ* – the value of a song text is determined by its effect, not by its literary authenticity – makes the shaping of repertoires relatively easy. Before discussing how the qawwals exert this role in individual *samāʿ* assemblies, I briefly address the issues concerning the history of qawwali music and the identity of the performers.

568 Asani 2002: 84–94.

5 QAWWALS, QAWWALI AND STAGES OF PERFORMANCE

5.1 The qawwals: history and hierarchy

Who are the qawwals who sing the poems discussed above and shape the poetic repertoires performed in *samā'* assemblies? As has been noted in Part I of this study, qawwal was initially a generic term denoting a singer. This applied especially to the framework of *samā'*, where the singers were frequently referred to as qawwals, but was not exclusive to it. Unlike today, the term was not originally associated with a single musical style called qawwali that has its clearly defined conventions. As a name of a musical style, the word qawwali is relatively new, and it has been derived from the word qawwal, not the other way round.⁵⁶⁹ Except for the texts written during the twentieth century, none of the sources discussed in Part I of this study uses it. According to the musicologist Katherine Butler Schofield, the word appears in a written record for the first time in 1698 in a musical treatise entitled *Shams al-aṣṣvāt* ('The Sun of Voices'), whereas '[b]efore this date, the repertoire specific to the Qawwals was referred to by its constituent parts, most prominently *qaul* and *tarāna*'. She further notes that during the early eighteenth century, the term qawwali seems to have been a general term for musical 'modes' associated with Sufism that also signified a shared musical style.⁵⁷⁰ It appears to have been commonly adopted as a name of a musical genre we know today as qawwali only towards the turn of the twentieth century. In the mid-nineteenth century, when Muḥammad Karam Imām *Khān* wrote his musical treatise *Ma'dan-i mūsīqī* ('Mine of Music'), this was not yet the case. Qureshi notes that the qawwals are in that text associated specifically with the musical genres of *tarānah* and *khayāl*, not qawwali.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁹ Katherine Butler Schofield suggests that the qawwals initially derived their name from their most important speciality, the musical genre called *qaul*. (Brown 2010: 162.) However, the word qawwal denoted a singer in the Sufi context much before it was introduced into the Indian musical jargon. Furthermore, the Sultanate Sufi sources invariably describe the singers called qawwals performing ghazals, not *qauls*. Thus, the Indian use of the word qawwal continued the Central Asian practice and its association with *qaul* was established only in the later period.

⁵⁷⁰ Brown 2010: 162.

⁵⁷¹ Qureshi 2010: 230.

History of qawwali

Although qawwali is today the best known of South Asian genres of Sufi music,⁵⁷² its history remains largely unexplored. A recent volume jointly edited by Joep Bor, Françoise ‘Nalini’ Delvoe, Jane Harvey and Emmie te Nijenhuis and entitled *Hindustani Music: Thirteenth to Twentieth Centuries*, constitutes a compelling study of North Indian musical genres by leading scholars. Their contributions discuss various aspects of Hindustani music from a wide range of perspectives, assuming different methodological approaches. The most prominent genres, *dhrupād* and *khayāl*, receive special attention in several papers, while others, most notably *thumrī*, are also touched upon. The volume does not have a special chapter on qawwali, yet qawwals – especially the qawwals of Delhi – are mentioned in several contributions. Cultural historian Madhu Trivedi dates the evolution of *qaul* and *tarānah*, the musical genres associated with Delhi qawwals, into a new genre called qawwali to the eighteenth century. She also attributes the early nineteenth-century evolution of *thumrī* into a refined musical genre to Ṣādiq ‘Alī *Khān*, a singer belonging to the musical tradition of the Delhi qawwals.⁵⁷³ In her contribution, Katherine Butler Schofield explores the role of Delhi qawwals in the early development of *khayāl*. She argues that *khayāl* did not arise from the personal genius of Amīr *Khusrāu* or Ḥusain Shāh Sharqī (d. 1483), the ruler of Jaunpur, but from ‘the creative collision’ of their musical legacies in the seventeenth century. Her reading of the historical texts suggests that the *khānqāh* of the Chishti sheikhs of Barnawa was the locus of this collision, because it facilitated the fusion of these two traditions. The Barnawa sheikhs were associated with the Delhi qawwals and one of them, Shaikh Pīr Buddhan (d. 1498), had acted as the Sufi guide of Ḥusain Shāh Sharqī.⁵⁷⁴

Other contributions in the volume contain snippets of information pertaining to qawwals. Qureshi, for example, suggests that the reference found in *Ma’dan-i mūsīqī* to songs praising Muhammad, ‘in which ustad and *shāgird* alternate repetitions,’ might be a reference to what is today known as qawwali.⁵⁷⁵ Notwithstanding the significance of the qawwals for the development of Hindustani music during the eighteenth and

⁵⁷² It should be kept in mind, that qawwali is by no means the only South Asian genre of Sufi music. Qawwali is mainly heard in the areas surrounding the axis formed by three imperial capitals Lahore, Delhi and Hyderabad (Deccan). After the partition, Karachi has become a significant centre of qawwali music due to the immigration of several distinguished musicians there. Geographically and culturally, qawwali has developed and flourished in the urban centres of the heartland of cosmopolitan Indo-Persian culture. Other areas, such as rural Punjab, Sindh, Kashmir and Bengal have their distinct traditions of Sufi music associated with poetry written in respective languages of these regions. Today, these musical genres are, Peter Manuel points out, often grouped under the term Sufi (or Sufiyana) Kalam (lit. ‘Sufi poetry’). See Manuel 2008: 379.

⁵⁷³ Trivedi 2010: 84, 88.

⁵⁷⁴ Brown 2010.

⁵⁷⁵ Qureshi 2010: 231.

nineteenth centuries when most of the musical genres assumed their present forms, the history of qawwali music remains largely unexplored.

The standard accounts on the history of qawwali related by performers invariably revolve around two key moments separated by half a millennium. The first one is connected with Niẓām al-Dīn. As has been noted above, the contemporaneous sources portray him as an eminent patron of poetry and music. He had at least two qawwals at his service, while others flocked to his musical assemblies from other parts of the city. The texts also note the presence of Amīr Khusrau in Niẓām al-Dīn's circle, but do not elaborate on his relationship with the qawwals. However, the oral histories narrated by the present-day performers connect him intimately with them in a manner that echoes the accounts in the eighteenth century hagiography *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī*. Qureshi has documented how the qawwals hold that Amīr Khusrau trained young singers to perform in the assemblies of his Sufi guide. One of these boys was Miyān Ṣāmit⁵⁷⁶ and the Delhi qawwals trace their lineage to him. The musicians belonging to this lineage further associate themselves with one of the four towns situated around Delhi: Dasna, Sikandarabad, Khurja or Hapur.⁵⁷⁷

The second key moment is connected with the court of the last Mughal emperor, Bahādur Shāh Z̄afar. His leading court singer, Tānras Khān (d. 1884), was allegedly a descendant of Miyān Ṣāmit. Tānras Khān survived the bloody aftermath of the 1857 uprising and managed to immigrate to Hyderabad, where he continued his career at the court of the Nizam.⁵⁷⁸ Some of the most celebrated present-day qawwals trace their lineage to him or to one of his relatives.

At present, the representatives of two partly overlapping musical traditions claim the heritage of Miyān Ṣāmit-Tānras Khān lineage. The first is that of the qawwals who prefer to call their tradition *qavvāl baccon̄ kā gharānā* ('the *gharānā* of the children of the qawwals'). Singers specializing in various genres of Hindustani classical music, such as *khayāl*, *thumrī* and *ghazal* represent the second tradition. While they occasionally evoke the appellation *qavvāl baccon̄ kā gharānā*, they usually prefer to call their tradition Delhi *gharānā*. The word *gharānā* immediately associates both musical traditions with the broader world of Hindustani classical music where the transmission of musical knowledge and the training of musicians has been conceptualized in the framework of various *gharānās* since the turn of the twentieth century. Although the concept of a *gharānā* is vast and has multiple connotations for different people, in the words of Daniel Neuman it 'may be said to include, minimally, a lineage of hereditary

⁵⁷⁶ Claire Devos records Miyān Ṣāmit's year of birth as 1309 in her preface to *Surūd*. (Devos, "Peshlafz̄", 27.) Considering Niẓām al-Dīn's strong aversion to employing adolescent boys in his assemblies, it seems improbable that Miyān Ṣāmit would have achieved such a prominent status before the death of Niẓām al-Dīn in 1325, if this was correct.

⁵⁷⁷ Qureshi 2006: 99 and 2012: 106.

⁵⁷⁸ Qureshi 2012: 106.

musicians, their disciples, and the particular musical style they represent'.⁵⁷⁹ In the case of qawwals, the prestige of their *gharānā* is derived from the association with the original qawwals of Niẓām al-Dīn, whereas the classical musicians additionally link themselves with the Mughal court.

The classical singer and writer Vidya Rao has recorded another historical account that attempts to consolidate the simultaneous existence of courtly and Sufi musical traditions within a single *gharānā*. The account was recounted to her by Iqbal Ahmed Khan, the present head of the Delhi *gharānā*,⁵⁸⁰ who adds another key moment to his account. He pushes the founding of the *gharānā* further back, to the court of the sultan Iltutmish (r. 1211–1236). Iltutmish had two musicians at his service. One of them, Miyān Ṣāmit's grandfather Mīr Ḥasan Sāvānt, became a disciple of Khvājah Muʿīn al-Dīn, whereas the other, Mīr Bullā Kalāvānt, remained at the court. However, their musical traditions continued to run parallel to each other and were fused into the Delhi *gharānā* in the person of Mamman Khān, an early twentieth-century descendant of Tānras Khān and the great-grandfather of Iqbal Ahmed Khan.⁵⁸¹ Thus, the *gharānā* came to include two separate musical traditions associated with their respective performers. On the one hand, there are the qawwals who perform qawwali music in the Sufi shrines and, on the other, there are the classical musicians. Despite the different musical styles, there is significant overlapping in the poetic repertoires. Especially the texts written by or attributed to Amīr Khusrau as well as ghazals of Delhi poets like Ghālīb and Bahādūr Shāh Ḥafīz are sung by both the qawwals and Hindustani singers of this *gharānā*.⁵⁸²

These accounts have evidently been shaped by an attempt to lend authority and legitimacy to the present-day musical traditions. Moreover, they bring out certain important questions about the past and present of qawwali music. Most importantly, the members of the *qavvāl baccon̄ kā gharānā* constitute only a small minority among all those musicians who call themselves qawwals. However, the music performed by all of them is immediately recognized as qawwali by the listeners, whereas registering the regional or stylistic differences follows the initial recognition. How, then, did qawwali

579 Neuman 1990: 146.

580 When Daniel M. Neuman conducted his fieldwork in Delhi during the late-60s and 70s, this particular musical lineage was not yet firmly established and it was referred to as “the Delhi gharana of Mamman Khan” by the outsiders. His prediction that the *gharānā* would soon become established because of the presence of accomplished soloists in its ranks seems to have come true, since the lineage is now commonly referred to as the Delhi *gharānā*. (See Neuman 1990: 155, 160.) However, Iqbal Ahmed Khan's position as the leader of all the musicians of the *gharānā* is not unequivocal. Meraj Ahmed claims to be the senior surviving descendant of Tānras Khān, while Naseeruddin Saami, a classical singer from Pakistan, considers himself to be the authentic representative of the *gharānā*.

581 Rao 2010.

582 On some rare occasions, these two traditions still combine in one person. A recent example is Munshi Raziuddin, a qawwal who migrated from Hyderabad to Karachi after the partition. He sung qawwali himself and trained his son, Fareed Ayaz, in the art of qawwali. However, to his son-in-law Naseeruddin Saami, he imparted a training in *khayāl* and other classical genres.

music that shares certain musical conventions evolve? Did the other qawwals imitate the Delhi qawwals or did different musical styles amalgamate into a single musical genre at some point of time? Furthermore, does the music of *qavvāl baccoṅ kā gharānā* represent the most authentic and original qawwali music as their understanding of the historical traditions suggests? Are there any grounds for holding their music as a parameter against which the performances of other qawwals should be evaluated? An in-depth exploration of these questions is outside the scope of this study. However, understanding the considerations that determine the hierarchy of qawwals performing in the Sufi context forms an important background for the subsequent chapters.

Hierarchy of the qawwals

Despite their small number, the performers belonging to *qavvāl baccoṅ kā gharānā* dominate the top rungs of the mutual hierarchy of qawwals. Their status stems largely from their association with Nizām al-Dīn and Amīr Khusrau. This association is cemented by a document (*mu'tād*) that attaches them to the Nizamuddin shrine by entitling them a share in its income. Although the document has no real financial significance – during Qureshi's fieldwork in the late 1970s their share amounted to only a few paisas⁵⁸³ – it guarantees the qawwals certain eminence.

Their prestige is further augmented by their familiarity with the theory of music. Qureshi points out that the knowledge of the leading *qavvāl bacce* includes the grammar of raga and tala, the melodic and rhythmic structures that govern the classical music. This knowledge has enabled them to effectively transmit and classicize their musical tradition.⁵⁸⁴ It has also earned the *qavvāl baccā* performers recognition among the Indian and Pakistani classical musicians that is generally denied from most other qawwals.

Some of the best-known Indian qawwals like Aziz Ahmed Khan Warsi (d. 1986), Hayat Ahmed Khan (d. 2011) and Meraj Ahmed Nizami (b. 1937) belong to the *qavvāl baccoṅ kā gharānā*. Many members of the *gharānā* have migrated to Pakistan, where their familial and musical credentials have undoubtedly assisted in establishing themselves in the musical scene of the newly created nation. Among them were the three cousins Munshi Raziuddin (d. 2003), Bahauddin Khan (d. 2006) and Manzoor Niazi (d. 2013), who initially performed together, but then founded their respective qawwali groups. The sons and grandsons of all the above-mentioned performers continue the musical tradition of their forebears. Some of them, like Munshi Raziuddin's son Fareed Ayaz, have become veritable qawwali superstars.

Among the most prestigious qawwals are also the singers who are able to trace their lineage to one or another court. For example, Mohammed Ahmed Warsi Nasiri

583 See Qureshi 2006: 99.

584 Qureshi 2012: 108.

combines a pedigree of court musicians of the erstwhile rulers of Rampur with classical qawwali idiom. If a qawwal does not happen to belong to either the *qavvāl baccoṅ kā gharānā* or a lineage of court musicians, the best way of procuring prestige is getting trained in classical Hindustani music. This is a strategy adopted by, for example, Ghulam Hussain Niazi. He has had an extensive training under the exponents of the Hapur *gharānā*, which has led to his attachment to the Nizamuddin shrine even if he lacks a link with *qavvāl baccoṅ kā gharānā*.⁵⁸⁵

The qawwals who can boast either a prestigious lineage or training in classical music, or both, tend to be the ones who become attached to the most prestigious Sufi shrines. In practice this means that they are accorded prime performing time in these shrines and thus they have a relatively secure means of earning their living. For qawwals who lack such position, the shrine environment can be very harsh. They have to content themselves with singing in lesser and usually poorer shrines. In the more prestigious shrines, they are given less visibility.

The *qavvāl baccoṅ kā gharānā* has been keenly studied by scholars and critics. They perceive their tradition as authentic and regularly belittle other qawwals. An excellent example of this is the case of Iftekhar Ahmed. He hails from Amroha, a provincial town north-east of Delhi. When Qureshi conducted her field work, Iftekhar Ahmed was a young amateur performer, who had limited musical abilities.⁵⁸⁶ Nonetheless, he has managed to progress in his career. Over three decades later, in 2010, he was accorded a place next to the established qawwals in *Jashn-e-Khusrau*, a musical festival celebrating the legacy of Amīr Khusrau in qawwali music. However, the stigma of lacking prestigious musical lineage still attaches to him. Shakeel Hossain, the editor of an impressive volume released after the festival, emphasizes in the introduction that Iftekhar Ahmed lacks both the connection with *qavvāl baccoṅ kā gharānā* and training in any of the schools of Hindustani music.⁵⁸⁷ Moreover, he terms him – no doubt echoing the contempt of the elite qawwals – as *naqqāl* ('mimic, imitator') in an unabashedly derogatory manner. Such comments show how difficult it is for a qawwal like Iftekhar to get the approval of critics.

However, the favouritism prevailing in Sufi shrines has a flip side that has been rarely touched upon by the scholars. Discussing the hierarchy of the qawwals in shrines, Qureshi points out that the customary order of performers that favours *qavvāl baccoṅ kā gharānā* is followed from generation to generation.⁵⁸⁸ If a qawwal becomes attached to a certain shrine, this right is conferred to his progeny as well. However, the fact remains that every new generation is not necessarily as talented as the preceding one and a hereditary engagement can become an encumbrance for those who patronize the qawwals. At present, this is happening at the Nizamuddin shrine, where Meraj

585 Hossain 2012: 32.

586 Qureshi 2006: 38, 102.

587 Hossain 2012: 32, 37.

588 Qureshi 2006: 191.

Ahmed, the senior living member of the *qavvāl baccoṅ kā gharānā* heads the qawwali community (*birādari*).

Meraj's training has been extensive. It began in his native Hyderabad and among his teachers were both eminent musicians and Sufis. From the latter, he acquired knowledge about both music and Sufism. Meraj himself sees this phase of his life as a significant prerequisite for his deep understanding of poetry. In the early fifties, Meraj's father and uncle migrated to Delhi in order to take up the lead of the qawwals at the Nizamuddin shrine. After the death of his elders, Meraj assumed this responsibility and established himself as a consummate performer in his own right. The appreciation he enjoyed is evident from the epithets *Sitārah-yi Dakkan* ('The Star of the Deccan') and *Bulbul-i Cisht* ('Nightingale of Chisht'), conferred to him by the Sufis of Hyderabad and by Pir Zamin Nizami (d. 1993), respectively.⁵⁸⁹

During the fieldwork of Qureshi, Meraj Ahmad was the qawwal who was invited to perform in the elite assemblies of the Nizamuddin shrine. However, he has not been able to pass his tremendous musical and poetic heritage to his sons and grandsons. As a consequence, they lack the musical sophistication and poetic sensitivity of their father. The sad fact is that the audiences are no longer keen to listen to them, but since he is attached to the shrine, his access to the *samā'* assemblies cannot be denied. However, at present, Meraj's group is often allowed to sing only the ritually prescribed items, after which they have to give way to other qawwals. The preferences of the hereditary custodians of the shrine became evident during a *samā'* assembly held at the *urs* of Nizām al-Dīn in March 2013, when they openly threatened to invite outside qawwals to perform instead of the local ones, if they would not improve their singing.

In the *samā'* assemblies that do not feature the ritual items and where the patrons have no obligation to invite the local qawwals, there is a tendency to rely on qawwali groups that gather to Delhi from outside the city during the *urs*. Notwithstanding the derogatory remarks of Shakeel Hossain, Iftekhar Ahmed is today among the most sought-after qawwals in Nizamuddin. Despite the contempt, he has persisted with his career and kept refining his musical and poetic skills. A wide repertoire and the ability to combine the words of poetry with music so as to bring out their full effect are his trademarks. He is also one of the few qawwals who keeps introducing new, less familiar poems into his performances even when he knows that the listeners would be entirely contented to hear a handful of his signature numbers again and again.

The qawwals are popularly called Sufi musicians, but their role in the social hierarchy of South Asian Sufism is far removed from the romanticized image of roving minstrels who preach a liberating message of Islam to the masses.⁵⁹⁰ Instead, the qawwals are service professionals, whose duty is to provide music in the Sufi shrines. They form an endogamous professional group whose existence is a result of the profes-

589 Devos, "Peshlafz", 29–31.

590 For such portrayal of Sufi musicians, see, e.g. Abbas 2002.

sionalization of *samāʿ* in South Asia.⁵⁹¹ In other Sufi traditions where *samāʿ* is practised, the Sufi sheikhs may get involved in the production of music together with their disciples. On the one hand, this applies to the simple *ḥaḍrah* of North Africa, where musically talented, but generally non-professional members of a Sufi brotherhood take care of the musical aspects of the occasion, and, on the other, to the highly refined *sema* of the Turkish Mevlevi that involves Ottoman art music and demanding whirling dance.⁵⁹²

In South Asia, the Sufi sheikhs and the hereditary guardians of the shrines may recite poetry or the Koran, but they rarely sing. When they practice music, they tend to take up classical music instead of qawwali. For example, the Hyderabad Sufi sheikh, religious scholar and poet ‘Abd al-Qadīr Ṣiddīqī Ḥasrat learnt music as one of the sciences, not as a performing art.⁵⁹³ His biographer Anvar al-Dīn Ṣiddīqī Anvar explains that owing to his religious status and family background, ‘he could not frequent the alleys and marketplaces or houses of those who were experts of the art’ (*māhirān-i fann ke gharoṅ yā kūcah o bāzār ke cakkar to nah kar sakte the*) in order to perfect his musical practice.⁵⁹⁴ Here, the author refers to the fact that many musical professionals were courtesans or musicians associated with them. A respected Sufi master simply could not mingle with them. For this reason, Ḥasrat devised a distinctively modern way of learning music: he purchased the available recordings and together with the theoretical information gained by reading musicological treatises, he mastered the art. Occasionally, he had a chance to hear longer performances⁵⁹⁵ in the houses of his disciples who belonged to the local nobility and had means to organize musical soirees in their homes.⁵⁹⁶

Although Ḥasrat was not a performer, he listed a qawwal named Mohammed Ghaus among his disciples and he gave him musical training.⁵⁹⁷ According to Claire Devos, Meraj Ahmed was another qawwal who was initiated by him to the Qadiri brotherhood.⁵⁹⁸ In addition, Ḥasrat taught one of his sons and one disciple of his to sing poetry he had composed in different ‘ragas and raginis’.⁵⁹⁹ They used to sing to

591 On which, see Qureshi 1993 and 2006: 97.

592 On the music of the Mevlevi, see During 1999: 277–288; Ambrose, Feuillebois & Zarcone 2006, 123–172; and Ambrose 2014: 13–40. An article by Jean During includes an interesting comparison of Mevlevi music and qawwali. It is, however, misleading in its juxtaposition of a very formal performance occasion of the former with an informal qawwali session.

593 This resembles Dard’s approach to music discussed above.

594 Anvar, *‘Abd Allāh*, 526.

595 During Ḥasrat’s lifetime, the gramophone records dominated Indian music industry. The combined length of the two sides was less than ten minutes, which effectively inhibited recording performances that in live occasions could continue for one hour or longer.

596 Anvar, *‘Abd Allāh*, 534.

597 Anvar, *‘Abd Allāh*, 529.

598 Devos, “Peshlafz”, 31.

599 For a list of Ḥasrat’s poems associated with particular ragas and raginis, see Anvar, *‘Abd Allāh*, 531–532. The ragas and raginis are also recorded in *Kulliyāt-i Ḥasrat* (2002).

him and make him become absorbed in the world of unselfconsciousness (*be-kḥyudī*). However, this seems to have been a strictly private practice and did not occur in public assemblies.⁶⁰⁰

In the public or semi-public sphere of *samāʿ* assemblies, the Sufis do not take part in singing even if they had the ability to do so and the work is delegated to the qawwals. In the Sufi hierarchy, the qawwals' status is lower than that of the Sufis even though they are indispensable for arranging a *samāʿ* assembly. Their inferior role is made explicit in the organization of a *samāʿ* assembly. Instead of the qawwals, it is the *mīr-i mahfil* ('the head of the assembly') who is in control of the occasion. The *mīr-i mahfil* is either the seniormost member of the audience or a Sufi functionary, whose status as the head of the shrine entitles him to the position. He has the prime seat, either opposite to the qawwals or on their right side, if a tomb occupies the former location. He (or extremely rarely, she) is the centre of the occasion, especially when the audience consists of his disciples who pay close attention to his every action. When the listeners want to reward the qawwals for performing in a manner that has touched them on some level, they give the *nazrānah* (or *nazr*; 'offering, gift') to the *mīr-i mahfil*, who then gives it to the qawwals. The *mīr-i mahfil*'s tasks include also supervising the *adab* of the listeners, and on the more subtle level, his concentration is believed to affect the entire occasion. He decides who is allowed to sing, and he has the right to instruct the qawwals on what they should sing. The actual intervention in the qawwals' decisions varies from one *mīr-i mahfil* to another.

During a formal *samāʿ* assembly, the qawwals are required to avoid comporting themselves in any conspicuous manner in order to avoid attracting the attention of the listeners. Although their voice pervades the space where *samāʿ* takes place, they should otherwise be as unobtrusive as possible. They should control their movements and, for instance, refrain from gesticulating animatedly. Qawwals who perform in both Sufi shrines and on concert stages assume different codes of behaviour for different occasions. Fareed Ayaz, for example, has the mannerism of appreciating the poetry by pausing in the middle of singing a verse and intoning phrases like *vāh vāh* ('Bravo!') or *kyā bāt* ('What a thing!') when performing on stage and in a studio. He also frequently sings the end of a verse in a shrieking, high-pitched voice.⁶⁰¹ Such behaviour would be quickly censored in a *samāʿ* assembly. When he sung at the Nizamuddin shrine on 3 March 2013, immediately after the completion of the 'urs festivities, he took care to suppress all such gimmicks.

Even if a qawal is prevented from presenting himself as an artist in a *samāʿ* assembly, the following chapters will show that he still has means to express his musical

600 Anvar, *ʿAbd Allāh*, 527.

601 His appearances in Coke Studio at MTV Pakistan are excellent examples of this. See, e.g. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BOPPSoGhWo> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYFwzGZcidk>.

skills and poetic innovations in a manner that he is actually lauded by the *mīr-i maḥfil* instead of being censored.

5.2 The musical idiom

Although the qawwals in Delhi have been involved in what is at present considered classical music,⁶⁰² the status of qawwali remains contested. Even if some qawwals consciously classicize their music, they are mostly frowned upon by classical singers, who perceive themselves as representatives of a higher artistic tradition. In her seminal study of qawwali, Qureshi classifies qawwali as one of the 'light classical' genres along with *ghazal* and *ṭhumrī*.⁶⁰³ The traits that Qureshi characterizes as typical to 'light classical' genres include the association with urban centres and professional music making that involves elements from art music, but that is also open to regional and folk influences. However, the main criterion concerns the mutual relationship of pure music and words. The 'heavier' classical genres, such as *khayāl* and *dhrupād*, emphasize pure music while the verbal delivery may or may not be present. Even when it is present, the clear enunciation of the words is not of primary importance and they often get muddled as they are used as material for expressing the nature of the raga. In the 'light classical' genres, primacy is given to words. However, these genres are distinct from recitation (*parhnā*) where no musical accompaniment is employed and the structure of the text fully defines the performance idiom. Recitation of poems in praise of the Prophet Muhammad (*na'tkhyānī*) and the commemoration of the events of Karbala (*marṣiyakhyānī*) fall into this category.⁶⁰⁴ Since a detailed musicological analysis of qawwali is found in the works of Qureshi, I will briefly discuss only those musical aspects that bear immediate relevance to constructing the effect of a poetic text.⁶⁰⁵

According to Qureshi, primacy of text is a Muslim socio-cultural norm, which has contributed to the elevation of poetry into an art characterized by high formal and aesthetic standards.⁶⁰⁶ In music, this has led to the development of refined musical forms that enable an effective delivery of poetic message to the audience. Qawwali is one

602 The concept of classical music has taken shape since the latter half of the nineteenth century. In Hindi, the classical music is known as *shāstrīya saṅgīt* ('shastric music') whereas in Urdu, the English loanword *klaissikal* is in common use. For the development of the concept of classical, see, e.g. Schofield 2010. For the puritanical concerns of Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (d. 1936) and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (d. 1931), the moving spirits behind its development, see, e.g. Bakhle 2005 and Trasoff 2010.

603 Qureshi 2006: 47. For an excellent discussion on the problems of the term 'light classical' and 'semi-classical' in the case of *ṭhumrī*, see du Perron 2007: 98–109.

604 Qureshi 1990: 458 and Qureshi 2006: 46–47.

605 For a detailed analysis of the musical features like pitch and duration in light classical music in general and in qawwali in particular, see Qureshi 1990: esp. 468–473 and Qureshi 2006: esp. 46–75, respectively.

606 Qureshi 1990: 469.

such form and its musical idiom has been greatly affected by the song texts. Music is an essential sonic component of qawwali, but it is never independent of the text.

The level of acquaintance with the theory of music varies greatly among the qawwals. This is also one of the main factors that makes qawwali so heterogeneous and complicates locating it in the field of Hindustani music. Theoretical knowledge is essential for learning and performing the 'heavier' genres of Hindustani music that can be easily characterized as classical in the present-day context. In the case of the qawwals, Qureshi notes, the theoretical musical knowledge is not necessarily highly nuanced. Instead, it has been simplified into a working knowledge that is needed to conceptualize the music in order to teach it.⁶⁰⁷ However, the musical knowledge and presenting pure music is always subordinate to the text and this differentiates qawwali, even in its classicized manifestations, from *dhrupād* and *khayāl*. In qawwali, the primacy of the text occasionally changes the theoretical vocabulary, as well. For example, the qawwals differentiate between the different tune sections by calling them *miṣra^ʿ-i avval* ('first line') and *miṣra^ʿ-i s̄ānī* ('second line') instead of *antarā* and *asthāyī* in accordance with corresponding textual sections.

The text also determines the approach to the musical grammar of raga and tala. The selection of the musical metre, tala, is determined by the poetic metre. The poetic metres used in qawwali song texts are based on syllabic quality: long and short syllables are grouped into prosodic feet. A fixed sequence of different prosodic feet or repetitions of the same foot form the poetic metre. In qawwali, the musical metre should ideally represent and bring out the rhythm inherent in the poetic metre. In order to achieve this, long and short beats of the tala are made to correspond to the syllabic length. Occasionally, a long syllable can be represented in the musical metre by stress instead of duration whereas a short syllable can connect with an unstressed long beat.⁶⁰⁸ The brevity of many poetic metres prevalent in qawwali texts has led to the prominence of the *dādrā* of six beats, *pashto* of seven beats and *kaharvā* of eight beats. The last-mentioned is tellingly known as *qavvālī tāl*, the qawwali rhythm. The most common tala of classical music, *tīntāl* of sixteen beats, is conspicuously absent from qawwali, since it is simply too long for most poetical metres.⁶⁰⁹ The most important beat of a tala, the *sam*, falls in qawwali to some key word. In the case of ghazals, this is usually the *radīf*.

On the whole, the textual orientation leads to downplaying purely musical features. Thus, the prelude known as *naghmah* ('melody') is the only purely instrumental section in qawwali music. Vocal improvisations are employed sparingly, and the bulk of a qawwali performance consists of singing the text by a group of male performers. One of the qawwals leads the group; he decides what to sing and directs the performance. He also keeps a close eye on the *mīr-i mahfil* in order to take the smallest clues

607 Qureshi 2006: 47

608 Qureshi 1990: 470.

609 Qureshi 1983: 126–127.

into consideration when performing. The rest of the qawwals form a choir whose vocal support enables the continuous verbal delivery during numbers that can continue for more than one hour. The traditional voice ideal in qawwali is strong and full-chested. It is in stark contrast with crooning, which has gained prominence since the advent of mechanic sound reproduction. The group enforcement also serves to increase the volume which must have been essential in the large gatherings that preceded the invention of microphones.

At present, the melodic accompaniment is provided by one or two portable harmoniums played by the group leader and another leading vocalist. The other instruments in the austere soundscape are the traditional barrel drum, dholak, and a later addition, tabla. In qawwali, the tabla is played like the dholak, using the flat hand technique (*thāp se*) instead of the finger technique (*cutkī se*) favoured in the classical music.⁶¹⁰ The syncopated clapping by the rest of the group accentuates the rhythmic accompaniment. In her works, Qureshi has emphasized the significance of the strongly accentuated rhythmic patterns for inducing ecstatic arousal in the listeners.⁶¹¹

A basic unit of a qawwali performance is an item (*cīz*). An item comprises both the textual unit (the poem) and the musical unit (the tune). Since most song texts in qawwali consist of verses that are identical in structure, the same tune is employed in singing the respective verses.⁶¹² The qawwals hold that some of the tunes they sing are raga-based old compositions (*qadīmī tarz*) that have been passed, unchanged, from generation to generation since the days of Amīr Khusrau.⁶¹³ Such statements are perhaps an attempt to uplift the status of qawwali among the genres of Hindustani music, but they also constitute a powerful means to associate the song texts with their alleged legendary writing context. Qureshi, for instance notes that most of the ghazals of Amīr Khusrau and nearly all of his Hindavi poems have tunes that characterize and identify them to the audiences as much as their textual contents.⁶¹⁴ Conflating such associations with the legendary material, as discussed above, forms a powerful means to link texts written by later-day poets with Amīr Khusrau.

5.3 Different types of qawwali performances

At present, a *samāʿ* assembly organized in a *khānqāh* or a *dargāh* remains the primary context for a qawwali performance. In this respect, qawwali is a rare example in the broader field of Hindustani music of a genre that is still associated with its pre-modern performance context. This is a result of the persistence of the traditional patterns of patronage. The ending of an era of courtly patronage and the closing of the salons of

610 Qureshi 2006: 60.

611 See, e.g. Qureshi 1990: 484 and 2006: 60.

612 Qureshi 2006: 66.

613 Hossain 2012: 32.

614 Qureshi 1993b: 117.

highly educated courtesan entertainers significantly altered the performances of *dhrupād*, *khayāl*, *ṭhumrī* and *ghazal* during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These genres have been relocated from the intimate gatherings of connoisseurs to public concert stages, while the state and the middle class have assumed the role of the patron. Recordings have become an essential means to reach audiences. Unavoidably, the newly defined contexts have significantly affected these musical genres.⁶¹⁵

The often close relationships of the qawwals with royal courts have been noted above. Yet, significantly, the qawwals seem to have never fully depended on them. The courts have offered one more venue for performances and an additional source of income. When they ceased to exist, the qawwals ventured to concert stages and started making recordings like other musicians. However, in comparison to the live performances in the *khānqāhs* and *dargāhs*, the concerts and recordings have had only secondary importance to many qawwals.

Performances in khānqāhs and dargāhs

As a background for the case studies of *samāʿ* assemblies and the qawwals' roles in them, it is useful to discuss the different types of performances that take place in Sufi institutions. Based on my observations, most of the qawwali performances in *khānqāhs* and *dargāhs* belong to one of the following four categories: 1. spontaneous musical assemblies; 2. informal qawwali sessions in front of the shrine; 3. formal assemblies organized in regular intervals and 4. formal assemblies organized during the *ʿurs* festivities.

The first category is the rarest at present. In the light of the accounts found in *Siyar al-auliyaʿ*, a majority of Niẓām al-Dīn's *samāʿ* assemblies appear to have been spontaneous in a sense that they were organized when the Sufi master felt inclined to engage in the practice. To facilitate this, at least two qawwals stayed close to him. In the eighteenth-century sources, such occasions have given way to *samāʿ* assemblies belonging to categories three and four, and at present, spontaneous *samāʿ* is almost unheard of. This is at least partly a result of the increased institutionalization of Sufism. Organizing a *samāʿ* assembly has become a major undertaking and the small, informal gatherings have given way to more ceremonial assemblies. It is also worth bearing in mind that small-scale occasions are rarely lucrative to the qawwals due the small number of listeners who contribute towards their remuneration.

The second category covers the informal singing that usually takes place in front of the tomb of a saint. Such occasions are typical to larger and grander, urban shrines to which qawwals are attached. While the resident qawwals may sing in the shrine courtyard at any time of the day, qawwali is especially elaborate on Thursday evenings when the number of pilgrims peaks. Rather than *samāʿ* assemblies, these occasions

615 On *ṭhumrī*, see du Perron 2002 and 2007. On *ghazal*, see Manuel 1988–1989 and Qureshi 1993: 483–491.

can be aptly characterized as jam sessions. The shrine authorities' monitoring is minimal and the qawwals are given relatively free hands to shape their performances so as to appeal to their patrons. They can also display their musical virtuosity freely. On Thursday evenings, individuals who do not have a formal standing in the Sufi hierarchy – traders, civil servants and performing artists, for instance – are able to assume the role of a patron. Even if the qawwals have to stick to a more popular repertoire in order to appeal to them, their financial support makes the occasions worthwhile.

Thursday night qawwali is often an important element in the cultural life of the city. In Hyderabad, for example, the Yousufain Dargah situated in the busy Nampally area close to the railway station hosts a qawwali session every Thursday night.⁶¹⁶ It begins after the night prayer (*'ishā'*), around nine in the evening and continues until two in the morning. The less established qawwals perform in the beginning and the night culminates with the eagerly awaited appearance of the Warsi Brothers (the grandsons of Aziz Ahmed Khan Warsi) at midnight. The qawwali sessions at the Yousufain Dargah are an important part of the Hyderabad Muslim culture. The middle class professionals dominate the audience, and they assume an active part in the assemblies. They patronize the qawwals generously and attempt to affect their choice of items. They keep making suggestions on suitable combinations of verses and, every now and then, a poetically talented listener composes impromptu lines and gives them to the qawwals to sing, scribbled on a piece of paper. The area in front of the tomb where the qawwals perform is always brightly lit. It offers them a perfect setting to establish a close rapport with the audience, whose interference with the performance they seem not to mind. At Yousufain Dargah, Thursday qawwali resembles a musical concert and the performances rarely instigate mystical states in the listeners.

The third category consists of assemblies that are organized in *dargāhs* or *khānqāhs* on a regular, often monthly basis. The attendance is frequently limited to the *sajjādanashīn* and his disciples. These occasions have a more sombre flavour than the Thursday evening qawwali sessions. In Delhi, *samā'* assemblies belonging to this category are rare, but in Hyderabad they are a key element in the devotional life of various Sufi institutions. A monthly *samā'* takes place, for example, in the *khānqāh* of Shāh Khāmosh (d. 1871).⁶¹⁷ The impressive and well-maintained tomb of this influential Chishti-Sabiri sheikh is situated in Nampally, behind the Yousufain Dargah, but the monthly *samā'* assemblies take place in the *khānqāh*, the location of which, in the heart of the old city behind the *qiblah* recess of the Mecca Mosque, reveals the standing the sheikh was accorded in nineteenth-century Hyderabad. The monthly gathering is known as *terahvīn sharīf* ('The Blessed Thirteenth'), because it takes place on the thirteenth day of each lunar month, marking the passing away of the eponymous 'Alā' al-Dī Ṣābir. The gatherings begin with recitation of the Koran around ten thirty in the

616 For a discussion on qawwali at the Yousufain Dargah, see Hassett 1995.

617 For an early scholarly account on a *samā'* assembly organized at the *khānqāh* of Shāh Khāmosh, see Sadler 1963.

morning. This is followed by a short prayer for the spirit of the saint (*fātiḥah*) and the distribution of bread and a cup of peach-coloured, milk-based hot drink. After the listeners have gulped down their drinks, the qawwals start.

The *samāʿ* is elaborate. Each time I have attended the gathering, altogether ten groups have performed, each singing two items. In most of the monthly gatherings organized in the city, the number of performing groups is one or two. If the qawwals sing altogether twenty items, the occasion is bound to stretch to the late afternoon and the *sajjādanashīn* habitually suspends the programme for the time of the midday prayer (*ẓuhr*). When the qawwals start singing the ritual items *Rang* and *Qaul* in the end of the occasion, sweets and rosewater are placed in the middle of the room and frankincense (*lobān*) is burnt so that a thick aromatic smoke fills the entire space. Another *fātiḥah* closes the assembly. Blessed sugar candies are distributed to the participants and rosewater is sprinkled on them. The audience consists mainly of family members, disciples in the *silsila* and members of the city's educated Muslim elite. Their number rarely exceeds fifty. The qawwals' selection of song texts invariably features poems by Shāh *Khāmosh* as well as Persian and Hindavi classics of the core qawwali repertoire. In the *khānqāh* of Shāh *Khāmosh*, *samāʿ* is the main component of the occasion, whereas in the monthly gatherings of other *silsilahs*, it is frequently combined with communal *zīkr* and *langar*.

The fourth category covers the *samāʿ* assemblies that are organized during the *ʿurs* festivities in various South Asian shrines – the bigger the shrine, the grander the occasion. Especially a musical assembly presided over by the *sajjādanashīn* of a major shrine can be an impressive occasion where all the Sufi regalia that reminds an observer about royal courts is on prominent display. This is especially true in Ajmer, where the festive *samāʿ* assemblies take place in a special *samāʿkhānah* ('house for listening to music') constructed by Bashīr al-Daulah Āsmānjāh Bahādur, a prime minister of Hyderabad from 1887 to 1894. The *samāʿkhānah* is open during the *ʿurs* festivities of Muʿīn al-Dīn and his master, ʿUṣmān Hārvanī. The diwan, the hereditary head of the shrine, whose post was established by the Mughal emperor Akbar, heads the assembly. Like an imperial official, he sits opposite the qawwals on silken cushions under a canopy supported by silver poles. The rest of the listeners take their seats in rows on both of his sides. The hereditary custodians of the shrine take up the centre of the room, and two attendants dressed in shervanis and orange turbans and armed with silver clubs supervise the order and deliver the *nazrānah* given to the diwan to the qawwals. The fenced area in the middle of the *samāʿkhānah* accommodates a few hundred listeners, but the peristyle surrounding it can sit a couple of hundred more. All these areas are usually fully packed by the audience who wants to see the Sufi dignitaries and the celebrated qawwals.

Although qawwali music is exclusively dominated by men, the practice of *samāʿ* is usually open to women as well. However, their presence in *samāʿ* assemblies is always

inconspicuous and sometimes they may remain fully invisible. At present, Qureshi's observation of qawwali and *samā'* as a strictly male phenomena does not apply unconditionally.⁶¹⁸ In her anthropological study of a female Sufi healer in Hyderabad, Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger offers an invaluable glimpse to the female participation in *samā'*. The musical assembly she describes took place in the informal atmosphere of the healer's and her husband's home. Even though the men occupied the public space, the women actively participated in the occasion from behind a curtain that was set to divide the gendered space. Flueckiger suggests that the homely setting, removed from the stricter norms followed in Sufi shrines, might have facilitated the active female participation.⁶¹⁹ However, it should be kept in mind that at present, most *samā'* assemblies organized in shrines accommodate female listeners and a special area is often reserved for them. Sometimes, this simply means sitting apart from the men. In a crowded shrine compound, this has little more than symbolic value. Sometimes a reed curtain (*cilman*) is used to physically divide the space. It hampers the vision to the space behind, but allows the women to see what happens on the other side. The reed curtain is a common feature in the Sufi shrines of the Deccan. Interestingly, Flueckiger's informants emphasized the advantages of the curtain for the female listeners; they could express their experiences through movement more freely when they were unobserved by the men.⁶²⁰

It is difficult to conclusively determine whether the differences between the observations of Qureshi and Flueckiger depend on the changes that have taken place during the three decades that separate their respective fieldwork periods or on the divergent contexts where they were conducting their research projects. While Flueckiger had access to the female space, Qureshi worked mainly with the qawwals in the male space. Based on my own observations, I can say that it is sometimes extremely difficult to detect the female presence from the male space even when it is there. For example, in the Nizamuddin shrine, a *samā'* assembly takes place in a room called Taq-i Buzurg ('The Great Vault'). The place is believed to be especially propitious for the practice of *samā'*. Aside from a couple of European ladies conducting research in the shrine, no women are to be seen during the occasion. However, practicing Sufi women and the family members of the *mīr-i mahfil*, Pir Ahmed Nizami, sit in the adjacent room to which a connecting door is left ajar. They cannot be seen, neither do they see the performers or other listeners. However, the sound is in that room as clear as inside Taq-i Buzurg itself. Occasionally, *nazrānah* handed over through the door indicates their presence. Thus, the women generally have a possibility, if they so wish, to participate in *samā'*. However, they do not have the possibility of getting involved in the display of social status brought by the patronage or open display of mystical states.

618 Qureshi 2006: xv.

619 Flueckiger 2006: 218–221.

620 Flueckiger 2006: 219.

The qawwals on concert stages

While the qawwals' performances outside the *khānqāhs* and *dargāhs* have been noted above, and scholars like Peter Manuel and Regula Burckhardt Qureshi have explored the impact of mass media on the musical idiom and lyrical content of the genre,⁶²¹ their increased spiritual role has not been critically examined. There is a gap between the historical studies and Qureshi's ethnomusicological findings emphasizing the qawwals' role as professional musicians, on the one hand, and the more recent work describing them with the ubiquitous term "Sufi singer," on the other. Although this work is essentially concerned with the practice of *samā'*, trying to answer what has happened with respect to the qawwals' role over the past three decades will contribute to understanding their position vis-à-vis the *mūr-i mahfil* in the following chapters.

At present, the broader audience is likely to be acquainted with qawwali through some other context than *samā'*. This is due to the changes that have shaped both the Indian music scene and patterns of patronage during the past two centuries. Towards the turn of the twentieth century, when the patronage of traditional Muslim religious, land-owning and aristocratic elites was waning, some qawwals started to search for alternative stages of performance. Some of them ventured to perform in the Parsi theatre and, after the advent of sound cinema, in films. Yet others seized opportunities introduced by commercial recording industry. However, it was only in the 1960s when long-playing technology replaced the gramophone records and facilitated longer and more elaborate performances that qawwali acquired an established place on concert stages. This development was accompanied with the qawwal's characterization as "Sufi singers."

Qureshi calls the new musical trend "serious popular religious qawwali." It is serious because it emphasizes musical characteristics intimately linked with classical Hindustani music. Simultaneously, it is popular, like earlier recorded qawwali, because it is disseminated through mass media and intended to be consumed by a broad audience. It is also religious because its lyrical content emphasizes unambiguously religious themes.⁶²² Qureshi links the genesis of this trend with the Pakistani qawwals Ghulam Farid Sabri (d. 1994), his brother Maqbool Ahmed Sabri (d. 2011) and their accompanists, collectively known as the Sabri Brothers.⁶²³ The long-playing technology allowed them to elaborate their performances with purely musical features of Hindustani classical music that were uncharacteristic to both the earlier recorded qawwali and the qawwali sung during *samā'* assemblies. This development was carried furthest by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (d. 1997), who brought qawwali into the consciousness of the world music audiences in the mid-80s.⁶²⁴ His best-known world

621 See Manuel 2001, 123–127; and Qureshi 1992, 1995 and 1999.

622 Qureshi 1992: 117–118. On lyrical content of popular qawwali, see also Viitamäki 2011 and 2014.

623 Qureshi 1992: 118.

624 For an excellent introduction to the career of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, see Baud 2008. The French original has been recently translated into Urdu. See Baud 2014.

music recordings are probably the two fusion albums, *Musst Musst* (1990) and *Night Song* (1996), produced in collaboration with the Canadian musician Michael Brooke. In contrast to these albums, his concerts often featured more traditional items. However, instead of emphasizing the textual content, Nusrat gave a prominent role to musical features. He prefaced his songs with extensive *naghmahs* and sang extended vocal improvisations as slowly unfolding melodic introductions (*alāp*) to the salient text. In between the verses of poetry, he inserted improvised passages that used either phrases from the text (*bol banā'o* or *bol tān*), names of the notes (*sargam*) or the vowel *-ā* (*ākār tān*) as vehicles for melodic improvisations. As will become clear below, such passages are not alien to *samā'* assemblies, but they are kept short in order to avoid a rupture in the delivery of the textual message. In Nusrat's performances, the improvisations often run up to several minutes and they bear a striking resemblance to the *khayāl* genre. Some of his albums also record the ragas of the songs in a manner typical to classical music.⁶²⁵ Like other representatives of the "serious popular religious qawwali," Nusrat favoured a somewhat austere soundscape during his concerts when the accompaniment was dominated by the traditional harmonium, dholak and tabla. Whereas, the additional synthesizer, guitar, mandolin, flute or tambourine can more often be heard in his recordings.

In the wake of the Sabri Brothers' and Nusrat's classicization of qawwali, a few members of the *qavvāl baccon̄ kā gharānā* have profiled themselves as representatives of authentic traditional qawwali in Pakistan. Most prominent among them are Najmuddin and Saifuddin, the sons of Bahauddin Khan, and Fareed Ayaz. They often perform in festivals celebrating the classical arts in Pakistan. Fareed Ayaz's performances during the All Pakistan Music Conference organized in Karachi in 2007 are replete with the qawwal's comments wherein he explains the musical features of his performance or the import of the song text.⁶²⁶

In addition to providing musical information to the listeners when performing on concert stages, the qawwals have begun to address issues that have conventionally belonged to the domain of the *mīr-i mahfil*. While their role as religious functionaries is suppressed during *samā'*, in concerts they are able to assume the latter's function and to cultivate an image of themselves as Sufi mystics. In an interview with Nusrat conducted some months before his untimely death in August 1997 by Dimitri Erlich for *Shambhala Sun*, a magazine focused on Buddhism, the superstar qawwal humbly states that he is not a Sufi. He says he has spent much time with the Sufis since his childhood and deeply studied them. On Sufi music he says: "Sufi music, especially, is a kind of prayer. If you sing in this manner, you will become closer to God, very close. That's basically what I do."⁶²⁷

625 See, e.g. Nusrat: *Traditional Sufi Qawwalis* I–IV.

626 See Fareed Ayaz: *The All Pakistan Music Conference, Karachi: Annual Festival, March 2007*.

627 *Shambhala Sun*, http://www.shambhalasun.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2033, accessed 15 January 2014.

When asked about his experiences when singing, he evokes connotations that go far beyond mere mastery of music and poetic repertoire and draws parallels between singing and meditation. He emphasizes the element of *taṣavvur* ('visualization') and the transformative aspect of his music. It is significant that singing is also a spiritual experience to the qawwal, not only to the listeners:

“When I sing traditional spiritual songs, I always concentrate on who it is that I’m singing about. For instance, if I am inspired by the holy prophet, I concentrate on the prophet. In my mind, there are many things, but when I sing, I sing for God, and for holy prophets, for Sufi saints. When I sing, their personalities are in my mind. I feel like I am in front of them. I feel their personalities, and I pray. I feel like I am in another world when I sing. I am not in the material world while I am singing these traditional holy messages. I’m totally in another world. I am withdrawn from my materialistic senses; I am totally in my spiritual senses. And I am intoxicated by the holy prophet, God, and other Sufi saints.”⁶²⁸

The power of Nusrat’s qawwali is globally acknowledged, yet there are slight local differences in conceptualizing his role as a singer. In South Asia, Nusrat is popularly known as the *Shahanshāh-i Qavvālī*, ‘The Emperor of Qawwali’, due to his musical ingenuity and phenomenal success. However, he is not primarily remembered as a religious specialist. In the world music scene, the volcanic force of his singing and his emphasis on the spiritual aspects of his music has led to associating Nusrat with prophetic qualities. Although his 1994 album, *The Last Prophet*, published by Real World, derives its title from the opening song dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad, the association is probably lost to the broader audience in the USA and Europe who would connect the title with the singer. Another album published by M.I.L. Multimedia in 1996, *The Prophet Speaks*, is a more overt reference to his role as a religious figure since there are no apparent references to the Prophet in the three romantic ghazals included in the release. His French biography by Pierre-Alain Baud is suggestively titled *Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan: Le messager du qawwali*. It is telling that when the work was translated into Urdu, the word messenger was rendered as *payāmrāsān*, a neologism that would not be understood as a reference to prophethood. The spiritual image cultivated by the qawwals themselves as well as by the producers and their fans⁶²⁹ seems to have resonated more strongly with audiences outside South Asia, helping to cement the position of qawwali as one of the spiritual trance music genres in the world music scene.

Even though the religious role of qawwals remains toned down in South Asia, the stardom enjoyed by certain qawwals can affect the organization of *samā’* assemblies. During formal *samā’*, the listeners and performers usually occupy the same space and sit on the same level. Yet, in his discussion of qawwali in the shrine of Bābā Farīd,

628 *Shambhala Sun*, accessed 15 January 2014.

629 For an encomium of the “dervish-qawwal” Mehmood Sabri of the Sabri Brothers written by his Australian promotor and Sufi practitioner, Amatullah Armstrong Chishti, see Chishti 2006.

Qamar-ul Huda describes how the singers and the *sajjādanashīn* are seated on a stage with the guests of honour, while the common people sit on the ground. The regular activities, such as offering *nazrānah* – notably to both the *mīr-i mahfil* and the performers – take place on the stage, whereas the common people remain as spectators.⁶³⁰ Thus, a part of the authority that usually belongs to the *mīr-i mahfil* has been transferred to the qawwals.

Seating the qawwals and the key listeners on the same stage is indicative of the rise of the qawwals' social standing that has resulted from being able to exploit the possibilities offered by the music industry. Simultaneously, such settings cast qawwali and the key listeners' response to it as a staged show. Only a small circle of listeners participates in the actual *samā'* assembly, while the rest – often the majority – remain as spectators. This effectively distances the listeners from qawwali and the experiences it is supposed to entice in them. In such settings the potential for spiritual experiences rising from the interaction between the performers and the listeners is bound to give way to a readily packaged product that is meant to be viewed and consumed rather than transform the listeners.

Although such approach differs from the traditional manner of using music as a tool of Sufi practice, it does not necessarily mean that the listeners would not nurture spiritual aspirations. Rather, the phenomenon is probably best understood as part of the global trend, where, in Nile Green's words, "the old Sufi establishment only survives in a much-diminished form."⁶³¹ In the case of India and Pakistan, the spiritual ideals and cultural expressions of Sufism continue to attract the broader public, who at the same time seem reluctant to acknowledge the religious authority of hereditary sheikhs and *sajjādanashīns*. In these circumstances, qawwals have started to portray themselves as both artists and Sufis – an undertaking in which they have been aided by recording technology and the commercial market. The following chapter will discuss popular interest in Sufism and the qawwals' role in feeding it at the Nizamuddin shrine in Delhi.

630 Huda 2007: 683–684.

631 Green 2012: 228.

PART III: POETRY IN SAMĀ'

6 OBSERVING POETRY IN SAMĀ'

6.1 The Nizamuddin shrine and its qawwali scene

A major shrine is a convenient starting point for the field observation of *samā'*. In such shrines, music is performed in various contexts ranging from fulfilling ritual requirements and serving the purposes of meditative practice, to entertaining broad audiences. Furthermore, such shrines attract qawwals from all over India and Pakistan and thus offer an opportunity to observe a wide range of performance styles. The Nizamuddin shrine located in Delhi is one such shrine.

I first came in contact with Indian Sufi shrines during language training in Delhi during the academic year 2004–2005. Since then, I have had the chance to attend and observe several *samā'* assemblies in Delhi, Ajmer, Jaipur and Hyderabad. However, Nizamuddin is the only shrine I have been able to visit on a regular basis during the past ten years. I have become familiar with the people visiting and tending the shrine, and I have observed how the popular Sufi culture boom has influenced it in recent years. For this reason, it was natural to concentrate on Nizamuddin instead of some other, less studied shrine. However, in order to highlight the fact that observations about the musical assemblies in this shrine are not necessarily representative of the situation in other shrines, I will also discuss one *samā'* assembly that was organized in Hyderabad, outside the sphere of influence of the Nizamuddin shrine and the Chishti Nizami brotherhood.

As a European researcher with background knowledge of Sufism and Islam, I have been able to enter into the religious life of the shrine relatively easily. My ability to speak Urdu and working knowledge of Persian and Arabic, as well as the ability to discuss poetry, have also facilitated communication with religious experts and performers. The audio recording of performances and taking of notes has been barely noticeable within an environment that is characterized by the extensive use of smart phone cameras. And, as a male, I have been able to move in the public space of the shrine freely, whereas I know very little about the religious practices of women.

Sufi shrines (*dargāh*, lit. 'court') are generally built around the tombs of Sufi saints and may in addition include several other buildings such as a mosque, madrasa, library, accommodation for pilgrims and a soup kitchen (*langar*).⁶³² The development of

632 For a general discussion on Indian Sufi shrines, see, e.g., Currim & Michell 2004 and Troll 2004.

an individual shrine depends on the popularity of the saint interred there, as well as on the patronage the shrine has enjoyed. Consequently, the shrines situated in South Asia vary considerably in size and fame.⁶³³ The few major ones that attract pilgrims from all over South Asia are impressive architectural complexes, whereas the myriads of the smaller ones may be very modest in appearance and have only local fame. Richard Eaton and Carl W. Ernst have emphasized the importance of Sufi shrines in the process of creating Muslim states in medieval India. According to them, the rulers patronized Sufi shrines and thus contributed to the evolution of a sacred Islamic geography that would make India an Islamic land and a region of peace where there would be no need of constant confrontation with the Hindu majority of the population.⁶³⁴ The general openness of the Sufis to the local culture and their interaction with different religious communities no doubt made this project plausible. In present-day India, the sacred network of Sufi shrines exists in an officially secular state, where Muslims have gradually been marginalized in politics, education and cultural life. Nevertheless, the shrines anchor Islam to India as well as serve as religious spaces where representatives of different communities may come into interaction with each other.

The intermingling of religious communities and the consequently complex expressions of religious culture that characterize the Sufi shrines have also made attending them one of the most hotly debated practices in Islam. This debate gained momentum during the latter half of the nineteenth century when the demand for clearly demarcated, exclusive religious identities was voiced by reformist Muslim and Hindu movements. Among the Muslims, the most outspoken condemnation of the shrines has come from the representatives of Darul Uloom Deoband and Tablighi Jamaat. Neither movement condemns Sufism as such; they merely consider the past Sufi masters as exemplary Muslims, whose moral integrity is worth emulating. However, they deny them any power of intercession or mediation and detect the first symptoms of *shirk* ('associating others with God') in the practice of attending their tombs.

The Nizamuddin shrine and its custodians

The Nizamuddin shrine is situated in Delhi, the city that has served since the thirteenth century as the capital of various Muslim dynasties, British colonial regime and independent India. In the pilgrimage economy of South Asia, Nizamuddin is the major urban shrine of North India. It may not rank as high in the hierarchy of Indian shrines as the *dargāh* of Muʿīn al-Dīn in Ajmer, but its location in the capital city gives it the advantage of being more accessible than the latter. Interestingly, a similar situation prevails in the Deccan, where the shrine of Gesūdarāz in Gulbarga is the most important centre of pilgrimage; however, it is removed from the busiest urban centres. In con-

⁶³³ For an account on the contrasting developments in two small Delhi shrines over the past three decades, see Kumar 2010.

⁶³⁴ See Eaton 2010: 159–175 and Ernst 2004: 227–238.

trast, the Yousufain Dargah in the heart of Hyderabad attracts a steady flow of visitors on a daily basis. North India, on the one hand, and the Deccan, on the other, seem to form two distinct systems of pilgrimage networks in India. They are by no means mutually exclusive, but in the Nizamuddin shrine, for example, pilgrims⁶³⁵ from North India tend to outnumber those arriving from the Deccan.

Among the countless Sufi shrines of Delhi, Nizamuddin is most centrally located. It is situated in the heart of a New Delhi neighbourhood, named Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin after the saint. Over the past fifty years or so, well-to-do residential areas Nizamuddin East, Sundar Nagar and Lodi Estate, where free standing houses fill the plots shaded by thick foliage, have risen around the ancient neighbourhood. The Basti is only about eight kilometres away from Connaught Place, the epicentre of the Lutyens Delhi. The neighbourhood is sometimes characterized as a ghetto⁶³⁶ or even a slum.⁶³⁷ Although the contrast between the wide streets, spacious living conditions and the neat markets of the surrounding areas and the narrow, densely built alleys and the overpowering smells of the street-food of the Basti may seem sharp, the latter is not radically different from the congested Old Delhi which is hardly ever called a ghetto or a slum.

The main access road to the shrine forks from Mathura road and another begins from the opposite side of the shrine from the western edge of the Basti. Two narrow, roofed alleyways that are bordered by shops and rows of beggars lead to the shrine. Although the entire Basti bustles with intense life, it is also a virtual necropolis where Sufis, poets, nobles and royals have been buried in the course of the past seven centuries.⁶³⁸ However, most of the devotional activities of the pilgrims revolve around the two tombs belonging to Nizām al-Dīn and Amīr Khusrau. They are situated on opposite sides of a chequered courtyard in the heart of the Basti. Although Nizām al-Dīn's mausoleum is the more central of the two, the significance of Amīr Khusrau in the shrine complex is underlined by the pilgrims' practice of presenting themselves by his cenotaph before entering the main mausoleum. The other tombs in the area are

635 The word pilgrim, *zā'ir* (lit. 'visitor'), seldom features in Urdu parlance, whereas the words 'pilgrimage' (*ziyārat*) and 'place of pilgrimage' (*mazār*, i.e. a saint's tomb), derived from the same Arabic root, are in common use. The word *ziyārat* denotes the visit to the shrine and the rituals performed there, not the act of peregrination. Thus, both those who arrive at the shrine from a longer distance and those who live in its vicinity and may attend it on a daily basis, perform *ziyārat*. Presenting oneself at the tomb of a saint is also called *hāzīrī* ('presence, attendance'). The word has another, distinct connotation which is also linked with the shrines, namely the confrontation between the saint and a spirit possessing a person who has been brought forward for healing. For the use of *hāzīrī* in this context, see, e.g. Bellamy 2007, Bellamy 2011: 129–171 and Flueckiger 2006: 99–101.

636 See, e.g. Hossain 2012: 61.

637 For a recent portrayal of the Basti in fiction, see Alice Albinia's novel *Leela's Book* (Random House, 2011). The author paints a definitely grim picture of the neighbourhood as a slum by juxtaposing it with Nizamuddin East.

638 Detailed information on various tombs and their locations in and around the shrine can be gleaned from the margin notes of Khwaja Hasan Nizami's *Nizāmī bansurī*.

generally neglected by pilgrims and the hereditary custodians (*khudamā'*/*khuddām*, sing. *khādim*) alike.

The architecture of the shrine complex has acquired its present form at several stages in the course of the centuries following Nizām al-Dīn's death. The present appearance dates back to the late Mughal period, but it has also been influenced by the patronage of the royal family of Hyderabad during the nineteenth century.⁶³⁹ Although the literary production among the Sultanate Chishtis was essential to the immortalization of Nizām al-Dīn's repute, the shrine's location in a capital city has played a significant role in diffusing his reputation among people who may have had neither chance nor interest in submerging themselves in study of Sufi writings. The shrine has always been frequented by Muslim conquerors and travellers, along with the local elite and common people. At present, a visit to the shrine is included in the official visits of Muslim statesmen.

The Nizamuddin shrine is situated, both ideologically and geographically, in between two contrasting versions of Sufism. To the east of the shrine lies the Delhi centre, Markaz, of Tablighi Jamaat. It is an imposing concrete building housing a mosque and residential quarters for members who are trained in Delhi before they move on to more remote locations to take part in the missionary work (*tablīgh*) of the movement. The members are frequently seen in the Nizamuddin shrine observing what they perceive as corrupted Islamic practices. Inside the shrine complex, they demonstrate their contempt for the notion of holy space by carrying their shoes with them in a gesture deeply detested by the custodians of the shrine. The main access road to the shrine passes by the Markaz, and the Tablighi Jamaat members sometimes attempt to convince pilgrims to give up their plans of visiting the shrine. However, the close proximity of the Markaz does not seem to have effected any radical diminution in the number of pilgrims. According to the observations of Peter Manuel, this applies to Sufi shrines on a more general level, as well. Similarly, Hindu attendance has remained stable notwithstanding the exclusivist rhetoric of the exponents of Hindutva.⁶⁴⁰

As was noted above, Tablighi Jamaat does not reject Sufism altogether. However, it reduces the process of inner growth into the minute observation of purist, pietistic Islamic practice. In contrast to this approach, Inayat Khan's (1882–1927) followers, whose centre is also located in the Basti, eschew the connection with Islam altogether and contest the relevance of common Muslim rituals to their Sufi practice. Instead, they advocate 'universal Sufism' as a manifestation of perennial spirituality that can be found in every religion. Inayat Khan was a *bīn* player and a Sufi master, who gave recitals and preached in the USA and Europe in the early twentieth century. He returned to

639 For a chronology of the main buildings in the shrine complex, see Tara Sharma 2012. For a further discussion on the architectural development of the mausoleum and its adjacent mosque, see *Khān, Āsār* I, 291–294; Peck 2005: 167–175.

640 Manuel 2008: 381.

India shortly before his passing away in 1927 and was buried in the Basti to the south of the Nizamuddin shrine.⁶⁴¹ The members of various movements that have drawn their inspiration from his legacy during the past century come from the USA, Europe and New Zealand. They visit the Basti only during specific retreats, in addition to the *ʿurs* festivities of Inayat Khan that take place on 5th of February. They rarely visit the main shrine complex.

In contrast to Tablighi Jamaat, the custodians of the Nizamuddin shrine advocate visiting shrines and engaging in a vast collection of Sufi rituals and practices. However, unlike the followers of Inayat Khan, they insist on the Islamic character of Sufism even if they simultaneously acknowledge that the saint's blessings are meant for all human beings, whatever their religious background.

When pilgrims arrive at the Nizamuddin shrine, they leave their shoes to the care of shoe-keepers against a numbered token. They then proceed to the tombs for their devotions. They read Koranic passages and may present flowers, cloth covers (*cādar*) and sugar candies on the tombs. The pilgrim is usually assisted in the rituals by his or her *khādim*, whose personal client or guest (*mihmān*) he or she has become. *Khādims* are also called *pirzādahs*, 'sons of the master'. This appellation indicates their belonging to the pan-South Asian, often endogamous community of descendants of Sufi saints whereas *khādim* refers to their function in the shrine context.⁶⁴² Their status in South Asian Muslim culture has traditionally been high.

In the case of Nizamuddin, who never married, the *pirzādah* families trace their origin to various associates of him. Originally, there were four *pirzādah* lineages, but one of them, *Hārūniyān* ('The Hārūnīs'), tracing their descent to Rafīʿ al-Dīn Hārūn, a son of Niẓām al-Dīn's sister, is now extinct. The three remaining families, *Nabīraqān* ('The Grandsons'), *Hindustāniyān* ('The Indians') and *Qāẓīzādagān* ('The Sons of Qāẓī') trace their descent to Muḥammad Imām, a grandson of Bābā Farīd, to Abū Bakr Muṣallābardār and to Qāẓī Muḥyī al-Dīn Kāshāni, respectively.⁶⁴³

No single *khādim* of the Nizamuddin shrine is designated as the head (*sajjādanashīn*, lit. 'the one who sits on a prayer mat') or superintendent (*mutavallī*) of the shrine, who would manage the institution single-handedly. Its rituals and finances are supervised jointly by the three families in accordance with a rota system known as *bārīdārī niẓām* ('the order of holding [the post of superintendent] in turns'). The absence of centralized hierarchy in the shrine entitles every *pirzādah* to call himself the *sajjādanashīn*. In the English billboards hanging above the entrances to their offices housed in the shrine complex, the term has been freely rendered to denote 'The Dargah Head Office', 'Head Priest of the Dargah' and even 'The Chief Head Priest of the Dargah'. One family that is at present headed by Pir Ahmed Nizami, also lays claim to

641 On Inayat Khan, see Hermansen 2001 and Ernst & Lawrence 2002: 140–143.

642 The *pirzādah* community of the Nizamuddin shrine, especially its female members, was studied by Patricia Jeffery in the 1970s. See Jeffery 2000 [1979].

643 Nizami, "Dargāh sharīf kā intizām", 536–537

holding the hereditary post of the *mutavallī*. In reality, however, the standing of an individual *pirzādah* in the overall hierarchy of the shrine is determined by his religious learning and the number of influential disciples and patrons.

Another distinguishing character in the organization of the shrine has been the absence of income from land-grants (*jāgīr*) and inalienable religious endowments (*vaqf*, pl. *auqāf*).⁶⁴⁴ In other words, the shrine does not have a fixed source of income, and it is entirely dependent on donations. While this arrangement may simulate the ideal of *tavakkul* ('trust in God') upheld by Niẓām al-Dīn, it also makes the shrine vulnerable to the fluctuations affecting the assets of the pilgrims. The precarious financial situation of Muslims in independent India has been in stark contrast with the earlier royal patronage, and this has impacted the activities of the shrine. The arrangement furthermore posits the *pirzādahs* in rivalry with each other when it comes to the pilgrims. Although some *pirzādahs* earn their living through various businesses or in the civil service, others subsist on donations from pilgrims. They keep client registers, and a pilgrim who has written his or her name in such a document is bound to his or her *khādim*. Since *pirzādahs* serve their clients by keeping them updated about the festivals of the shrine, assisting them during the pilgrimage and praying for them in their absence, they are entitled to receiving *nazrānah* from them. The rivalry between the *pirzādahs* is also discernible during the *ʿurs* festivities, when they organize overlapping programs for their followers.

Qawwali scene at the shrine

In addition to the saint himself, qawwali music is one of the main attractions drawing people to the Nizamuddin shrine. Although the presence of music is by no means unique to this shrine, its intimate association with qawwali has increased its significance in this respect. Despite the blows suffered by Muslims and Indo-Persian culture in Delhi during the brutal suppression of the 1857 uprising and the partition ninety years later, the shrine has remained an important cultural symbol for the inhabitants of Delhi and for Indian Muslims in general. Qawwali has played an important role in sustaining its broader cultural significance. Over the past two decades, the popularity of qawwali and Sufi music has only increased, and the Nizamuddin shrine now also attracts people who are primarily interested in music, not the saint.

This phenomenon is a result of the increasing interest in Sufi music and culture that the urban middle- and upper-middle-class populations of India have expressed since early 1990s. According to Peter Manuel, the phenomenon has its roots in the reaction against the rise of Hindutva and the appalling massacres of Muslims following the destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992 and the Godhra train-burning in 2002. Manuel attributes the initial interest in Sufi music to the urge of the socially

⁶⁴⁴ Nizami, "Dargāh sharīf kā intizām", 536. For the economy of other shrines, see, e.g. Ernst 2004: 191–226.

aware artists and intellectuals to counteract the Hindutva rhetoric questioning the role of Muslims in the shaping of Indian culture.⁶⁴⁵

Although the interest in Sufism and Sufi music initially took the shape of not-for-profit series of concerts such as *Anhad Garje* ('The Roar of the Infinite'), it has, in the course of the twenty-first century, transformed into a more commercial phenomenon. The later phase of the Sufi music boom involves, in the words of Manuel, a selection of sub-genres that 'span a stylistic range, and indeed have no unifying features except an explicit Sufi orientation, conveyed variously in lyric content, accompanying iconography, or publicity blurbs.' He also juxtaposes the essentially urban middle-class attendance in the concerts of self-assigned Sufi singers like Zila Khan, Rekha Bharadwaj, Kailash Kher and the 'Sufi extravaganzas' organized by the fashion designer and filmmaker Muzaffar Ali with the subaltern milieu of the shrines.⁶⁴⁶ Admittedly, such events have very little to do with Sufi shrines or Sufism as a living religious tradition, and the appearances of these singers in expensive Delhi clubs and on MTV are far removed from the reality of most of the shrine-goers and practicing Sufis. However, the impact of the commercial Sufi music is felt in the Nizamuddin shrine as the presence of middle-class visitors who arrive there to imbibe its authentic Sufi atmosphere.

This middle-class interest has also found a literary expression in works directed to an English-speaking audience. The Nizamuddin shrine has featured prominently in several coffee table books that have appeared in recent years and are affordable only to the higher-income classes.⁶⁴⁷ Sadia Dehlvi, a media person and activist hailing from an illustrious cultural family has during the recent years profiled herself as a concerned representative of Delhi's Sufi heritage and an authority of the subject matter. That her both books on Sufism were published by HarperCollins Publishers, one of the largest English publishing houses in India, indicates that such books are expected to sell well.⁶⁴⁸ For the more adventurous residents of Delhi interested in their city, the writer and photographer Mayank Austen Soofi has introduced the Nizamuddin shrine as one of the exciting hang-outs of the city. His writings have appeared originally in The Delhi Walla blog, and some of them have been printed with attractive photographs.⁶⁴⁹

Even if popular Sufi music, coffee-table books and English-language writing do not affect most of the people who visit the Nizamuddin shrine, they have contributed to introducing a new clientele there. Traditionally, many pilgrims visit the shrine in order to solicit saintly intervention, for example, for curing a disease or passing an im-

645 Manuel 2008: 382–383.

646 Manuel 2008: 384, 391.

647 On the Nizamuddin shrine in these books, see Currim & Michell 2004: 24–39; Dhau 2006 and Quraeshi 2009: 166–185.

648 See Dehlvi, *Sufism: The Heart of Islam* (2009) and *The Sufi courtyard: Dargahs of Delhi* (2012). The latter work concentrates on the Sufi shrines of Delhi.

649 See <http://www.thedelhiwalla.com/>, especially the section 'Faith'. On Nizamuddin in Mayank Austen Soofi's books, see *The Delhi Walla Hangouts* (Collins, 2010), 94–97 and *The Delhi Walla Monuments* (Collins, 2010), 68–71.

portant exam. Yet others come there only in order to be close to the saint and engage in their spiritual practices in the vicinity of his tomb.⁶⁵⁰ Whichever the case, being present at the tomb of the saint is the most important component of the visit. The middle-class visitors, on the other hand, tend to neglect the saint and concentrate on qawwali music. They show no particular interest in the tombs and often merely sit in the courtyard to listen to the qawwals without acknowledging the saintly presence in any way.

The middle-class clientele is particularly conspicuous in the shrine on Thursday evenings.⁶⁵¹ Thursday evening is always a busy time in Sufi shrines, and if qawwali is performed, it fills much of the evening. Thursday qawwali is also less formal than *samā'* assemblies; no *mīr-i mahfil* monitors the occasion and the qawwals are able to sing what they like and – ideally – perform only for the delight of the saint. In Nizamuddin, the local qawwals sing between sunset (*maghrib*) and night (*'ishā'*) prayers and occasionally carry on until the shrine is closed at 10:00 PM (9:30 PM in winter-time).

When I first visited the shrine on a Thursday evening in September 2004, the pilgrim crowd consisted of both Muslims and Hindus who, deducing from their clothing and demeanour, belonged to the lower-income classes. The qawwals did not receive much money – maybe something around the sum of three hundred rupees that Manuel states as the normal earnings of an evening.⁶⁵² However, the Thursday crowd has gradually changed. The pilgrims from the lower-income classes are still conspicuously present in the shrine, but the people who gather around the qawwals belong to a different social stratum. They – both men and women – wear neat (and genuine) designer labels and sport the latest smartphones, which they use to shoot a memento of their visit. They often clap to the music and exhibit behaviours that are perceived belonging to a trance-music experience. They shake their heads vigorously and sway their bodies from side to side. Although their behaviour is looked upon by some *khādims* and qawwals with apparent distaste, it is tolerated. This is probably because of the financial benefit they bring to the people who earn their income from the shrine. The value of *nazrānah* given to the *khādims* is difficult to determine, but it is not uncommon to see notes of five hundred rupees discreetly changing hands. Similar largesse extends to the qawwals, as well. In contradistinction with the formal *samā'* assemblies, where denominations exceeding twenty rupees are considered ostentatious, the middle-class clientele of the shrine showers the qawwals with notes of one hundred and, occasionally, five hundred rupees. Thus, a good Thursday evening can produce considerably more than the three hundred rupees mentioned by Manuel. The qawwals are also adroit at appealing to the tastes of their patrons by singing their fa-

650 For a detailed discussion on the motives of the pilgrims in Nizamuddin, see Pinto 1995 and 2004 [1989].

651 Thursday evening is actually the beginning of Friday in Muslim reckoning.

652 Manuel 2008: 391.

avourite items. These include songs like *Chāp tilak* ('Sign and mark'), *Damādam mast qalandar* ('Continually, intoxicated mendicant'), *Zi-hāl-i miskīn makun taghāful* ('Do not neglect my miserable state') and, occasionally, film songs like *Khwaja mere khwaja* ('Master, my master' from *Jodhaa Akbar*, 2008) or *Kun faya kun* ('Be', and it was' from *Rockstar*, 2011).

Thursday night qawwali sessions attract the participation of yet another visible group of people, namely European, American and Japanese tourists who are drawn to the shrine by the Lonely Planet's promising statement: 'It's one of Delhi's most extraordinary pleasures to take a seat on the marble floor and listen to Sufis singing rousing qawwali (devotional hymns) at sunset.'⁶⁵³ Following the example of the new middle-class listeners, they tend to contribute generously to the remuneration of the qawwals. Listening to qawwali and witnessing ecstasy at the Nizamuddin shrine has also become a recurring feature in contemporary Delhi travelogues.⁶⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that although Thursday night qawwali is often only a faint echo of the music heard in *samā'* assemblies, it appears authentic when compared with recordings that fill the Sufi Music sections in upmarket music stores.

Heritage, conservation and qawwali

Although the popular interest in Sufism and Sufi music during the recent years has largely bypassed the more tradition-bound *dargāh* culture, the Nizamuddin shrine has over the past few years seen a development that has attempted to bridge the two realities. This is the restoration of the so-called Nizamuddin Heritage Precinct called 'Humayun's Tomb – Nizamuddin Basti Urban Renewal Initiative,' a high-profile project in which the Aga Khan Foundation and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture play a major role.⁶⁵⁵ The aforementioned quarters completed the restoration of Humayun's tomb garden, east of the Basti, in 2004. From there, the urban conservation area has spread to cover also the Basti and the intervening Sunder Nursery. The aim of the project is to

unify the above-mentioned three heritage zones into an urban conservation area of considerable breadth and cultural significance, while improving the

⁶⁵³ Lonely Planet website, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/india/delhi-around/sights/religious/hazrat-nizam-ud-din-dargāh>, accessed 20.01.2014.

⁶⁵⁴ See, e.g. Tim Mackintosh-Smith, *The Hall of a Thousand Columns: Hindustan to Malabar with Ibn Battuta* (John Murray, 2005), 93–96. William Dalrymple had to travel to Ajmer in order to see the longed-for ecstasy, whereas in the case of Elizabeth Chatterjee, the rain spoiled her chances of witnessing such a spectacle. See Dalrymple, *City of Djinn* (Penguin Books, 2003 [1993]), 276–281, 307–311; Chatterjee, *Delhi – Mostly Harmless: One Woman's Vision of the City* (Random House, 2013) 252–253.

⁶⁵⁵ The non-profit partners include the governmental offices Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Central Public Works Department (CPWD) and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). In addition to the Aga Khan Foundation and Trust for Culture, the funding has been provided by other influential sponsors: Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Ford Foundation, World Monuments Fund, Sir Ratan Tata Trust, US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany. For an introduction to the project, see <http://www.akdn.org/hcp/india.asp>. For the project's own website, see <http://www.nizamuddinrenewal.org/humayuntomb/start.html>.

quality of life for resident population. The project integrates conservation, socio-economic development, and urban environmental development objectives in consultation with local communities and relevant stakeholders.⁶⁵⁶

One part of the cultural agenda of the 'Humayun's Tomb – Nizamuddin Basti – Sunder Nursery Urban Renewal Initiative' has been to organize two functions called *Jashn-e-Khusrau* ('Khusrau Festival') in 2010 and 2013. As the name indicates, both events focused on celebrating the contribution of Amīr Khusrau in various aspects of Indian culture. The first *Jashn* focused on qawwali music, whereas the second revolved around various other musical genres ranging from classical Hindustani music to Kashmiri Sufi music and Pakistani soft-rock fusion. Both *Jashns* spanned over a period of ten days, and concerts and lectures were held in various locations. The proceedings of the 2010 *Jashn* were published as *Jashn-e-Khusrau: A Collection* in 2012. The volume includes essays by prominent scholars like Sunil Sharma and Regula Qureshi and it is accompanied with three audio CDs of qawwali music and beautifully calligraphed and translated lyrics of all the performances. A similar publication on the proceedings of the second *Jashn* was scheduled to be published in 2014.

The musical events organized during the two *Jashns* have been radically different from the elitist and commercial concerts of Muzaffar Ali's *Jahan-e-Khusrau*. In 2010, the organizers attempted to convey something of the *dargāh* and *khānqāh* environment to the audiences through the qawwali concerts. The performers were the same ones who sing in Sufi shrines, and none of them was a commercial superstar (except, perhaps, for Fareed Ayaz). In addition, many *pirzādahs* of the Nizamuddin shrine were involved in the programs, both as audience and as consultants. The most prominent among them, Pir Ahmed Nizami, wrote the foreword for *Jashn-e-Khusrau: A Collection* and provided the venue for some of the concerts in the precincts of his Urs Mahal located in the Basti. Thus, organizers attempted to 'promote urban interaction between the city and the Basti'⁶⁵⁷ by not arranging all of the programs in the confines of India International Centre (IIC) or India Habitat Centre, which are both important venues for high-profile programs attended by English-speaking elite.

Despite the differences between the programmes coordinated by Aga Khan Trust for Culture, on the one hand, and the purely commercial events, on the other, one cannot avoid noticing certain similarities. Although the programs of *Jashn-e-Khusrau* were free, the audience was drawn essentially from the culturally aware urban elite, not from the Basti. The proceedings of the first *Jashn* were published as an English-language coffee-table book printed on glossy paper and costing 1995 rupees. Thus, it is for the most part inaccessible to visitors of the Nizamuddin shrine and the residents of the Basti. Not surprisingly, the volume can be purchased in the English bookshops of

⁶⁵⁶ *Jashn-e-Khusrau: A Collection* 2012: 188.

⁶⁵⁷ *Jashn-e-Khusrau* 2012: 192

elite shopping areas, and it is conspicuously absent from the small bookshops abounding around the shrine.

Financial considerations aside, the portrayal of Sufi music in the volume is worth noting. Understandably, all the song texts performed by the qawwals during *Jashn-e-Khusrau* and included in the studio-recorded CDs appended to the book were written by or attributed to Amīr Khusrau. It was after all his legacy that was celebrated during the event. However, some of the authors of the volume adopt a distinctly exclusivist approach to qawwali music. In the foreword, Pir Ahmed Nizami laments that the essential purpose of the qawwali has been lost when the performers have started to sing outside the shrines. He lauds the commendable selection of poetry on the CDs, because the poems of Amīr Khusrau can offer the listeners ‘a truly Sufi experience.’⁶⁵⁸ In another essay, the consultant of the project, Shakeel Hossain, assumes a role of a qawwali critic. While he ascribes to the project’s aim to present the cultural tradition in a manner relevant to the contemporary audience, he also tells says that in briefing the qawwals about the concerts, an attempt was made to eliminate the most popular songs like *Chāp tilak* (‘Sign and mark’) and *Kāhe ko byāhī bides* (‘Why do I have to marry outside the village’). This, however, proved impossible due to ‘the eagerness of the qawwal to engage the audience.’ In consonance with Pir Ahmed Nizami, he assumes a purist attitude towards the more popular manifestations of qawwali. Even as he absolves some qawwali numbers in the older films, he disparages the popular recorded qawwali available in the music shops clustering around Sufi shrines.⁶⁵⁹

This attitude may seem a commendable attempt to preserve the tradition of qawwali music and Amīr Khusrau’s poetry. However, it does not take into consideration the fact that the sustained appeal of qawwali lies in the qawwals’ ability to renew their repertoires and adapt their performances to varying contexts. Portraying Amīr Khusrau’s poems as the heart of qawwali repertoires is in flagrant contradiction with the lived reality of qawwali and *samā’*: by no means do his poems automatically induce the most favourable audience response. The emphasis laid on Amīr Khusrau not only leads to ignoring other prominent poets like Niyāz, Bedam and Kamil, but it also gives a thrust to the ossification of a living musical and religious tradition.

Discussing the commercial Sufi music boom, Peter Manuel criticizes the phenomenon because it ‘constitutes little more than a tokenism that in fact fetishizes and exoticizes Sufism.’ He continues that by selecting only a handful of poems for popularization through recordings, such approach ‘trivializes actual Muslims and bowdlerizes Sufism into an amorphous flower-power sentiment.’⁶⁶⁰ The aims of *Jashn-e-Khusrau* and the entire Urban Renewal Initiative appear nobler than the pursuit of financial benefit, and the overall impression of their activities is more scholarly and solid. Yet, in my view, the project’s impact on a living, vibrant and dynamic tradition of Sufi music

658 Nizami 2012: 11.

659 Hossain 2012: 40, 43, 45.

660 Manuel 2008: 391.

resembles the commercialized approach. It isolates and showcases a minute part of the phenomenon – twenty poems of Amīr *Khusrāu* set to traditional tunes – in an attractive package and claims it to represent the essence of the tradition without as much as acknowledging the lyrical, musical, cultural and religious breadth of qawwali. Admittedly, grasping the living tradition of qawwali in a way the performers and Sufi listeners do is difficult, if not impossible for an outside observer. However, assuming a role of a critic – like Shakeel Hossain does – and reformulating the essence of the tradition on the basis of such a narrow connoisseurship is as symptomatic as the Sufi songs of Zila Khan or writings of Sadia Dehlvi. *Jashn-e-Khusrāu* merely attempts to achieve this by evoking the concept of authenticity while the popular Sufi singers and writers appeal to diluted images of Sufism.

While it can be questioned whether or not popular Sufi culture is a sign of a genuine interest in a living tradition, it does seem to have restored the role of the Nizamuddin shrine in the cultural scene of the capital, a role that was severely shaken by the aftermath of the 1857 uprising and the partition. Whatever one's opinion about the authenticity of the popular Sufi culture in Delhi may be, the interest felt towards the shrine seems to be giving it and its custodians at least some leverage in the cultural life of the city.

6.2 Qawwali in the ritual context: *ʿurs* and other festivities at Nizamuddin

In addition to the religious fervour and popular qawwali sessions of Thursday nights, the Nizamuddin shrine has its annual cycle of religious festivals that culminates with the *ʿurs*. Before entering a detailed discussion about the *ʿurs* celebrations, I will briefly mention two other festivals that involve qawwali.⁶⁶¹ These two differ from the *ʿurs* because they are attended by middle-class clientele who are essentially interested in Sufism as a cultural expression, not as a system of beliefs or spiritual practices. These festivals are *basant* in early February and the birthday of Nizām al-Dīn on the 27th of Safar. The history of *basant* celebrations at the Nizamuddin shrine has been discussed above. At present, the main feature of this festival is a procession consisting of qawwals and devotees who wear something yellow as a part of their attire. The procession begins at the tomb of Taqī al-Dīn Nūḥ and proceeds from there to the main shrine where the qawwals sing an extended set of spring songs in Hindi. From there, they proceed to the minor *dargāhs* in the Basti. The final stops are the tombs of Inayat Khan and Pir Zamin Nizami (d. 1993). In addition to singing, the qawwals present mustard flowers on each tomb. The attraction of this festival for a culturally aware audience lies in the admixture of Muslim and Hindu traditions.

⁶⁶¹ Qawwali does not have similarly conspicuous role during certain other festivals, like the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (*ʿīd-i milād al-nabī*). During the first ten days of Muharram, listening to music is considered prohibited. However, many qawwals perform elegies (*marsiyah*) in commemoration of the events of Karbala at that time.

The birthday celebrations of Nizām al-Dīn take place during the night. The crowd starts to gather at the shrine after the night prayer (*‘ishā’*). Many pilgrims present the *khādims* with perfume oils, which are offered in the *dargāh* during the ritual washing of the tomb (*ghusl*). At midnight, the marble lattices of the tomb chamber are covered so that the view inside is obstructed. The *khādims* then enter the chamber and lock the door behind them. Unseen by the outsiders, they uncover the cenotaph which is hidden by a white cotton sheet and a coloured velvet sheet. The velvet covering (called *ghilāf*) is changed once a week, while the smaller *cādars* offered by the pilgrims are removed every evening before closing the *dargāh*. During the *ghusl*, the *khādims* wash the cenotaph using water and perfumes and cover it with a new white cotton *ghilāf*. The water used in washing is collected and distributed as *tabarruk* (‘blessed articles’) during the following year. In *Shavāhid-i nizāmī*, this water is said to cure all diseases. *Shavāhid-i nizāmī* is to my knowledge the first text to mention the washing of the tomb on the saint’s birthday.⁶⁶² The atmosphere outside the tomb during the *ghusl* is merry. People hang around the tomb eating and listening to the local qawwals, who sing throughout the night. Like *basant*, the birthday celebrations are perceived as one of the cultural events of the city, and they attract a significant number of Sufi-culture and music enthusiasts to the shrine.

The ‘urs

In contrast to *basant* and the birthday celebrations, the *‘urs* has been part of the religious life of the shrine since the fourteenth century. Commemorating the death of a Sufi master was an established practice already during Nizām al-Dīn’s life, and *Siyar al-aulyā’* documents how his disciples congregated at their guide’s tomb on his death anniversary.⁶⁶³ At present, the *‘urs* at the Nizamuddin shrine continues to be mainly attended by Sufis and devotees of the saint, and it has not acquired a broader significance in the cultural life of Delhi.

‘Urs, a word referring to marriage festivities, denotes the commemoration of the union of a Sufi saint’s spirit with the divine beloved in death. During the *‘urs*, the saint is thought to be particularly accessible, and pilgrims engage in spiritual communication with him through prayer, presenting him their requests that are to be mediated to God. In addition to the *‘urs* of Nizām al-Dīn on the 18th of Rabi‘ al-Thani, the death anniversary of Amīr *Khusrāu* is celebrated on the 18th of Shawwal. Both occasions span several days and follow a similar routine. (See Table 3 for the main events organized during the *‘urs* festivities.) Despite naming the two occasions as *barē ‘urs* (‘The Great *‘urs*’) and *choṭe ‘urs* (‘The Small *‘urs*’), respectively, they are both large-scale occasions that attract thousands of pilgrims.

⁶⁶² See Bulāq, *Shavāhid*, 5.

⁶⁶³ See Amīr *Khvurd*, *Siyar*, 227.

Table 3: The main events of the 'urs festivities at the Nizamuddin shrine

Date	Function	Place	Time	Presided over by
16 th	<i>fātiḥah</i> and qawwali, beginning of the 'urs	shrine courtyard	after <i>maghrib</i>	<i>khādims</i> collectively
17 th	<i>fātiḥah</i> and <i>samā'</i>	Chilla	morning	Khwaja Hasan Sani
17 th	<i>qul</i>	shrine courtyard	after ' <i>ishā'</i>	<i>khādims</i> collectively
17 th	seminar, <i>langar</i> and <i>samā'</i>	Khwaja Hall	after <i>maghrib</i>	Khwaja Hasan Sani
17 th	Recitation of the Koran, speeches, qawwali	Urs Mahal	after <i>maghrib</i>	Pir Ahmed Nizami
18 th	<i>fātiḥah</i> and <i>samā'</i>	Hujra-e Qadeem	morning	Khwaja Hasan Sani
18 th	<i>baṛā qul</i>	shrine courtyard	11 am	<i>khādims</i> collectively
18 th	<i>mahfil</i> of classical Hindustani music	Khwaja Hall	after <i>maghrib</i>	Khwaja Hasan Sani
18 th	<i>mushā'irah</i> , speech, qawwali	'Urs Maḥal	after ' <i>ishā'</i>	Pir Ahmed Nizami
19 th	<i>qul</i>	shrine courtyard	11 am	<i>khādims</i> collectively
19 th	<i>Ruhani Tablighi Ijtima</i>	Urs Mahal	after ' <i>ishā'</i>	Pir Ahmed Nizami
19 th	<i>fātiḥah</i> and <i>samā'</i>	<i>samā'khānah</i>	after ' <i>ishā'</i>	Afsar Ali Nizami
19 th	<i>fātiḥah</i> and <i>samā'</i>	shrine courtyard	10 pm	Nazim Ali Nizami
19 th	<i>fātiḥah</i> and <i>samā'</i>	Langarkhana	in the night	Anis Miyan Ashrafi
20 th	<i>qul</i>	shrine courtyard	11 am	<i>khādims</i> collectively
20 th	Maulā 'Alī kā Niyāz (<i>fātiḥah</i> and qawwali)	shrine courtyard	after <i>maghrib</i>	<i>khādims</i> collectively
20 th	<i>fātiḥah</i> , <i>langar</i> and <i>samā'</i>	Taq-i Buzurg	after ' <i>ishā'</i>	Pir Ahmed Nizami

The festivities begin on the evening of the 16th day of both lunar months and draw to a close on the 20th, although many pilgrims leave after the main ritual that takes place on the 18th. The core element of the 'urs is a ritual called *qul*.⁶⁶⁴ *Quls* are organised in the shrine courtyard at 11 AM on the 18th, 19th and 20th during each festival. The attendance, especially during the *baṛā qul* ('the great *qul*') on the morning of the 18th, is so high that the shrine compound, the adjacent mosque and the rooftops close-by can barely contain all the devotees. A *qul* begins with a *fātiḥah*.⁶⁶⁵ Known by the name of

664 Lit. 'say'. The name is derived from the first word of the four suras (109, 112, 113 and 114) beginning 'Say...'. These four suras are collectively known as *cār qul* ('The four says') and they have an important role in the ritual context.

665 For a detailed discussion on the legal controversies surrounding *fātiḥah*, see Valdinoci *forthcoming*.

the first sura of the Koran, the *fātiḥah* begins by *khādims*' recitation of prescribed Koranic passages.⁶⁶⁶ This is followed by the master-disciple chain (*shajarah*) read by the imam of the mosque of the shrine. The *shajarah* begins with the Prophet Muhammad and ends with the saint whose *urs* is being celebrated. Each name is prefaced by the phrase *ba-rūḥ-i pāk* ('to the pure spirit') indicating the transferring of the merits (*iṣāl-i savāb*) accrued from the recitation to the spirit of the saint. The imam then recites the supplication (*du'ā*), which for many pilgrims is the main reason to attend the *urs*.⁶⁶⁷ As he requests the saint to bestow his kindness, convey the prayers of the pilgrims to God, accept their presence in the shrine and remove their troubles, the thousands of pilgrims squeezed into the compound are absolutely silent and only the humming sound of amen fills the air whenever a request is submitted to the saint.

The deferential silence is followed by a momentary mayhem, when the pilgrims leave their places after the *du'ā* and squeeze closer to the *khādims* in order to get their share of the *tabarruk*, while the Sufi dignitaries and the qawwals attempt to organize themselves in front of the shrine. The simultaneous presence of the leading *khādims* of the shrine and the representatives of other major Sufi centres, such as the *dargāh* of Mu'īn al-Dīn in Ajmer and the Khanqah-e-Niyaziya in Bareilly, makes the *quls* impressive occasions. Everyone is dressed in his full Sufi regalia of colourful, conical hats, imposing turbans and formal high collared sherwanis. Disciples of various Sufi *silsilahs* are distinguishable from their hats and, in the case of a few *silsilahs*, from their dress. In addition, travelling mendicants sit a little further from the centre of the gathering, dressed in patched cloaks or brightly coloured, flowing robes and sporting an assortment of necklaces, staffs and begging bowls. For a regular pilgrim, the *qul* is a rare occasion to approach the high-ranking Sufi dignitaries, who are normally inaccessible to casual visitors to the shrines. Many of them utilize this opportunity by soliciting them with a *nazrānah* during the *samā'* and attempting to imbibe their blessings by kissing their hand or touching their knee or feet with their forehead. This is not an easy task to accomplish, since the scant space between the performers, the audience and the tomb is occupied by the Sufi dignitaries themselves, who offer *nazranah* to each other as a token of social bonding. The atmosphere is extremely charged during the *qul* and the qawwals' performance is very intense. Although the Nizamuddin shrine is not particularly famous for exorcism, some devotees, mostly women, take advantage of the intensity of the occasion and use it for spiritual healing purposes. Devotees diagnosed with spirit possession can be seen during the *quls* behind the marble lattices of the

666 The recitation begins with the final verses of *Sūrat al-ḥashr* (59:20–24), which is followed by a varying set of passages. The recitation always ends with suras 102, 109, 112 (repeated three times, since reading *Sūrat al-ikhhlāṣ* thrice is considered equal to reading the entire Koran), 113, 114, 1 and the first section of *Sūrat al-baqarah* (2:1–5). This is followed by verses 2:163, combination of 7:56 and 21:107, 33:40, 33:56 (followed by *Durūd-i tāj*, 'The Blessings of the Crown' read to the Prophet as urged in the preceding verse) and 37:180–182.

667 For a detailed discussion on the significance of *du'ā* in a Pakistani Naqshbandi shrine, see Werbner 2003: 242–258.

tombs of Shāh Jahān's daughter Jahānārā and the Mughal emperor Muḥammad Shāh, swaying violently to the music with hairs flowing. Their occasional shrieks are suppressed by the music.

Ritual songs during the 'urs

The intensity of the occasion is upheld by the singing of the qawwals. In the ritual context of the *qul*, the qawwals attached to the shrine sing collectively. This, according to Qureshi, is called *pancāyatī gānā* ('communal singing').⁶⁶⁸ The melange of the performers that contrasts the more regular practice of taking turns in singing (*bārī gānā*) is also referred to as *mīlī julī caukī qavvālī* ('qawwali of mixed groups'). During the *qul*, the sequence of items performed by the qawwals is strictly prescribed. The first item at Nizamuddin is always the *Qaul*, a song Qureshi has characterized as the basic ritual song of Sufism in India. Her notion that 'at Nizamuddin Auliya no qawwali event can start any other way' is somewhat inaccurate,⁶⁶⁹ since this applies only to qawwali that follows the *fātiḥah*. On other occasions the *Qaul* can be omitted. Yet, its significance can hardly be overrated, and it is probably the most often performed and recorded individual item.

The Arabic text of the *Qaul* is very short and reads *man kuntu maulā fa-'aliyyun maulā*⁶⁷⁰ ('Whose master I am, his master is Ali').⁶⁷¹ Some qawwals add the phrase *ana madīnatu'l-'ilm fa-'aliyyun bābuhā* ('I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its door'). The *Qaul* is based on a hadith included, for example, in *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, where it reads: *allāhumma man kuntu maulāh fa-'aliyyun maulāh allāhumma vālī man vālāh wa 'ādī man 'ādāh* ('God, whose master I am, his master is Ali. God, befriend the one who befriends him and be an enemy to the one who is hostile to him'). For the Shia, the hadith proves Ali's inheritance of both the spiritual and worldly authority of the Prophet Muhammad. For the Sufis, its significance arises from Ali's role as the heir of the Prophet's esoteric knowledge, as well as from his being the first link in the master-disciple chain of most Sufi brotherhoods. The second section of the *Qaul* makes a clear reference to this by emphasizing Ali's role as the gate leading to the knowledge of Muhammad.

The *Qaul* is said to have been set to music by Amīr Khusrau. Being a hallowed part of a ritual, where the creativity of the qawwals is curbed, the tune of the *Qaul* is likely to represent the oldest surviving layer of qawwali compositions. When the *Qaul* is

668 Qureshi 2006: 100.

669 Qureshi 2006: 21

670 The correct form of this saying is *man kuntu maulāh fa-'aliyyun maulāh*. The pronominal suffix is perhaps forgotten and omitted from written versions of the *Qaul* since it is normally pronounced only as an inaudible *-h* in singing. See Meraj, *Surūd*, 68.

671 The word *qaul* has come to denote this particular item, yet there are other Arabic qawwali standards bearing the same designation. Among these are, for example, *Subḥānā dhī'l-mulk wa'l-malakūt* ('Glory to the Lord of dominion and the angelic realm') and *Allāhumma anta'l-salām* ('God, you are peace'), also attributed to Amīr Khusrau.

sung, the Arabic text is followed by a *tarānah* consisting of words that do not form a coherent meaning, but musically illustrate the melody the composer wants to express.⁶⁷² The *tarānah* is also a rare example of abstract, wordless music in the qawwali repertoires:

dar dil dar dil dar dānī
ham tum tanā nānā nātanā nānā rī
yalālī yalālī yalā lālālī
*yalā lālā yalā lālā yalā lālālī*⁶⁷³

The song text of the *Qaul* is very short, and in order to develop it into a full-fledged qawwali item, the performers augment it by inserting into it verses from other source. Thus they have some scope of adapting their performance to varying contexts through the use of inserted verses. Three very different versions of the *Qaul* will be discussed in the following chapters.

In addition to the inserted verses, especially the qawwals from Hyderabad append two short items to the *Qaul* and *tarānah*. At Nizamuddin, this practice is followed only by Meraj Ahmed, who hails from Hyderabad. The first appended item is another *tarānah* attributed to Amīr Khusrau in *Surūd*. Many of the words in this *tarānah* are either Arabic or Persian and, occasionally, they seem to constitute coherent expressions. However, they do not convey any obvious overall meaning.

lā tamā fī ḥāl-i vājḥ allāḥ fataḥ innā fī
āh-e āh-e innā fī ḥayyā to dāmān darān darān
dār-i fanā dānī tā dānī ḥayyā ḥayyārī
*tel lāretā tel lār*⁶⁷⁴

If the second *tarānah* is appended to the *Qaul*, it is always followed by a short Hindi poem by Āghā Muḥammad Dāʿud Abū'l-ʿUlāʿī (d. 1905). In Hyderabad, an entire neighbourhood has been named after this influential Sufi master as Aghapura. He used the pen name *Ṣuḥā* in his Hindi poems, instead of *Ṣaḥv* reserved for Urdu and Persian writing. The verse evokes a poetic motif of a girl who is fetching water from a pond and then sees a handsome reflection mirrored on the surface of the water. Through this motif, the poem explores the bewilderment resulting from witnessing the beauty of divine self-disclosure.

Who is it that appeared, who is it?
He made a beautiful vision appear [and] I found it.
This is that, that is this, hey Ṣuḥā!
I found it, I found it!

672 It is interesting to note that Karam Imām Khān, the author of nineteenth-century *Maʿdan-i mūsīqī*, contests that the contemporary illiterate singers have distorted the Persian text of *tarānahs*. This indicates that in his view they had a logical semantic meaning. See Qureshi 2010: 231.

673 Meraj, *Surūd*, 48.

674 Meraj, *Surūd*, 69.

*He arrived, who is it that appeared?*⁶⁷⁵

The motive behind appending this item to the devotional *Qaul* is not immediately obvious. Its origins may lie in the practice followed in a single Hyderabadī *khānqāh* from where it has subsequently been adopted for a wider usage.

The *Qaul* is normally followed by *Rang* ('The Colour'), a Hindi poem attributed to Amīr Khusrau. It evokes the poetic images connected with *holī*, the Hindu festival of colours. It celebrates the connection with the saint whose 'urs is being commemorated, but simultaneously exults in the joy of being affiliated with a living Sufi master. When the *Rang* is sung during the 'urs festivities, it acquires another layer of meaning as a poetic description of how the blessings of the saint spread over the participants in the same manner as the colours of *holī* spread over the revellers. The Koranic reference [2:138] to being dyed with God's colour (*ṣibghat allāh*) may have prompted the wide use of *holī* imagery among Indian Sufis. In the following chapters, three different versions of the *Rang* will be discussed.

The *Rang* is often followed by another Hindi poem attributed to Amīr Khusrau. This poem, too, evokes the *holī* imagery, but the focus turns from the celebrations to the girl's declaration of her passionate love for the beloved. The semantic range of the word *joban* adds an erotic undercurrent to the poem. In addition to simply meaning youth, it also denotes the pleasures of the youth as well as female breasts.

*Dye me with your colour, colourful!
You are my lord, Beloved of God!*

*My veil [and] the turban of the beloved
Dye them both with the colour of spring.
If you want a fee for dyeing [them]
Keep my youth (joban) as a pledge.
You are my lord, divine beloved!*

*I have hurled myself to your doorstep
Protect my honour and modesty
You are my lord, divine beloved!*

*Nijām al-Dīn Auliyā' is my master
Beloved, join [me] in [my] love.
You are my lord, divine beloved!*⁶⁷⁶

In Indian and Pakistani Sufi shrines, the *Qaul* and *Rang* are almost always performed together. Their order depends on whether qawwali follows or precedes the *fātiḥah*, since the *Qaul* is always adjacent to it. Thus, in the Deccan, where *fātiḥah* usu-

675 Meraj, *Surūd*, 360.

676 Meraj, *Surūd*, 358.

ally follows a *samāʿ* assembly, the items are performed in the opposite order so that the *Rang* precedes the *Qaul*. In the Nizamuddin shrine, the only ritual when the *Rang* is omitted but the *Qaul* is sang is the opening ceremony of the *ʿurs* – simply called *fātiḥah* instead of *qul* – on the evening of the 16th.⁶⁷⁷ The ritual is supererogatory and although attended by the *khādims*, it does not attract many pilgrims. The qawwali that follows the opening *fātiḥah* begins with the *Qaul*, but instead of the *Rang*, it features a Persian ghazal attributed to Amīr *Khusrāu*. In and of itself, the poem is not congratulatory and in *Surūd*, it is classified as a love ghazal instead of a *mubārak* or some other poem with ritual function. Its incorporation into the ritual context probably stems from the fact that the first two verses express the lover’s best wishes to the beloved.

*May you shine in beauty like the moon
May you always remain in the kingdom of attraction.*

*You killed me, the poor, by an amorous glance
You were merciful, my God, may you live [long]!*

*I am released from the captivity of the two worlds
If you just sit together with [your] slave.*

*You burn the world, if you throw an amorous glance
You shower sugar, if you smile.*

*Do not be so cruel, lest tomorrow, in the day of judgement
You should feel ashamed in front of the lovers.*

*By debauchery and frolic, like *Khusrāu*,
May you also tear up thousands of households.*⁶⁷⁸

After the qawwals have finished singing the *Qaul* and *Rang*, some of the Sufi dignitaries leave the formal assembly in the shrine courtyard and seat themselves on the arcade surrounding the tomb chamber. Someone with at least some standing in the shrine hierarchy stays behind in order to supervise the end of the assembly. Although this transition marks the end of the obligatory part of the ritual, the qawwals continue, time permitting, with two more Hindi items which are specific to the occasion and are rarely sung otherwise. They are *Āj badhāvā* (‘Today, [sing] felicitations’) and *Cisht nagar meñ nijām pyārā* (‘In the town of Chisht, the lovely Nijām’), the latter already

677 The opening ritual actually takes place in the beginning of the 17th. However, its timing is always given as the 16th in the *ʿurs* programmes sent out by the *khādims*.

678 Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 371; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 194–195 and Meraj, *Surūd*, 91. The poem is not found in the *divans* of Amīr *Khusrāu*. For a discussion on a performance of this poem, see Anis Miyan’s, Item 3.

discussed above. In the first item, a female protagonist befittingly felicitates the Prophet, who arrives to her courtyard as a handsome bridegroom:

Today, [sing] felicitations in the house of the beloved, oh I would die for him!⁶⁷⁹
I sacrifice myself, time and again, for my beloved, oh I would die for him!

Ali made the canopy, spread the flowers
Set the bed of flowers, hey!
Muhammad has today become the bridegroom.

Today, [sing] felicitations in the house of the beloved, oh I would die for him!

There is only one beloved and the world is the bride
I sacrifice myself for a beloved like that.

Today, [sing] felicitations in the house of the beloved, oh I would die for him!

Bangles decorate his hands, oil decorates his head
The Prophet came swaying to my courtyard
A sacrifice to [his] coming, hey!

Today, [sing] felicitations in the house of the beloved, oh I would die for him!

A staff in his hand, blanket on his shoulders
Followed by the entire community of believers

Today, [sing] felicitations in the house of the beloved, oh I would die for him!⁶⁸⁰

The first section of the poem describes the preparations of a ceremonial canopy and the nuptial bed by Ali, whereas the second focuses on describing the Prophet's appearance: he carries a staff in his hand and a blanket on his shoulders. Bangles adorn his hands and oil (*makhnā*) shines in his hair. Although he arrives to the courtyard of the protagonist, it is made clear in the second verse that the Prophet marries the entire world. Thus the poem refers to the concept of Muhammad being sent as a prophet to the entire world. If time remains after these two items and before it is time to attend the next daily prayer, different qawwali groups start to sing in turns.

In addition to the *quls*, the qawwals' services are required in various *samā'* assemblies in and around the shrine during the *ʿurs*. In contradistinction with the custom followed in smaller shrines, where the participants of the *ʿurs* attend all the programmes as a single group, at Nizamuddin different pilgrims have their individual routines of attending different functions organized in various locations around the Basti. Some of them practically spend the entire *ʿurs* in the courtyard of the shrine and take part in whatever functions occur there, while others stay with their specific Sufi

679 *E main vārī re*, lit. 'oh I am a sacrifice hey'.

680 Meraj, *Surūd*, 361.

brotherhood. Yet others follow a particular qawwali group from one function to another.

The sheer abundance of qawwali performances renders music a major attraction of the celebrations – alongside with the saint himself, of course. At the Nizamuddin shrine, there are relatively few other attractions to compete with qawwali. There is no full-fledged fair (*melā*) with stalls and merry-go-rounds organised in the neighbourhood, nor are there any non-religious events such as the All India Industrial Exhibition that takes place during the *ʿurs* of Gesūdarāz in Gulbarga.

For the qawwals, *ʿurs* is a lucrative period. They have a possibility to practise their profession on multiple occasions over a short period of time. Even if they do not act as religious functionaries like Sufi sheikhs and *khādims*, they are crucial to the proper execution of the *ʿurs*. Their services are in high demand, and since Delhi is home to a relatively small number of qawwali groups, the shrine has to rely on qawwals arriving from outside the city in order to meet the demand for performers. The need for qawwals is all the more pronounced at present as it seems that the Sufis who lay claim to qawwali connoisseurship are reluctant to listen to the hereditary qawwals of the shrine. For this reason, the qawwali performances that take place in various *samāʿ* assemblies are heterogenous and varied.

6.3 Sacred history and lived present: *samāʿ* at the meditation cell of Nizām al-Dīn

The first qawwali performance analysed in this chapter throws light on the dynamics of a *samāʿ* assembly that is attended by a Sufi sheikh and his disciples.⁶⁸¹ All aspects of the occasion – whether they relate to the outward comportment of participants, the selection of poetry, the musical idiom or the venue itself – are connected with the sacred history of the Chishti Nizami *silsilah* in one way or another. The assembly in question is organised at Chilla Shareef in the late morning of the 17th day of both *ʿurs* festivities. Chilla, the meditation cell used by Nizām al-Dīn, is believed to have been the original location of his *jamāʿatkhānah*. It is situated about one kilometre east of the shrine, adjacent to the northern wall of the Mughal emperor Humāyūn's tomb. Still in a dilapidated state in the 1970s when Qureshi did her field work,⁶⁸² the Chilla has now been renovated, painted and whitewashed. Although the city is slowly crawling towards the Chilla, it is still situated in a serene setting flanked by Humayun's tomb, a Sikh gurudwara and a scrubby forest. Seeing wild peacocks in the surrounding trees and hearing their shrill cries is not uncommon.

The rediscovery of the place has been claimed by Khwaja Hasan Nizami, and he initiated the practice of holding *samāʿ* assemblies here. The Chilla is located away from

681 This chapter is a detailed analysis of the *samāʿ* assembly briefly discussed in Viitamäki *forthcoming* a.

682 See the photographs in Qureshi 2006: 97, 143 and 146–147.

the thoroughfares of the neighbourhood, and casual passers-by rarely stray in. Most listeners are disciples in the Sufi order headed by Khwaja Hasan Sani Nizami, the son and deputy of Khwaja Hasan Nizami, and the atmosphere is very intimate. The 'urs is a rare opportunity for the disciples to enjoy the company of their guide who is not very active during the rest of the year due to his considerable age.⁶⁸³ As a result, the five days spent with Khwaja Hasan Sani during the 'urs become an intensive period of Sufi training. The assembly organised at the Chilla represents an important aspect of pilgrimage to Sufi shrines that is sometimes overlooked: the focus of the pilgrims is not exclusively on the saint, but also on being in the company of a living sheikh.

On regular days, the few people visiting the Chilla engage in their devotions in the gallery adjacent to the meditation cell. During the *samā'* assemblies, the cell is opened and Khwaja Hasan Sani takes his place inside, thus explicitly assuming the role of Nizām al-Dīn's present-day representative. His relatives, closest disciples and visiting Sufi dignitaries gather around him, while the rest of the listeners take their seats in the gallery with the qawwals who sit facing him. The distance between Khwaja Hasan Sani and the qawwals is only about four metres and the performers are here able to read even the smallest signs from the face of the *mīr-i mahfil*.

The assembly opens with a *fātiḥah* that is followed by the qawwals' performance. As the time for the assembly is not very long due to the impending noon prayer (*ẓuhr*), only a few qawwali groups perform here. During Qureshi's fieldwork, the stage was exclusively held by Meraj Ahmed, but since then other groups have been invited. During the 'urs of Nizamuddin on the 14th of April 2009, altogether three qawwali groups attended the *samā'* assembly at the Chilla. Meraj Ahmed and the qawwals attached to the Nizamuddin shrine are entitled to perform the ritual items on all occasions during the 'urs festivities, so they had the first turn.

Item 1: Qaul (in Arabic)

Qaul and tarānah *Whose master I am, his master is Ali.*

dar dil dar dil dar dānī
ham tum tanā nānā nā tanānānā re
yalālī yalālī yalā lālālī
yalā lālā yalā lālā yalā lālālī

Whose master I am, his master is Ali.

1st *girah* (in *Let the scripture of Ali's countenance be the faith of Muslims!*

683 Since the 'urs of Nizām al-Dīn in 2012, he has not been able to attend the *samā'* assembly at the Chilla anymore, since moving there from his house in the Basti has proved physically too taxing.

Persian) *We prostrate ourselves towards the prayer niche of Ali's arching eyebrows.*

Qaul *Whose master I am, his master is Ali.*

As was pointed out above, the song text of the *Qaul* is so short that developing it into a full-fledged performance that involves more than repeating a single phrase over and over again necessitates inserting verses into it. This practice is known as *girah lagānā* ('tying a knot').⁶⁸⁴ *Girah* verses can be inserted after any semantically meaningful phrase of the salient text whose import the qawwals wish to elaborate on. In the case of the performance at hand, all the *girah* verses are devotional and connected with Ali. In the course of his performance, Meraj Ahmed initiates altogether five *girahs* out of which four are in Persian and one in Urdu. This already lends the performance an aura of sophistication. Another way to emphasize the novelty of the performance of a common item belonging to the core qawwali repertoire is to introduce *girah* verses in a clearly distinguishable form. This applies particularly to the third *girah*. It consists of five verses taken from a *manqabat* written by Shāh Niyāz. The full text has nine verses, but usually only one or two are inserted into the *Qaul* by other qawwals.

Girah verses are usually sung in recitative while the beat of drums recedes to the background. Sometimes the lines of the *girah* are sung by the leading vocalist alone, but he is frequently lent vocal support by at least part of the group. The last line of the *girah* acts as a punchline leading musically and semantically back to the salient text and it forms an exception to this practice. All the members of the group join in singing it, and it is usually repeated only once. Entire *girah* verses can be repeated after briefly returning to the salient text. Qureshi has observed that if a *girah* is well received by the audience, and for this reason repeated, more verses can be added to it if it is part of a larger whole, like a ghazal or a *qit'ah*.⁶⁸⁵ According to my experience, the opposite is often true. If the *girah* consists of, for instance, three verses, like in the case of the fourth *girah* of the performance at hand, the qawwals invariably repeat only the last one. The last verse of the *girah* has usually the most weight, as well. In this case, imploring the help of Ali climaxes the insert.

In the opinion of Shakeel Hossain, inserting verses into the salient text is among the most misused tools of the qawwal. He contrasts the use of *girah* verses with 'spiritual affinity of the kalām and the vibrancy of the tarz (musical composition)'.⁶⁸⁶ Qureshi makes a similar observation when she notes that the profuse use of *girah* is sometimes censored, because it implies the qawwal's personal expression and

684 See Qureshi 2006: esp. 143–207 for a detailed discussion on various textual and performative techniques used by the qawwals. A general outline of the performance process can be found in a table on page 197.

685 Qureshi 2006: 201.

686 Hossain 2012: 31.

choice.⁶⁸⁷ No doubt, the qawwals performing in formal *samā'* assemblies are not as free to manipulate the text as the non-Sufi performers influenced by qawwali. Madan Gopal Singh and Dhruv Sangari, for example, contest that qawwali allows them to do practically whatever they want with the text. The former, for example, inserts passages from Bertold Brecht and John Lennon to his songs.⁶⁸⁸ The observations of Hossain and Qureshi, on the other hand, suggest that the qawwals' possibilities to express their poetic creativity are much more limited than what emerges in the course of the following chapters. On many occasions, the most favourable audience response is enticed by a skilful use of *girah* verses.

Qaul *Whose master I am, his master is Ali.*

2nd *girah* (in *I am a ḥaidarī, I am a qalandar, I am drunk*⁶⁸⁹
 Persian) *I am a slave of Ali with whom God is pleased*
 I am the chief of the profligates
 Because I am a dog from the alley of God's lion.

Qaul *Whose master I am, his master is Ali.*

3rd *girah* (in *Bravo the might and majesty of the Father of Dust,*⁶⁹⁰ *the pride of humanity*
 Persian) *Ali with whom God is pleased, remover of obstacles, lion of the Omnipotent.*

Friend of the Truth, assignee of Mustafa, ocean overflowing with bounty
Imam of the two worlds, the direction for the prayers of religion and faith.

Prince of the land of pious poverty, king of the clime mystical knowledge
He speaks about God, knows God, sees God and derives his authority from God.

*The Messenger sat on the pulpit and said: 'His master'*⁶⁹¹
So that there would be a proof of his [i.e. Ali's] being the master among the created
beings.

Niyāz, during the resurrection, you will not be destitute

687 Qureshi 2006: 201.

688 See Manuel 2008: 392–393.

689 Both terms, *ḥaidarī* and *qalandar*, refer to the antinomian Sufi brotherhoods. Mentioning them has led to attributing this verse to various qalandars such as Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar of Sehwan (d. 1274), Bū 'Alī Shāh Qalandar of Panipat (d. 1324) as well as the contemporary of Niẓām al-Dīn, Abū Bakr Ṭūsī Ḥaidarī Qalandarī of Delhi.

690 Bū turāb, i.e. Ali.

691 *Maula-y-ash* ('His master) translates the Arabic *maulah* and refers to the hadith that forms the basis of the *Qaul*.

*Since the love and affection for Ali will be your possessions.*⁶⁹²

Qaul *Whose master I am, his master is Ali.*

4th *girah* (in *King of Najaf, Lion of God, cupbearer of Kausar*
Urdu; the *Conqueror of Khaybar, breaker of ranks, brave warrior!*
last verse re-
peated *My situation, in its entirety, is evident to you*
twice) *I am desperate, I am helpless, why should I not be agitated?*

Help [us] now; this is the time for help!
King of Najaf! By Muhammad, you are bound by an oath.

Qaul *Whose master I am, his master is Ali.*

5th *girah* (in *Since the picture of the world has been joined together, Ali has existed*
Persian; the *Since the earth has been formed, the time has been and Ali has existed.*
last verse re-
peated *The king who was the assignee [of Muhammad], was the master, was Ali*
twice) *Ali was the monarch of generosity, bounty and munificence.*

That exalted king, who, in the night of ascension
Was one with Ahmad, the chosen one, was Ali.

Qaul *Whose master I am, his master is Ali.*

6th *girah* (in *Come, oh monarch who sits on the throne...*⁶⁹³
Persian)

5th *girah* re- *Since the picture of the world has been joined together, Ali has existed*
peated *Since the earth has been formed, the time has been [and] Ali has existed.*

Khwaja Hasan Sani and his main guest, Waris Hussain Chishty, a *khādim* from the shrine of Mu‘īn al-Dīn, are stirred by the fifth *girah*, variably attributed to Rūmī and Shams-i Tabrezi. When the qawwals are about to start a new Persian *girah* (6th *girah*), they direct them to return to the previous one. This *girah* becomes the culminating point of the entire number. Khwaja Hasan Sani instructs the qawwals to repeat the final part of the verse in different variations. This leads the qawwals to use another per-

692 For the full text of the *manqabat*, see Niyāz, *Dīvān-i Niyāz Beniyāz* (1929), 69; Meraj, *Surūd*, 58–59. For abridged versions, see Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naḡhmāt*, 355–356; Fārūqī, *Naḡhmāt*, 186.

693 *Ṣāhib sarīr*, lit. ‘one who owns the throne’.

formative technique that is very characteristic to qawwali. This is called *takrār* ('repetition'). Most textual passages are in a qawwali performance repeated at least a few times. This is called *dohrānā* ('repeating, reiterating'), and it is employed in order to give the listeners enough time to grasp the meaning of the verse. *Takrār*, on the other hand, is more extensive and can involve repeating a single phrase for tens or even hundreds of times. The *takrār* is resorted to when some listener is deeply affected by the performance or undergoes a mystical state. Such states are by Sufis attributed to the combined effect of musical and poetic phrase, and upholding them requires repeating the phrase in question until the state abates.

The phrases repeated during the *takrār* are often melodically identical and the aim is not to present melodic improvisations, but to let the listeners extract meanings from the text. This approach differs from *ṭhumrī*, for example, wherein the singer varies the phrase musically in order to highlight different shades of meaning.⁶⁹⁴ In its basic form, the *takrār* leaves the responsibility of deriving the meanings from the text to the listeners. In transcribing the performances in the following chapters, I have used **bold** to indicate all the instances of *takrār*. In practice this means that any line in bold was repeated at least ten times.

5th *gīrah* *There was one, there was Ali.*
elaborated

There is Ali, there was Ali.

There is Ali, there is Ali, there was Ali, there was Ali.

There is Ali, there was Ali, there is Ali, there was Ali.

*That exalted king, who, in the night of ascension
Was one with Ahmad, the chosen one, was Ali.*

Qaul and tarānah *Whose master I am, his master is Ali.*

*dar dil dar dil dar dānī
ham tum tanā nānā nā tanānānā re
yalālīyalālīyalā lālālī
yalā lālāyalā lālāyalā lālālī*

Whose master I am.

During this performance, the qawwals dexterously followed the reactions of the *mūr-i mahfil* and accordingly engaged in *takrār*. Rest of the listeners demonstrated

⁶⁹⁴ See du Perron 2007: 6.

their appreciation of the performance, which prompted the qawwals to extend the *takrār*. The fact that the impetus for initiating and upholding this *takrār* came from the listeners is an excellent demonstration of how a qawwali performance is to a great extent shaped by the audience response. Qureshi has analysed the full range of audience responses and divided them into three groups. The first group that includes bowing the head, prostrating and joining the hands is specific to Sufism, whereas to the second belong the forms of common Indo-Muslim cultural expression, such as swaying, raising the arm and expressing verbal admiration. The third group, again, comprises the manifestations of intense arousal typical to Sufism and covers the responses from uncontrolled movement and crying, to dance, rolling on the ground and, in extreme cases, death.⁶⁹⁵

While all these offer the qawwals clues as to how their performance is received, offering *nazrānah* to the *mīr-i mahfil* constitutes the clearest indication of the audience's approval. This is also a welcome gesture from the qawwals' vantage point, since it contributes to the remuneration they receive. *Nazrānah* is given by the listeners to the *mīr-i mahfil*. It is then delivered to the qawwals during the performance or after their turn is over. The level of expressing respect to the *mīr-i mahfil* when presenting the *nazrānah* varies greatly from a slight bow of head to kissing his hand or feet. In the *samā'* assemblies, where the *mīr-i mahfil* acts as the Sufi guide of the listeners, the latter's gestures tend to be highly reverential, like in the occasion at hand. A listener may also present his *nazrānah* to a fellow-listener, who adds his contribution before they approach the *mīr-i mahfil* together. Thus, *nazrānah* offers a possibility to bond with the *mīr-i mahfil* as well as with other listeners, while it simultaneously establishes a dialogue with the qawwals.

In the formal *samā'* assemblies I have attended, the *nazrānah* is normally a note of five or ten rupees. The *mīr-i mahfil* usually has a stack of crisp notes with him, whereas a listener who has not prepared beforehand is able to get small exchange from the qawwals or from the pile of *nazrānah* lying in front of the *mīr-i mahfil*. Although money is at present the standard form of *nazrānah*, I have once witnessed an elderly gentleman gifting his watch to the qawwals in the *khānqāh* of Shāh Khāmosh in Hyderabad. Over the past decade, I have also observed an increase in the value of regular *nazrānah* from two or five rupees to ten. Larger amounts are considered ostentatious, and even the smallest amounts are often hidden inside the palms or folded. Although money is a key factor in the interaction between the performers and the listeners, it is also something that needs to be kept hidden and moved around discreetly. This seems to apply especially to India and it forms a stark contrast to the practice prevailing in Pakistan, where showers of notes can be rained on both the *mīr-i mahfil* and the qawwals and where the listeners may compete over becoming the most prominent

695 Qureshi 2006: 120–128

patron of the occasion.⁶⁹⁶ In the formal *samā'* assemblies in India, such actions would be rectified in strong words. However, they are not uncommon during the more informal qawwali sessions in the shrine courtyards where the presence of money can be conspicuous and the denominations of one hundred or five hundred rupees are commonly presented by the more affluent listeners.

The impetus for giving *nazrānah* varies from purely social motivations bearing no relation to the performance itself to appreciating the song text or music. On the coarsest level, it is common to offer *nazrānah* whenever a name of a saintly personage is mentioned. However, the more subtle the level of listening to the text, the more closely the listener synchronizes the giving of *nazrānah* to the poetic meaning. Of course, the reasons behind being touched by the text can be deeply personal and not necessarily stem from hearing a particularly artistic poetic line or a virtuoso performance. In her typology of the audience responses, Qureshi separates the spontaneous, expressive reactions from presenting *nazrānah*.⁶⁹⁷ It should be noted, however, that the two are interconnected. Even a person who has undergone a mystical state involving involuntary movements and, possibly, loss of senses usually solicits the *mīr-i mahfil* with *nazrānah* after regaining his senses.

In the present case, the comportment of the listeners is restrained and none of them exhibits any signs of violent mystical states; the tendency is rather to turn inwards than openly exhibit the experience. When the successfully performed *Qaul* is concluded, the qawwals proceed to the *Rang*.

Item 2: *Rang* (in Hindi)

Rang *Today there is colour (Let's go!), O mother, there is colour, hey!*
There is colour in the house of my beloved!
Meeting⁶⁹⁸ with the darling love (Meeting with my beloved!), joyful celebrations⁶⁹⁹ (In my house!)
[Will take place] in this courtyard! (See!)

When the qawwals sing the line *is ānḡan meṅ* ('in this courtyard'), they gesture around them, towards their physical environment, and thus connect the poetic text

696 See, e.g. Huda 2007: 684–685.

697 Qureshi 2006: 122.

698 Both *milāvarā* and *badhāvarā* are apparently nouns formed from *milāvā* and *badhāvā*, respectively, by substituting the ending *-ā* with *-arā* in analogy with *jīyā* and *jīyarā*. One of the *thumrī* lyrics studied by du Perron substitutes the word *papīhā* with *papīharā*. See du Perron 2007: 32. The ending accentuates the archaic impression, but does not affect the meaning of the nouns.

699 In the word *anad*, the nasalization of the word *anaṅd* ('bliss'; the word is a Braj Bhasha variant of *ānaṅd*) has been dropped. However, the remaining nasal sound nasalizes both syllables of such a short word. *Ānaṅd badhāṅī* is an idiom denoting either joyful celebrations or congratulations. See McGregor 2000: 86.

with the venue where the *samāʿ* assembly is taking place. As a result they appear to be saying that the beloved can be met right here, today. In this passage, the qawwals employ a specific type of *takrār* called *takrār ka ḥalqah* ('encirclement of repetition'). According to Qureshi, this denotes inserting fillers such as the saints' names, titles or exclamations to highlight the transition from one repeated statement to the next one. She further notes that the filler and the text unit are often contrasted by performing them in solo-group responsory.⁷⁰⁰ In comparison to regular *takrār*, *takrār kā ḥalqah* enables the qawwals to emphasize a certain aspect of the repeated phrase and thus direct the listeners' understanding of its meaning. In the present case, one part of the qawwals keeps exclaiming *dekho* ('See!') after the phrase *is āṅgan meñ* ('in this courtyard') in order to indicate that it is to be repeated. Whenever the qawwals employ *takrār kā ḥalqah* in the course of the following chapters, I transcribe the fillers within brackets.⁷⁰¹

Drawing a parallel between poetic images and the actual, lived reality also paves the way to the following passage of the *Rang*:

Rang ***I found my master!***
 Nijām al-Dīn Auliyāʿ, Nijām al-Dīn Auliyāʿ! (My master!)
 I found my master! (O, o, o bravo!)

1st *girah* (in *Except for me, who is a master of destiny like this?*
 Urdu; re- *The fate gave me this kind of master of mine!*
 peated
 twice)

Rang ***I found my master! (O, o, o bravo!)***

2nd *girah* (in *Everyone is possessed, devoted, infatuated,*
 Urdu) *mad and enamoured of his master; I am [all this, but] for my own master.*

Rang ***I found my master! (O, o, o bravo!)***
 Nijām al-Dīn Auliyāʿ, Nijām al-Dīn Auliyāʿ! (My master!)
 Nijām al-Dīn Auliyāʿ illuminates the world
 He illuminates the world, illuminates the universe.
 Nijām al-Dīn Auliyāʿ, Nijām al-Dīn Auliyāʿ, Nijām al-Dīn Auliyāʿ, Nijām al-Dīn Auliyāʿ!
 I have seen no other such colour, (Divine Beloved!) Nijām al-Dīn Auliyāʿ!

700 Qureshi 2006: 205.

701 Square brackets indicate the words that have been interpolated for the sake of clarity or syntax. Angle brackets in the transcription indicate what the qawwals sing in cases where I have been unable to fully transcribe the text from disturbed recording or because the qawwals pronounce the passage inaccurately.

The poem celebrates the connection with Nizām al-Dīn but the *gīrah* verses extend this association to the relationship between the present-day Sufi disciples and their guide. At the Chilla, this acquires pronounced significance since the audience consists of listeners who share the experience of being disciples in a single Sufi brotherhood. The qawwals capitalize on this in their performance by emphasizing the phrase *mohe pīr pāyo* ('I found my master') through *takrār* and *gīrah* verses that elaborate that affiliation. After the section on finding one's Sufi guide, the qawwals add two Hindavi verses (3rd and 4th *gīrahs*). The first is what the qawwals call 'a special item' (*khāṣṣ cīz*). This specific verse is sung in Delhi only by Meraj Ahmed and his sons. The verse is in reality a *dohā*, but the qawwals sing it in four sections as if it were a *rubāʿī*. Incidentally, its rhyme pattern is also the same (AABA) as in most *rubāʿīs*.⁷⁰² The other Hindi *gīrah* is a famous *dohā* attributed to Amīr Khusrau.

3rd *gīrah* (in *How glistening glistening is*
Hindi) *She who sleeps covered with a veil.*
In the guise of Ganj-i Shakkar
The lovely beloved is sleeping.

Rang *I, another such colour (Divine Beloved!)*

4th *gīrah* (in *Khusrau, it was the wedding night, when I stayed up with the beloved*
Hindi) *The body was mine, the soul was beloved's and both were of the same colour.*

Rang *I have seen no other such colour, (Divine Beloved!) Nijām al-Dīn!*
My heart cherishes only your colour.

After the obligatory items, Khwaja Hasan Sani indicates that Meraj Ahmed and the local qawwals should give way to other performers. Meraj Ahmed's son, however, inquires in a hurt voice if that was all the time allotted to the Delhi qawwals. Eventually, they are allowed to sing one more item. The choice is a poem classified as *mubārak* ('congratulatory poem') in *Surūd*, and it is often sung on festive occasions. The ghazal, *ʿĪd-gāh-i mā gharībān kū-yi to* ('Your lane is where we poor celebrate 'īd') is attributed to Amīr Khusrau, yet it is not found in his *dīvān*.⁷⁰³ Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt* records some of the verses sung by Meraj Ahmed, yet they come from two different ghazals, one attributed to Khusrau (verse 7 and the *maqṭaʿ*) and the other to Zāmin 'Alī (d. 1855; verse 4).⁷⁰⁴ Fārūqī's *Naghmāt* contains a three-verse *qīṭ'ah* that corresponds to

702 More on this adjunct item, see Qureshi 2006: 30–32.

703 For a discussion of another occasion where this poem was performed, see Viitamäki 2009: 335–340.

704 See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 318 and 313, respectively.

the verses 1, 2 and 3 of Meraj’s version. However, the editor classifies it as anonymous.⁷⁰⁵ Two verses (verses 4 and 5) are mentioned by Murād ‘Alī Ṭālī’ in a collection of hagiographies of Hyderabadī Sufis. He mentions that they were sung during the funeral procession of Maḥv Abū’l-‘Ūlā’ī (d. 1869). Interestingly, he contests that these verses constitute a *rubā’ī* written by Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband.⁷⁰⁶ The modern standard version of this ghazal appears only in *Surūd*, where it contains the verses 1, 2, 3 and 7 of the present performance.⁷⁰⁷

The item demonstrates that even established performance standards can be patchwork items that have acquired their shape only recently. It also illustrates how new performance standards develop, if all the verses share the same metre and rhyme and can be sung to the same melody. Despite the disparate sources of individual verses, the ghazal forms a coherent whole. This applies even to the devotional verse (verse 3) that evokes the saint’s name. Both his sobriquet, Maḥbūb-i Ilāhī (‘The Divine Beloved’) and the reference to sacrificing all the beloved ones for the sake of his beauty connect it to the discourse of passionate love that pervades the poem.

The first two verses of the ghazal describe the lovers at the lane of the beloved, where they have arrived to receive the alms of love and beauty, just like the beggars receive alms near the *īd* grounds (*īdgāh*) after the communal prayers on the festive days:

Item 3: A *mubārak* in Persian

1st verse *Your lane is where we poor celebrate īd*
Seeing the joyous day of īd, your face.

2nd verse *I offer you a hundred crescent moons of īd*
The arch of your eyebrows is our crescent.

⁷⁰⁵ See Fārūqī, *Nagh̃māt*, 171.

⁷⁰⁶ See Ṭālī’ 1972: 157. The first verse of the *rubā’ī* (verse 4 in Meraj’s performance) is also the *maṭla’* of Zāmin ‘Alī’s ghazal. In qawwali performances, it is often followed by the second verse of Zāmin ‘Alī’s ghazal:

Kaaba of heart, the direction of my prayers is your face
Place of prostration for lovers are your eyebrows.

⁷⁰⁷ See Meraj, *Surūd*, 70. This is also the version recorded by popular qawwals like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. See, e.g. Nusrat 2002: track 3. I was initially hesitant to include the entire text of the ghazal here, since Meraj Ahmed did not want to divulge it in *Surūd*, perhaps out of fear that other performers might appropriate his ‘special item’. However, now that the text has been published together with a recording in *Jashn-e-Khusrau: A collection* that is readily available in India, I saw no obstacle for providing the text here. Interestingly, the version performed for *Jashn-e-Khusrau: A Collection* includes three further verses after verse 4 of the present performance: 1) the verse by Zāmin ‘Alī quoted above; 2) *Your hair* (mū-yi to) *has made the hyacinth perplexed* (incorrectly transliterated as *kū-yi to* [‘your lane’]) and 3) *My Turk! The moon is your slave*. The latter two verses belong to the ghazal attributed to Khusrau in Nūr al-Ḥasan’s *Nagh̃māt*. See, Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Nagh̃māt*, 318.

3rd verse *Nizām al-Dīn, the divine beloved*
All the beloved ones sacrifice themselves for the sake of your face.

The audience is stirred by the mentioning of the saint's epithet. This verse turns the poem into a depiction of the relationship between a Sufi disciple and his guide, which is in the collective imagination of the Chishti-Nizami brotherhood epitomized by the bond between Amīr Khusrau and Nizām al-Dīn. This relationship continues to be an ideal of contemporary disciples, and the performance provokes them to approach Khwaja Hasan Sani with *nazrānah*. This leads to a prolonged *takrār* of the line that includes the name of the saint.

The above three verses are part of the standard version belonging to the core repertoire, but Meraj Ahmed once again demonstrates the superiority of his personal repertoire by inserting three more verses into his performance. These verses employ images of passionate love and refer to the theme of a lover's dependence on his beloved. In this manner, the verse resonates with the theme of begging introduced in the *maṭlaʿ*:

4th verse *We destitute have arrived to your lane*
[To receive] alms⁷⁰⁸ from the beauty of your face.

5th verse *Extend your hand towards our [begging] basket*
Praise to your hand and to your arm!

6th verse *What do I know about the Kaaba and the temple?*
I keep prostrating towards your face.

7th verse *How long will you be asking who killed Khusrau?*
It was your coquettish glance, your eyes, your eyebrows.

Once Meraj has finished, he has to give way to Mohammed Ahmed Warsi. The latter had, during previous years, been given a privileged place in the assemblies of Khwaja Hasan Sani. However, assuming the role of an ambassador of authentic qawwali music outside the Sufi context and even prioritizing a concert over *ʿurs* festivities on one occasion impaired his status in the shrine. On one particular occasion, Khwaja Hasan Sani had been making frequent, critical remarks about Mohammed Ahmed's singing and his understanding of poetry. For a well-trained and self-assertive qawwal hailing from a family of musicians formerly attached to the Rampur court, this verged on public humiliation. Even so, the qawwal kept attending the assemblies of Khwaja Hasan Sani, who is recognized as a significant patron of qawwals. By 2009,

708 *Shaiʿan li'llāh*, lit. 'something, by God.' This is an Arabic phrase used by beggars calling for alms.

when the public attention around Mohammed Ahmed had somewhat abated, the relationship between the Sufi master and the qawwal improved.⁷⁰⁹ Whenever Mohammed Ahmed is performing for Khwaja Hasan Sani and his disciples, he seeks to demonstrate his musical skills and superb command over a wide range of poetry. In the assembly organised in 2009, he began with the *maqta'* from a ghazal by Amīr Khusrau:

Item 4: An individual *shi'r* in Persian

*Cry out in front of his door, Khusrau, because that king
Knows that it is my beggar calling.⁷¹⁰*

The choice of the song text is highly unusual. First of all, the verse belongs to a ghazal that is rarely, if ever, performed by the qawwals. The treatment of the text is even more striking. It is a normal practice among the qawwals to perform select verses of a ghazal instead of singing the entire poem. However, only singing the concluding verse is exceptional. Yet, here Mohammed Ahmed builds the entire performance on musical improvisations woven around this single verse. His performance is immediately recognizable as qawwali, but he demonstrates much stricter adherence to the grammar of raga and tala than qawwals usually do. Melodically, the performance adheres closely to raga Jaunpuri, and rhythmically, to *pashto tāl* of seven beats. Between the rhythmical sections, where qawwals would normally insert *girah* verses in recitative, Mohammed Ahmed and his brother Hamid, the second leading vocalist, sing prolonged melodic improvisations using the words of the verse (*bol tān*). These improvisations are more reminiscent of the quick-paced final section of a *khayāl* performance, the so-called 'little *khayāl*' (*choṭā khayāl*), than of qawwali. The novel approach is well received, and Khwaja Hasan Sani is touched to the verge of tears. The qawwals keep an eye-contact with him, following his slightest reactions. They often finish an improvisatory passage and return to the rhythmical section when he merely nods his head to one side, as if removing one musical passage away from the way of the next one. The *mūr-i mahfil* also expresses his appreciation by offering *nazrānah* to some of his family members and closest disciples who sit next to him. They, of course, give this money back to him, and it is placed on a heap of notes that keeps growing in front of him.

The choice of the text is also well calculated, since it continues the theme of poverty from the previous item. The verse describes Amīr Khusrau as a beggar at the door of a king announcing his presence with a cry. The verse plays with the meaning of

⁷⁰⁹ A similar case of conflict between stardom and Sufi practice that aims at obliterating the ego has been discussed by Robert Rozehnal. He notes that a deputy of the Chishti-Sabiri sheikh Zauqī Shāh, Shahīd Allāh Farīdī, refused to allow either the Sabri Brothers or Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan to perform in his assemblies because he deemed their celebrity incommensurate with the practice of *samā'*. See Rozehnal 2007a: 222–224.

⁷¹⁰ For the ghazal, see Khusrau, *Kulliyāt*, 90.

the poet's pen name, *Khusrau* ('emperor'). He is only a supplicant at the door of 'that king' (*ān sulṭān*) – a phrase that indicates Nizām al-Dīn, the Monarch of Sheikhs (*Sulṭān al-Mashā'ikh*). The verse manages to take into account the actual performance context as well: the participants literally sit in front of the door to the meditation cell of the Monarch of Sheikhs.

After completing *Khusrau's* poem, Mohammed Ahmed continues with praising Nizām al-Dīn by a Persian *manqabat* written by Shāh Niyāz. A positive response to poems by this eminent Sufi is guaranteed anywhere in South Asia. During this item, the qawwals concentrate on delivering the textual message, rather than engaging in vocal artistry. In the course of their performance, they sang five verses (verses 1, 2, 4, 8 and 9) of the nine included in the full version.⁷¹ Niyāz begins the poem with devotional praise:

Item 5: A *manqabat* in Persian

- 1st verse *Heart, reach your petitioning hand to the court of the king of kings
The order of religion and creed, God's mercy upon him.*
- 2nd verse *Prince, who adorns the world, protector of religion and faith
King of kings who shares in the status of Ali, the glory of the Prophet and is aware of
the Truth.*
- 3rd verse *You are a pearl in the ocean of seclusion, a rose in the garden of ascetic solitude
Your form is that of a human being, yet you manifest the essence of God.*

The second line of the above verse is perhaps the most a poet can say in the praise of a Sufi saint; it is difficult to imagine what more a human being could be than a manifestation of God's essence. After the verse, the qawwals jump to the end of the poem. Abridging a ghazal and reorganizing its verses often seems haphazard and may simply follow the order of verses as they occur to the qawwal during the performance. However, in this instance the choice seems more conscious. After the initial praise reaches its climax, the qawwals turn to verses where Niyāz resorts to the imagery of passionate love. The penultimate verse describes the emaciation of a passionate lover. The theme keeps echoing in the *maqta'* that states that the separation is not eternal and the beloved will become the friend and companion of the lover in death:

- 4th verse *The passion for the Divine Beloved has made me like this*

⁷¹ See Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 70–71. Both Nūr al-Ḥasan's and Fārūqī's *Naghmāt* include an abridged version, including verses 1, 2, 4 and 9 of the original. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 356; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 187. *Surūd*, on the other hand, records the entire poem. See Meraj, *Surūd*, 64–65.

Were an artist to paint my picture, he would make it into the form of a sigh.

5th verse *Why grieve over leaving from this world alone, Niyāz*
If the Monarch of Sheikhs is the friend of your soul and your fellow traveller?

Conceptualising the relationship between a disciple and his guide or between a human being and God in the framework of passionate love features prominently in Sufi poetry written in India prior to the mid-nineteenth century, when the authors and their audiences increasingly had begun to hail from among the emerging Muslim middle classes.⁷¹² Notwithstanding that this convention has become increasingly rare in contemporary Sufi poetry and public qawwali performances, such poetry is still an essential component of intimate *samā'* assemblies like the ones organised at the Chilla.

The last group to perform also hails from Rampur. Majid Warsi continues with the theme of passionate love by performing four verses of a ghazal by Khusrau that in his *dīvān* comprises eight verses.⁷¹³ He begins with an extended vocal introduction (*alāp*) that does not employ words and is not tied to the musical metre. In certain musical genres such as *dhrupād*, the *alāp* occupies a major part of the performance and may last up to one hour, whereas in qawwali the *alāp* is usually very short or can be omitted altogether. However, it helps the qawwals to settle the melodic framework for their performance as well as focus the attention of listeners. In the present performance, Majid Warsi emphasizes the *alāp* in order to give his performance a more classical flavour. In a similar vein, he inserts several improvisatory passages using the vowel sound -a (*ākār tān*) in between the poetic lines.

Item 6: A ghazal in Persian

<*alāp*>
1st verse *You robbed the soul from the body and yet are within the soul*
You gave me pain but are the medicine as well.

2nd verse *With the sword of coquetry you ruined the kingdom of heart*
<*ākār tān*>

712 See, e.g. Green 2010 for an analysis of the works of Iftikhār 'Alī Shāh Vaṭān, a late nineteenth-century Hyderabadī Sufī poet.

713 See Khusrau, *Kulliyāt*, 275. Majid Warsi performs verses 1, 3, 4, and 8. This is also the version found in *Surūd*. See Meraj, *Surūd*, 92. Both Nūr al-Ḥasan's and Fārūqī's *Naghmat* include also verse 2 of the full text:

You tore my chest open [for everyone to see]
Yet, you are still hidden in my chest.

See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmat*, 170; Fārūqī, *Naghmat*, 93–94.

And yet, you are the ruler of this wasteland.

3rd verse *'Both worlds! you told the price of yourself*
Raise the bid, as it still sells cheap.

4th verse *Old age and worshipping beauties do not go well together*
Khusrāu, how long will you remain agitated?

The musical skills of the qawwals are lauded by Khwaja Hasan Sani. After a slow-paced performance, Majid Warsi concludes with a more energetic number, a *manqabat* by Niyāz in praise of Muʿīn al-Dīn. The item is among the most popular Persian *manqabats* in praise of the saint. It is bound to receive favourable response in this occasion because of the presence Waris Hussain, a *khādim* from Ajmer. Majid Warsi sings five verses (verses 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7) of the seven found in the original.⁷¹⁴

Before starting the *manqabat* itself, the qawwals sing an introductory verse. Introductory verses are indiscriminately called *rubāʿī* ('quatrain') after the poetic form most commonly used for this purpose. However, also other poetic forms are employed as *rubāʿīs* in qawwali performances. Individual couplets from ghazals and *masnavīs* are perhaps the most prevalent, while *dohās* often preface *gīts*.

The *rubāʿī* has a twofold purpose. First, it prepares the ground for the main item, tuning the listeners to it. In *samāʿ* assemblies that feature several qawwali groups the prescribed thematic sequence of poems can be met through the introductory verses. By singing a *rubāʿī*, the qawwal can cover the devotional poems of praise within a few verses and then move on to love poems.

Concerning the second function of *rubāʿī* Qureshi notes that introductory verses offer the qawwals an opportunity to test the listeners' reactions to different languages and themes. Once they have begun singing the main item, it is impossible to take recourse to another text in the middle of the song. However, *rubāʿīs* give the qawwals time to observe the audience and select a suitable text accordingly. Qureshi has observed that the language of the *rubāʿī* can be hierarchically higher than that of the main item, but never lower. Thus, Persian or Hindi verse can introduce an Urdu poem, but not vice versa.⁷¹⁵

The *rubāʿī* can also be skipped over, especially if its function in testing the reactions of the audience has been rendered useless by a request (*farmāʿish*) from the *mīr-i mahfil*. The qawwals also omit the *rubāʿī* if they can be sure of the success of the item they are going to sing or if the time is limited, like in the *samāʿ* assembly at hand. In

714 See Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 58–59. For an abridged version (verses 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7), see Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmat*, 293; Fārūqī, *Naghmat*, 155. *Surūd*, again, records the full text. See Meraj, *Surūd*, 63.

715 Qureshi 2006: 195–196.

the case of Majid Warsi's final item, the *rubā'ī* seems to merely offer the listeners some taste of the item that is going to follow instead of testing their reactions.

Item 7: A *manqabat* in Persian

- 1st *rubā'ī* (in Persian) *The boat has sunk to the whirlpool of calamity*
Give protection to the powerless who are defeated!
By the claim of 'Uṣmān Hārūnī [over you]
Help, Mu'īn al-Dīn Cishtī!
- 1st verse *Master of masters, Mu'īn al-Dīn*
Pride of the universe, Mu'īn al-Dīn.
- 2nd verse *An explanation of the secret of the Truth, Mu'īn al-Dīn*
A sign of the Signless, Mu'īn al-Dīn.
- 3rd verse *You are where the eternal light manifests and is unveiled*⁷¹⁶
Sun of the world, Mu'īn al-Dīn!
- 4th verse *Master of the no-place and the holy station!*
The sky is your threshold, Mu'īn al-Dīn.
- 5th verse *Niyāz, if you want intimacy with the truth*
Keep repeating: Mu'īn al-Dīn.

716 Distinguishing between an *izāfat* construction and the conjunction *va/o* seems to be difficult for qawwals when they sing Persian texts. In this case, the line does not make much sense when read as the qawwals do, as the words *mazhar* ('manifestation', or, more technically, 'a locus of manifestation') and *jalvagāh* ('place of manifestation, place where the bride is unveiled') are more or less synonymous. The qawwals' reading would render the meaning as: 'The unveiling place of the the locus of manifestation of the eternal light.' The original text uses the co-ordinating conjunction: *mazhar o jalvagāh-i nūr-i qidam*, lit. 'Locus of manifestation and the place of unveiling of the eternal light.' For the original text, see Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 59. All the qawwali anthologies, however, record the variant with the *izāfat*. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 293; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 155 and Meraj, *Surūd*, 63.

Another grammatical slip often encountered in the Persian pronunciation of the qawwals is the turning of *e muet* required by the metre into the unstressed *-ah* in the end of the word. This usually happens with verbs, an imperfect turning into a perfect participle. Thus, in the first line of a qawwali standard by Amīr Khusrau, *khābar-am rasīd imshab ki nigār khvāhī āmad* ('The news reached me tonight that you, beloved, will arrive') the imperfect verb *rasīd* is frequently changed into the perfect participle *rasīdah*. The line still makes sense even if the grammar is not streamlined. For the original text, see Khusrau, *Kulliyāt*, 196–197, which reads *khābar-am shudast k'imshab bar-i yār khvāhī āmad* ('I was informed that you would come to the side of [your] friend tonight'). Both the *Naghmāt* anthologies use the variant with *rasīdah*, whereas *Surūd* reads *rasīd*. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 109; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 67 and Meraj, *Surūd*, 86.

1st verse *Master of masters, Mu‘īn al-Dīn.*

The pen name of the Sufi master entices the listeners to stand up and present *nazrānah*. After energetic *takrār* of the last verse, Majid Warsi introduces a long improvisatory passage, which proves tedious to the listeners. The elated mood is disrupted, and Khwaja Hasan Sani indicates the qawwals to close the performance. He then ends the assembly with a *du‘ā*. The sugar candies blessed during the *fātiḥah* are distributed as *tabarruk*, and the crowd disperses.

The *samā‘* assembly at the Chilla offers an excellent example of qawwali in a Sufi *khānqāh*. The audience consists of disciples of one brotherhood, and the qawwals expertly intertwine the experience of being a Sufi disciple with poetic images revolving around Nizām al-Dīn and his favourite disciple Amīr Khusrau. The site where Nizām al-Dīn used to engage in his spiritual practices becomes the nexus that mediates between these two realities.

In such cases the role of the *mīr-i maḥfil* acquires special weight. Although the qawwals always attempt to sing in a way that would appeal to the widest possible range of listeners, they keep an especially close eye on the *mīr-i maḥfil*, since his reactions reflect strongly on the listeners, especially if they are his disciples. During such occasions, the disciples express their enthusiasm with a flow of *nazrānah* whenever their Sufi guide is affected by the performance. Such behaviour can be seen as a practical way of pursuing the ideal of *fanā fī’l-shaikḥ* (‘annihilation in the sheikh’).

Knowing the aesthetic sensitivities of the key listeners Khwaja Hasan Sani and Waris Husain Chishty, the qawwals selected the song texts and musical idiom correspondingly. In the case of song texts, they gave preference to Persian and Hindavi and selected items that were somehow exceptional, either due to being either different from the common standard version featuring in the core repertoire (3rd item) or seldom heard (4th item). Musically, they consciously emphasized adherence to raga and tala. Mohammed Ahmed even took a bold step of shaping his performance of a single verse of Amīr Khusrau so that it resembled *khayāl* singing. However, he cleverly kept this approach separate from the more conventional, text-oriented qawwali in his second item (5th item). Majid Warsi was less successful in this respect. Although his extended improvisations before the actual text were well received, similar passages set in between the verses proved less welcome. His ill-timed improvisation immediately after an energetic *takrār* sunk the mood and brought the assembly to close.

6.4 Guiding Sufi disciples through music and poetry: *samāʿ* at Khwaja Hall

In the evening of the day when *samāʿ* is listened to at the Chilla, Khwaja Hasan Sani organizes another program in Khwaja Hall.⁷¹⁷ Khwaja Hall is an imposing building south of the Nizamuddin shrine, built next to the house of Khwaja Hasan Sani. On the one end stands a dome that dominates the view over the Basti. It houses the tombs of Khwaja Hasan Nizami and his wife, Khwaja Bano. Adjacent to the mausoleum is a long, rectangular hall which is used for the functions of the Sufi brotherhood. Behind it, hidden from the public view, are the accommodation facilities for disciples who arrive to the 'urs from far distances. The building was designed by Khwaja Hasan Nizami's disciple, the renowned architect Fayazuddin Nizami (d. 1977), who was nicknamed *Bihzād-i Dakkan* after the celebrated Timurid painter. In addition to Khwaja Hall, Fayazuddin has designed the Hamdard University Library building in Delhi as well as several public buildings in Hyderabad constructed during the reign of the last Nizam, Osman Ali Khan (r. 1911–1948) and after his dominions were annexed to India. It is indicative of the influence of Khwaja Hasan Nizami that Khwaja Hall is the only contemporary building of monumental proportions in the Basti.

During the 'urs festivities, two programs are organized in Khwaja Hall.⁷¹⁸ On the 17th, a seminar on either Amīr *Khusrau* or Niẓām al-Dīn takes place. This is followed by *langar* and *samāʿ*. On the 18th, there is an evening concert of Hindustani classical music. Many members of the Delhi *gharānā* are disciples of Khwaja Hasan Sani and their performances fill most of the evening, but celebrated musicians from other *gharānās* have performed there as well. The current head of the Delhi *gharānā*, Iqbal Ahmed Khan is always last in turn, and he invariably sings some poem written by or attributed to Amīr *Khusrau*.

The members of the Sufi brotherhood form the core audience of all the programmes, but, in addition, each of them attracts a specific attendance. The seminar is attended by scholars, Urdu poets and, occasionally, state dignitaries. The occasion represents an intellectual approach to Sufism and focuses on pondering over its significance in the history and culture of India in a scholarly framework. The concert of Hindustani music, on the other hand, attracts musicians, their students as well as members of the culturally aware intelligentsia of the city. While the audience enjoys the musical recitals, the performers explore the significance of Sufism for music through their art.

The audience of the *samāʿ* assembly, on the other hand, gathers together Khwaja Hasan Sani's disciples as well as other Sufis, who arrive there in small bands. The prevalence of Sufi listeners is partly a result of the late timing; for everyone else than seri-

717 During the field work of Qureshi in the 1970s, the venue was also known as Qawwali Hall. See, Qureshi 2006.

718 The members of the brotherhood also celebrate the 'urs of Khwaja Hasan Nizami in the Khwaja Hall on 18th Dhu'l-Hijja.

ous Sufi devotees, the *samāʿ* assembly takes place hopelessly late by Delhi standards. The programme is every year scheduled to begin at 9:30 PM, but the overlong speeches during the seminar and the distribution of *langar* regularly push it to 11 or 12 PM. On 14 April 2009, the *samāʿ* started about 11:30 PM and continued until 3:30 AM. No ritual precedes the *samāʿ* in Khwaja Hall. A short *fātiḥah* and laying flowers on the tombs of Khwaja Hasan Nizami and Khwaja Bano follows the seminar. This is also when the local qawwals sing brief *Qaul* and *Rang*. When *samāʿ* proper begins, it is preceded by a short recitation from the Koran.

In Khwaja Hall, the qawwals sit on a low platform facing Khwaja Hasan Nizami's tomb. Khwaja Hasan Sani sits on their right side with the guests of honour and the prominent members of the brotherhood. Other persons of note fill the front rows on the both sides of the empty space that is left between the listeners and the performers. Unlike in the Chilla, where Khwaja Hasan Sani is hidden from the view of those who sit outside the actual meditation cell, in Khwaja Hall, he is seen by everyone. Correspondingly, he is able to monitor all his disciples and guide them in proper *adab*, if needed. It is worth noting that despite the presence of the tomb in Khwaja Hall, it does not play a prominent role during the programmes organized there. Instead, the performances are essentially directed to Khwaja Hasan Sani.

Ever since I first observed a *samāʿ* assembly in Khwaja Hall in October 2004, Meraj Ahmed has been the only local qawwal to sing there and even his appearances have been sporadic. Usually, the first turn is given to Mohammed Ahmed. In 2009, he began his performance with a long *naghmah-yi quddūsi*. *Naghmah*, played on harmonium, is the only instance of instrumental music in a qawwali performance. It is frequently omitted, like in the Chilla, where the short time was too precious to waste on an item which rarely stirs the audience and leads to presenting *nazrānah* to the *mūr-i mahfil*.

The most classical *naghmah* is called *naghmah-yi quddūsi*. It emulates the *zīkr* formula *allāh hū*, both rhythmically and melodically. As the name indicates, its origins are traced to the *samāʿ* assemblies of the celebrated Chishti Sabiri master 'Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī (d. 1537).⁷¹⁹ Otherwise, the *naghmah* is usually based on the melody of the item the qawwals are about to sing.

In the present case, the *naghmah* is followed by a leisurely *alāp* before Mohammed Ahmed turns to the Persian *rubāʿī* which consists of the opening verses of a ghazal attributed to Quṭb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī.⁷²⁰ The improvisatory passage has attuned the audience to the performance, and their anticipation of the textual content gives the first few words much weight. Since the time is not a limitation in Khwaja Hall – *samāʿ* could, in theory, continue until the next morning prayer (*fajr*) – Mohammed Ahmed lets the melody and the text unfold slowly in a dialogue with the other members of the group. The *rubāʿī* leads smoothly to the anonymous *qitʿah* that serves as the

719 Qureshi 2006: 45.

720 For the full ghazal, see Quṭb al-Dīn, *Dīvān*, 118. For abridged versions, see Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmat*, 170 and Fārūqī, *Naghmat*, 94.

salient text.⁷²¹ It continues to elaborate the theme of bowing one's head to the threshold of the beloved and graving for his miracle-working glance. The transition from the *radīf* of the *rubā'ī* (-āz) to that of the *qīṭ'ah* (-āz-i mā) creates an impression of a sonic cohesion. The two *gīrah* verses also address the topic of the beloved's glance, and the item in its entirety reveals a conscious planning and subtle literary sensitivity from the part of the qawwals. The poetic themes of the threshold and the glance are also a clever way to start a *samā'* assembly. They create an association with the poems of praise that are the normative way to begin *samā'*, but simultaneously they manage to reach into the poetic realm of passionate love. The refined performance is not wasted on the audience, who responds enthusiastically.

Item 1: A *qīṭ'ah* in Persian

naghmah-yi quddūsī

<alāp>

1st *rubā'ī* (in Persian) *For a [whole] lifetime, I have rubbed my indigent head against your threshold
Perhaps I will be honoured by a soirée where I can meet you.*

*When a slave is allowed a graceful glance from the master
– I am a slave and you are the master – see that my work gets done.*

1st verse *My indigent forehead is in the dust of your threshold
My long life is a sacrifice for one glance of yours.*

1st *gīrah* *It is about one glance of yours
But my life is at stake.*

1st verse *My long life is a sacrifice for one glance of yours.*

2nd *gīrah* *The reflection of his beauty illuminates the world of our contingent existence
One coquettish glance of the beloved is the selling price of my faith.⁷²²*

1st verse *My long life is a sacrifice for one glance of yours.*

2nd verse *Why would I head to the infirmary of the Messiah?
Your ruby [lip] that sells sugar is enough to cure me.*

721 The text is found only in Fārūqī's *Naghmāt*. See Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 35.

722 This *gīrah* is the *maṭla'* of a ghazal written by Shāh Bahlūl. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 39; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 33; Meraj, *Surūd*, 112.

3rd verse *Sometimes your face appears in my dark corner
O sun of the world who nurture me, a speck of dust.*

1st verse *A sacrifice for one glance of yours.*

After the sophisticated Persian ghazal, Khwaja Hasan Sani instructs the qawwals to sing a simple Hindi *gīt* attributed to Amīr Khusrau. Instead of a refined chain of associated poetic images, its aesthetic effect stems from a single word, *meharvā*. The word *meharvā* ('thundercloud') is derived from Sanskrit *megharavā* appearing in the Mahabharata.⁷²³ It is a highly unusual word and its use is carefully calculated. It gives the text a definitely archaic flavour and efficiently shapes the images evoked in the listeners. Instead of just any rain cloud, *meharvā* is a roaring thundercloud that indicates the approach of a heavy rain shower, here likened to nectar (*ras*), and the associated enjoyment of freshness and cool air. Relying on the poetic potential of the word, the qawwals repeat it several times.

Deducing from the fact that Khwaja Hasan Sani asks Mohammed Ahmed to sing this particular item in every assembly, it belongs to his favourites. This time, Mohammed Ahmed begins with two verses from a ghazal by Ḥāfiẓ.⁷²⁴ In the verses, the poetic imagery flows from the wine house to a prostration on the beloved's footprint. Although the latter image is common in Hindi poems as well, the echo of the *rubā'ī* is only faintly felt in the salient text which makes no direct reference to prostration. However, the list of saintly personages offers an interconnected theme that loosely ties the *rubā'ī* and the salient text together. The list of the early Chishti masters climaxes the performance. Especially Nizām al-Dīn's epithet Maḥbūb-i Ilāhī is repeated several times together with the name of his Sufi guide.

Item 2: A *gīt* in Hindi

1st *rubā'ī* (in Persian) *As long as the name and sign of wine house and wine will remain
My head will remain [in the] dust of the old magi's lane.*

*Where an impression of your footprint is found on the ground
There the people of vision will bow their heads for years.*

Gīt *Thundercloud is raining drops of nectar (My friend!)*⁷²⁵
In the court of the masters

723 See Turner 1962–1966: 595; § 10302.

724 See Ḥāfiẓ 1972: 132. For two different abridged versions, see Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Nagḥmāt*, 119–120; Fārūqī, *Nagḥmāt*, 87.

725 *Gu'yyā*, a female friend of a girl or a women. The word is synonymous with *sakhī*.

*Look! Today [the clouds] form thick layers.
Thundercloud is raining drops of nectar! (My friend!)*

*Khvājah 'Usmān and Khvājah Mu'īn al-Dīn
Quṭb al-Dīn, Ganj-i Shakkar and the Divine Beloved
Bābā Ganj-i Shakkar, the Divine Beloved
Are today at the door of Nijām al-Dīn's darling, the prince of poets.⁷²⁶
<ākār tān>
Thundercloud is raining drops of nectar!*

After the energetic *takrār* of the saints' names, one of the qawwals initiates a long improvisation and the accentuated drum beats give way to softer ones. As in the case of Majid Warsi's performance at the Chilla earlier the same day, the listeners seem disappointed because of the sudden disrupt. Seeing their reaction, Mohammed Ahmed swiftly ends the song and continues with a Hindi *gīt* of Bedam. The poet depicts Nizām al-Dīn playing *holī* and gives him attributes that are usually connected with Krishna. He wears a crown (*mukut*) and carries a syringe (*pickārī*) used for spraying coloured water. He trespasses the social norms regulating the dealings between the sexes by seizing the girl's hand and lifting her veil. He makes her drink liquor and dyes her red with *gulāl*, the powder thrown about during the festival.

Formally, the text resembles a ghazal. However, the verses are not indivisible and self-contained and Mohammed Ahmed reworks them radically during the performance. In the case of a ghazal, this would be impossible, but with Bedam's Hindi poem the end result is still a harmonious whole.⁷²⁷

726 *Amīr-i shu'arā'*, i.e. Amīr Khusrāu.

727 For the original text, see Bedam, *Nūr al-'ain*, 168. For another version in which the lines have been reorganized, see Meraj, *Surūd*, 405. For this performance, Mohammed Ahmed has selected only part of the lines found in Bedam's *Nūr al-'ain*. These passages are below written in bold and numbered according to the order they appear in his performance. He not only sings a part of the lines, but also combines half-lines into new ones.

1. *Nijām al-Dīn, the darling of Ganj Shakkar, celebrated holī in the town of Chisht*
2. *Khvājah Mu'īn al-Dīn and Quṭb al-Dīn threw the colour of love [into the air].*
4. *Crown on his head, syringe on his hand, he came to play holī in my courtyard*
3. *Master Nijām al-Dīn is a cunning player; he seized my hand and raised my veil.*

*How fortunate is the lot of the one, who has found such a beautiful beloved
Play Chishtis, play holī! He has arrived in the guise of master Nijām!*

4. *He jumped forth, splashed water and all of a sudden, he threw colour and made me drink liquor*
5. *Bedam offers himself for his colourful rake; he dyed me red with powdered colour.*

Item 3: A *gīt* in Hindi

Gīt *Nijām al-Dīn, the darling of Ganj Shakkar, celebrated holī⁷²⁸ in the town of Chisht Khvājah Muʿīn al-Dīn and Quṭb al-Dīn threw the colour of love [into the air].⁷²⁹ Master Nijām al-Dīn is a cunning player; he seized my hand and raised my veil. Crown on his head, syringe on his hand, he threw colour and made me drink liquor. Bedam offers himself for the sake to his colourful rake; he dyed me red with powdered colour.*

The item is performed quickly and its function seems to have been sustaining the arousal of the listeners, which the extended improvisation in the end of the previous item threatened to disrupt. The qawwals then begin a new item with a slow *gīrah* that can accommodate improvisatory passages without the risk of losing the attention of the listeners.

Item 4: A ghazal in Urdu

1st *rubāʿī* (in Urdu) *One day I met him on the road somewhere
Afterwards, my heart did not let me nestle anywhere during the rest of my life.*

Everyone present knows that this particular *rubāʿī* will lead to Taskin Qureshi's Urdu ghazal describing the lover's search in the rose garden, where all the manifestations of beauty seem bland in comparison with the beauty of the beloved. The ghazal is very much liked by Khwaja Hasan Sani and Mohammed Ahmed has often sung it. Moreover, Khwaja Hasan Sani has previously elaborated on the mystical import of the ghazal by connecting it to the primordial covenant between the souls and God (*mīṣāq*). The idea is affected by neoplatonism and its Koranic basis is found in the *Sūrat al-a'rāf* [7:172] where God asks the souls, if he is not their Lord (*a lastu bi-rabbikum*) and they answer in the affirmative. According to a number of Sufi writers, the innermost secret of a human being is the memory of the covenant and souls' divine pre-existence. This memory causes in them a longing for their divine origin.

After the *rubāʿī*, Khwaja Hasan Sani interrupts the qawwals to explain that the question posed by God was the most beautiful sound and that human beings hear its echo in all beautiful sounds; he furthermore explains that this gave birth to all the different ragas. Reminded by music, the souls keep searching for the source of this voice in the form of a divine vision. Compared with the earlier performance of the same item I have analysed elsewhere,⁷³⁰ the explanation of the ageing Khwaja Hasan Sani is incoherent and he has to ask the audience to remind him of the relevant Koranic pas-

728 *Phāg* refers to the red powder thrown over each other during *holī* and, thus, to the *holī* festival itself. See McGregor 2000: 680.

729 *Rainī carhāyo*, lit. 'made the colour rise' or 'spread the colour.'

730 See Viitamäki 2009: 328–334.

sage. It is as if he was repeating partly forgotten lines. It is noteworthy that he refers to the human soul or spirit by both the distinctly Islamic term *rūḥ* as well as with its Hindu equivalent *ātmā*.

Khwaja Hasan Sani speaks (in Urdu): *There was a moment when spirits (rūḥeñ) had been created, before they got their bodies. This is mentioned in the Koran. My memory is now so weak, that I do not remember the exact words. You probably remember. [Audience replies: A lastu bi-rabbikum? Am I not your Lord?] Yes, and they answered: ‘Balā shahidnā. Yes, we have borne witness. And every spirit (ātmā) heard those words in a different raga. There was only one phrase, but it was heard in different ways and thus each raga affects the spirit in different ways. For a long time, I did not know, who had written this poem. Then I got to know, that it was written by one police officer, who used poetic expressions to say that the raga in which the individual heard the divine question can make life bloom. But it was not about the mere voice, it is said in Favā’id al-Fu’ād, but also about the vision. The spirit keeps searching in order to hear that voice again and in order to see that vision again. I do not remember the full poem, you explain it to us in full.*

After Khwaja Hasan Sani’s comments, the qawwals sing the *rubā’ī* again. They initiate another *rubā’ī* that elaborates on the theme of the primordial sound. It has been a success during the previous years, but this time, Khwaja Hasan Sani tells them to proceed straight to the salient text. Leaving the *rubā’ī* halfway, they start the ghazal.

1st *rubā’ī* (in Urdu) *One day I met him on the road somewhere
Afterwards, my heart did not let me nestle anywhere during the rest of my life.*

2nd *rubā’ī* (in Urdu) *The voice I had heard in pre-eternity, intoxicated and elated
That same voice I hear even now in the lute of being.*

Due to your kindness, my being became being...⁷³¹

1st verse *From whom should I ask where I have seen that luminous face?
From soirée to soirée...*

Khwaja Hasan Sani interrupts the qawwals again and tells them to join the ghazal with the first *rubā’ī* instead of the second. Accordingly, the qawwals sing the first *rubā’ī* again.

⁷³¹ These verses are part of a ghazal written by Navāb Khādīm Ḥasan (d. 1970), the third head of the Ajmer based Gudri Shahi Sufi brotherhood. For the full ghazal, see Khādīm, *Samā’ ahl allāh*, 114. As I have noted elsewhere, Mohammed Ahmed simplifies the original. See Viitamäki 2009: 332, fn. 44.

1st *rubāʿī* (in Urdu) *One day I met him on the road somewhere*
Afterwards, my heart did not let me nestle anywhere during the rest of my life.

1st verse *From whom should I ask where...*

Khawaja Hasan Sani is still unsatisfied with their performance. He had meant that the qawwals should connect the two items in the musical level so that the ghazal would grow organically from the *rubāʿī*. During the previous occasions, Mohammed Ahmed had sung the ghazal in a sombre melody with a full-throated voice. This time, his voice was lilting, almost crooning and the melody much lighter, which contradicted the musical rendition of the *rubāʿīs*. The new version did not please the *mīr-i mahfil* and Mohammed Ahmed was forced to leave the stage.

Mohammed Ahmed was followed by Majid Warsi. He begins with a *naghmah* and, like Mohammed Ahmed before him, with an extended melodic improvisation. When he begins the *rubāʿī*, he stumbles over his words. First he begins the *maṭlaʿ* of a Persian ghazal attributed to Khusrau, but then changes into a line from a ghazal attributed to al-Ḥallāj. Its wording resembles the verse attributed to Khusrau.⁷³² Then, he returns to the melodic improvisations without indicating that he intends to complete the verse.

Item 5: A ghazal in Persian

naghmah

<*alāp*>

1st *rubāʿī* (in Persian) *O delicate cypress... O proud cypress, you are the splendour of my garden.*

<*ākār tān*>

The qawwals are serendipitously saved by Khawaja Hasan Sani, who asks them to sing in the proper style of Rampur (something Mohammed Ahmed obviously failed to do). Majid Warsi selects a new *rubāʿī* that Mohammed Ahmed often sings and thus establishes himself as the finest representative of the Rampur tradition in this *samāʿ* assembly. The *rubāʿī* is followed by a ghazal by Jāmī. The qawwals sing four verses (verses 1, 3, 2 and 5) of the standard five-line version found in the qawwali anthologies.⁷³³

2nd *rubāʿī* (in Persian) *What would I do with a palace in Paradise? I have the lane of the beloved*
Why should I fear Hell? I have the face of the beloved

732 For the ghazal attributed to Khusrau, *E sarv-i nazarān-i man az man cih didah ī* ('My delicate cypress, what were you expecting from me?'), see Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 183. For the ghazal attributed to al-Ḥallāj, see Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 398; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 210.

733 See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 358; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 188. The ghazal is not found in *Kulliyāt-i Jāmī*.

*Like Majnūn, yearning for a meeting with Lailā
Day and night, I keep my eyes turned towards the one, who rides the she-camel.*⁷³⁴

- 1st verse *You raised a tumult in the world by your charming⁷³⁵ beauty
You made each and every wounded victim wail.*
- 2nd verse *Old magi, you made me intoxicated with just one goblet
You stole my heart and you stole my soul and made me weak and powerless.*
- 3rd verse *Innocent and unblemished, you killed me by idols' amorous playfulness
You hit me with a sword, but blamed others for it.*
- 4th verse *Hapless Jāmī is annihilated in your love
You hid the one who was annihilated in your intimacy into the dust.*

The performance is well received, but does not create overwhelming enthusiasm among the listeners, which is also evident from the lack of *takrār*. In contrast, the next item, a ghazal by Amīr Khusrau, stirs the audience to such an extent that the qawwals have to repeat each line several times. Extended *takrār* is employed in the *maqṭa'*, where the poet implores the king of beauty to notice his abject state. It becomes evident from the gestures of the listeners that they interpret the phrase *bādshāh-i ḥusn* ('king of beauty') to refer to their own Sufi guide. The qawwals sing four (verses 1, 2, 3 and 5) out of the five verses constituting the standard version found in the qawwali anthologies.⁷³⁶

Item 6: A ghazal in Persian

- 1st verse *Every night, I stumble around your dwelling
Every day, I sigh and wail because of you.*
- 2nd verse *Beloved, do not be unfaithful to this broken-hearted
I became your companion ages ago!*
- 3rd verse *On the day when my bones disintegrate
May the love for you still reside in my wounded heart.*

734 Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 441–442.

735 *Malīḥ*, lit. salty. C. M. Naim explains the word to refer to the off-white colour of salt that is found attractive in human complexion. According to him, this also denotes 'a spicier personality'. See Mir, *Zikr-i Mir*, 26. The common Urdu and Hindi word *salonā* has a similar meaning.

736 See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 315; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 147–148; Meraj, *Surūd*, 118.

4th verse *Look at my abject state with affection*
You are the king of beauty and Khusrau is your beggar.

1st *girah* (in *Jāmī, the servant, grew old like the slaves at your door*
Persian; re- *Be merciful, o king of beauties, to your weak beggar.*
peated
twice)

4th verse *Look at my abject state with affection*
You are the king of beauty and Khusrau is your beggar.
<*ākār tān*>

Throughout the performance, the qawwals rely essentially on *takrār* and rendering the salient text is enough to stir the listeners. Only towards the end do they insert one *girah* that closely echoes the *maqtaʿ* where Khusrau describes himself as a beggar. The similar expressions *bādshāh-i ḥusn* and *shāh-i khūbān* ('king of beauties') consolidate the link between the *girah* and the salient text even further. The success of the inserted verse makes the qawwals repeat it twice before initiating another extended *takrār* of the *maqtaʿ*. The first improvisatory passage is introduced only in the very end of the performance. Majid Warsi uses it to slow down the pace of music and immediately continues to the next item. He is well aware that the qawwals singing after Mohammed Ahmed are usually allowed to sing only two items. Starting a third number without a pause is a strategy that sometimes gives the qawwals an opportunity to exceed their allotted time. Majid Warsi begins a Persian ghazal commonly believed to have been written by Khvājah 'Uṣmān Hārvanī.⁷³⁷ However, Khwaja Hasan Sani's nephew and designated follower, Syed Muhammad Nizami, is growing concerned over the health of his uncle and he indicates the qawwals to stop. They, however, interpret this to mean that they should sing something else and start a Hindi *rubāʿī* that would probably lead to Amīr Khusrau's *Chāp tilak*.⁷³⁸ They are interrupted again and ushered to give way to the next group.

Unfortunately, I have never caught the name of the leading qawwal of this group hailing from somewhere in Uttar Pradesh. They sing regularly at Khwaja Hall, but do not belong to any of the established performing lineages. Although they are always welcomed by Khwaja Hasan Sani, their performances never quite reach the standard of the Rampur qawwals. Moreover, this group always performs the same items. The first is a *mustazād* ghazal by Bedam. The ghazal is among the best-known poems of

⁷³⁷ *Nah mī dānam kih ākhir cūn dam-i dīdār mī raqṣam* ('I do not know how I will eventually dance when I see you'). For the text, see Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Nagh̃māt*, 210–211; Fārūqī, *Nagh̃māt*, 113; Meraj, *Surūd*, 72–73.

⁷³⁸ The *rubāʿī* begins *Chap dikh̃lāne ko piyā ko pahūncī huṛīyih mujh se bhūl* ('When I arrived to my beloved in order to show [him] the mark [on my forehead], I forgot it').

Bedam, and it belongs to the core qawwali repertoire everywhere in India and Pakistan.

The performance is well received, but creates no particular enthusiasm in the listeners. The only time when most of the listeners get up to offer *nazrānah* to Khwaja Hasan Sani is when the qawwals sing verse 3, which announces the presence of the beggars at the door of the beloved imploring his kindness. This theme has been evoked throughout the two *samāʿ* assemblies presided over by Khwaja Hasan Sani, and it has invariably touched his disciples. The performance begins with a short *alāp* and an Urdu *rubāʿī* that describes the munificence of the beloved. The qawwals sing the full ghazal and only slightly reorganize its verses (they sing verses 1, 2, 4, 3 and 5).⁷³⁹ They also slightly stumble over their words in the *maqṭaʿ*.

Item 7: A ghazal in Urdu

<*alāp*>

1st *rubāʿī* (in Urdu) *Your generous hand reaches far and wide, each of your slaves is an Ayāz
You are the nurturer of the people and I am bold over your kindness.*

1st verse *Where is the place, beloved, that is not your dwelling
Where you could not be met?⁷⁴⁰
Winehouse is yours, Kaaba is yours, temple is yours
Everything, beloved, is yours.*

2nd verse *In whichever form you appear, I am mad for you
Enchanted by you.
Friend, if you are a candle, I am your moth
That is, crazy for you.*

3rd verse *The beggars of your threshold are present at you door
O richest of the rich.
Sometimes, let me share (My beloved! Soul of my soul!) in your merciful kindness
In your regal favour.*

739 For the text, see Bedam, *Nūr al-ʿain*, 115–116; Meraj, *Surūd*, 131–132.

740 *Aur jilaukhānah tirā*, lit. ‘and your antechamber’, i.e. the place where the guests are received.

- 4th verse *Old man of the ruins, let me have a goblet, too*
Let there be your charity.
Until the Doomsday (My beloved! Soul of the soul!) run your wine house like this
That is, your cup.⁷⁴¹
- 5th verse *By the wine house, o cupbearer, rob me off my senses*
Give me self-forgetfulness.
Everyone calls you, Bedam, like this: [He is] crazy about you
That is, mad about you.⁷⁴²

After finishing Bedam's ghazal, the qawwals start a Persian *rubāʿī*⁷⁴³ that is associated with the other item they usually sing, *E dil bi-gīr dāman-i sulṭān-i auliyāʾ* ('Heart, seize the hem of the king of saints'), written in praise of Husain by Niyāz.⁷⁴⁴ Like Majid Warsi, they are interrupted and signalled to leave. Their protestations that they were intending to perform a poem by a respected Sufi saint like Niyāz are to no avail.

The next qawwali group is a new appearance in Delhi. Its leading vocalist is still in his late teens and an elder relative explains in rustic Urdu how they are now singing at the Nizamuddin shrine for the first time. He apologizes for all the mistakes they may

741 In the *dīvān*, this line reads *rahe maikhānah tirā* ('may your wine house remain'). See, Bedam, *Nūr al-ʿain*, 115. In *Surūd*, it reads *daur-i paimānah tirā* ('circulation of your cup'). See Meraj, *Surūd*, 132. Here, the version of *Surūd* is perhaps the most sophisticated. When the line is connected with the previous line, it acquires the meaning 'let your cup circulate until the doomsday'. Thus, the qawwals occasionally succeed in ameliorating the original text instead of simplifying it.

742 The final one and half lines of the ghazal constantly present difficulties for the qawwals. Here, the second singular seems to refer first to Bedam (*tujhe*) and then to the beloved (*tirā*), which confuses the syntax. The construction based on the phrase *ya'nī* ('that is') is employed for the third time, indicating that it is used as a means to simplify unclear textual passages in oral transmission. In the *dīvān* (Bedam, *Nūr al-ʿain*, 115), these lines read:

yūn to sab kahte haiñ bedam tirā mastānah tirā
ab hūñ dīvānah tirā

Bedam, everyone says like this: 'I am crazy about you, about you!
Now I am mad about you!

The version in *Surūd* (Meraj, *Surūd*, 132) is slightly different and perhaps most easily understood when sung:

yūn to sab kahte haiñ bedam to hai mastānah tirā
ya'nī dīvānah tirā

Everyone says like this: 'Bedam is crazy about you
That is, mad about you.'

743 See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Nagh̃māt*, 435; Fārūqī, *Nagh̃māt*, 229. For a performance where this *rubāʿī* is employed, see Khanqah-e-Kamil, Item 4 below.

744 See Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 17. The versions in the *Nagh̃māt* anthologies are slightly abridged. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Nagh̃māt*, 25–26 and Fārūqī, *Nagh̃māt*, 27–28. *Surūd*, on the other hand, records the full text. See Meraj, *Surūd*, 60.

commit and asks the *mīr-i mahfil* for permission to begin. Although a standard procedure in concert stages, it is seldom followed in *samā'* assemblies.

After a short *naghmah* and a brief *alāp*, the qawwals sing a generic *rubā'ī* that could precede any *manqabat*. The second *rubā'ī* is more specific and indicates that they are going to perform an item in praise of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir. The poem is written by a poet using the pen name Ḥasrat, who also refers to his master called Ḥāfiẓ.⁷⁴⁵ It belongs to the varying repertoire of the qawwals. Considering how off-tune the qawwals sing and how strict Khwaja Hasan Sani can be with the qawwals, it is surprising how encouraging he is. This applies to his disciples, as well. Some of the members of the Delhi *gharānā* express their support for the qawwals and dutifully stand up whenever the name of the saint is mentioned.

Item 8: A *manqabat* in Urdu

naghmah

<*alāp*>

1st *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) *Whom should we call our own? You are our master
You are our refuge, if we estranged poor have any.
We will not leave your pure hem even in death
Even if religion and world were mine, you are the support.*

2nd *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) *Who knows the favours of my master Ṣābir?
Ali knows, God knows, Muhammad Mustafa knows.*

1st verse *I am crazy, I am mad about 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir
He is the master, I am a slave of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir.*

2nd verse *Let him who wants spiritual blessings keep watch at this door
The river of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir's blessings is flowing.*

3rd verse *You, who are drunk from the wine of unity! Drink the liquor of Ṣābir!
The tavern of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir is open today.*

5th verse *Friends, throw the colour of Sabiri brotherhood at the door of Ḥāfiẓ
Dye yourselves from head to toe by the colour of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir.*

6th verse *This Ḥasrat is a servant of Ḥāfiẓ, that Ḥāfiẓ is a manifestation of Ṣābir*

745 This might refer to Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Mūsā Mānikpūrī, the master of Shāh Khāmosh. He lived in Manikpur, in Ambala district.

Because this light is the unique light of 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir.

1st verse *I am crazy, I am mad about 'Alā' al-Dīn Ṣābir*

After finishing, the qawwals ask for a permission to perform one more item, but Syed Muhammad refuses them. The microphone is already about to be taken to Khwaja Hasan Sani for the final *du'a*, when some disciples point out that Shaheed Barelwi and his group are still waiting for their turn. Syed Muhammad agrees to let them sing with the condition that they keep their performance short. They begin without a *naghmah*, but introduce an extended *alāp*. Khwaja Hasan Sani impatiently tells them to sing qawwali, since the turn of classical (*klaissikal*) music would be only the next day. He clearly indicates that conveying a textual message is the essential character of qawwali music, whereas purely musical considerations belong to the domain of classical Hindustani music. The qawwals duly move to a *rubā'ī* that asks for the grief over the beloved. The mention of the martyred Sufis Shams-i Tabrez, Sarmad Shahīd and Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj in the last line indicates that something special is going to follow.

The qawwals' choice is one of the better known Urdu ghazals by Niyāz.⁷⁴⁶ During the performance that turns out to be anything else but brief – it lasts exactly one hour – the qawwals sing eight (verses 1, 3, 7, 4, 5, 2, 8 and 9) of the ghazal's nine verses in a seemingly sporadic order. The performance is a success from the very beginning. Khwaja Hasan Sani is visibly refreshed. He had thus far been leaning against a bolster, slouched, but now he sits erect and alert, listening to every word of the poem. Like in so many hagiographical anecdotes about a Sufi master's mystical state being transmitted to other people, similar enthusiasm and deep emotion seem to touch everyone who is present.

Item 9: A ghazal in Urdu

<*alāp*>

1st *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) *Give me grief over yourself and make my soul exult*
Make every wound in the heart a running sore.
Friend, make my existence worth of something
Make [me] Shams-i Tabrez, make me Sarmad or Manṣūr.

1st verse *In your love, I took a mountain of grief on my head, come what may (Mountain of grief!)*
I forwent the luxury and enjoyment of life, come what may.

⁷⁴⁶ See Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 30–31; Meraj, *Surūd*, 305–306.

2nd verse **Do not lay your hand on a patient like me, doctor!**

1st *girah* (in <*ākār tān*>
Urdu) *Nurtures the heart...*

The qawwals introduce a brief improvisatory passage and are about to insert a *girah*, but Khwaja Hasan Sani asks them to continue with the *takrār* of the previous verse. He also asks them to sing it without an instrumental accompaniment for few times, so that he can properly hear it and understand its import.

2nd verse *Do not lay your hand on a patient like me, doctor!*
Leave it to God, for God's sake, come what may.

After the *takrār*, Khwaja Hasan Sani instructs the qawwals to keep repeating the *radīf jo ho so ho* ('come what may'). This simple and commonplace phrase is repeated throughout the ghazal and in the course of the performance it becomes the fulcrum to which the qawwals and Khwaja Hasan Sani frequently return.

Elaboration *Come what may!*
of the 2nd
verse *For God's sake, come what may.*

Come what may!

3rd verse *I stated all the afflictions of separation to him face to face*
He smiled charmingly, coquettishly (Charmingly! Charmingly, coquettishly!) and
said: 'Come what may!'

Come what may!

4th verse *Rise from the school of reason, come to the wine house of love!*
I have now drank the goblet of annihilation and unselfconsciousness, come what may.

When the qawwals sing the fourth verse, Khwaja Hasan Sani himself indicates that his *khānqāh* is the wine house mentioned in the verse. Each time the qawwals reach the *radīf*, there is a general uproar in the audience and Khwaja Hasan Sani jolts a little. As if feeling that he may have lost some shades of meaning during the beginning of the performance, he asks the qawwals to sing the ghazal from the start.

1st verse *In your love, I took a mountain of grief on my head, come what may (Mountain of grief!)*

I forwent the luxury and enjoyment of life, come what may.

Come what may!

When the qawwals again reach the *radīf*, Khwaja Hasan Sani interrupts them saying that this phrase, 'come what may,' has been the motto of the prophets and saints throughout the history of Islam. He says that this is what it has been all about and asks the qawwals to continue explaining the import of the phrase.

1st verse *I took on my head, come what may.* (Mountain of grief!)

He interrupts again and states that this is what the companions of the Prophet went through, when they risked being ostracised in their social circle when they joined him.

1st verse *In your love, I took a mountain of grief on my head, come what may*
I forwent the luxury and enjoyment of life, come what may.

2nd verse *Do not lay your hand on a patient like me, doctor!*
Leave it to God, for God's sake, come what may.

Come what may!

4th verse *Rise from the school of reason, come to the wine house of love!*
I have now drank the goblet of annihilation and unselfconsciousness, come what may.

Khwaja Hasan Sani asks the qawwals to sing the verses a few times without the instruments. He also gives instructions on how to rhythm the *takrār* of *jo ho so ho* in different ways. He beams to his disciples, and through his gestures he indicates the skill of the qawwals and the profundity of the poem. Although he has been giving ten rupee notes to the qawwals throughout the evening, he now takes from his pocket a note of five hundred rupees and gives it to the singers. This is highly exceptional in his *samā'* assemblies, where denominations exceeding ten rupees are a rare sight.

3rd verse *I stated all the afflictions of separation to him face to face*
He smiled charmingly, coquettishly, and said: 'Come what may!'

Come what may!

Instead of continuing to the following verse, the qawwals return to the previous one that juxtaposes reason and love. Thus far, they have relied mainly on *takrār*, but now they initiate a series of five *girahs*. Each elaborates the contrast between reason and learning, on the one hand, and love and intoxication, on the other. All the *girah* verses entice a positive response, and the qawwals repeat some of them twice.

4th verse *Rise from the school of reason, come to the wine house of love!*

2nd *girah* (in *Whenever Niyāz went to the school of love and took a lesson about the station of anni-*
Urdu; re- *hilation*
peated *With a sincere heart, he forgot whatever he had learned.*⁷⁴⁷
twice)

4th verse *Rise from the school of reason, come to the wine house of love!*

3rd *girah* (in *This is not a school, preacher, pick up the book, pick it up!*
Urdu) *This is a wine house, here you should enjoy the pleasures of liquor!*

4th verse *Come to the wine house of love!*

4th *girah* (in *Those who are madly in love, act in an absurd manner*
Urdu; re- *They close their eyes in order to see.*
peated
twice)

4th verse *Come to the wine house of love!*

5th *girah* (in *Who will see him veiled in amorous playfulness?*
Urdu) *I see his image in everything!*

4th verse *Come to the wine house of love!*

6th *girah* (in *Every vein and nerve burst into a flame, the entire body is on fire*
Urdu) *Cupbearer, what is this goblet of fiery wine that you made me drink?*⁷⁴⁸

4th verse *Rise from the school of reason, come to the wine house of love!*
I have now drunk the goblet of annihilation and unconsciousness, come what may.

5th verse *As soon as love caught fire, [all] this burned like cotton:*

747 The *maqta'* from a ghazal by Niyāz. See Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 6–7.

748 The verse belongs to the same ghazal as the 2nd *girah*. See Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 6.

The chattels of existence, soul and body – nothing remained, come what may.

- 6th verse *Friends, do not ask me to act as an advisor
My ability of judgement remains no more in its place, come what may.*
- 7th verse *In this mirage of existence, the dead of night remains, nothing else
When the morning of eternity broke, I walked off, come what may.*
- 8th verse *Niyāz, I have no use for good and bad of the world
What is it to him who has passed away from himself, come what may.*

Khwaja Hasan Sani is visibly touched. He indicates the qawwals to stop for a moment with a slight movement of his hand and says:

Khwaja Hasan Sani speaks (in Urdu) *Look at the history of Islam from Adam to Karbala. Look at its pervading mood (kaifiyyat). Except for what is being said in this poem, you will see nothing else. Everything is in this poem, everything is in this poem, everything is in this poem. This is the pervading mood of Islam, they say. Maḥbūb Pāk ('the Pure Beloved', i.e. Nizām al-Dīn) says 'Come what may! and he goes on with his work, loving. Is this a small thing? Is this a commonplace thing? By God, I tell you, this is such a qawwali that one could go on listening to it for the entire life, drowning in its import. Just repeat some verses for a few more times and then we stop.*

- 8th verse *Niyāz, I have no use for good and bad of the world
What is it to him, who has passed away from himself, come what may.*

Come what may!

- 1st verse *In your love, I took a mountain of grief on my head, come what may
I forwent the luxury and enjoyment of life, come what may.*

- 8th verse *Niyāz, I have no use for good and bad of the world
What is it to him, who has passed away from himself, come what may.*

When the qawwals stop, it is 3.30 AM. Everyone is absolutely silent and there is no trace of the muted chatter that usually follows a *samā'* assembly. It is as if the phrase *jo ho so ho* was still echoing in the air. The microphone is taken to Khwaja Hasan Sani. He begins the final *du'ā* by reading the Sura of Opening and *durūd*. He then continues in a more informal tone, his voice occasionally choking:

Khwaja Hasan Sani's *du'ā* God! Today, you were so merciful at the blessed Khanqah,⁷⁴⁹ you were so merciful that the occasion became very special. When Hasni Miyan will arrive tomorrow,⁷⁵⁰ offer him this sum on my behalf for the services that the qawwals render in the dargāhs. [He gives a note of five hundred rupees to the qawwals.] What happened in the morning is clear to you. And now, tonight, qawwali... there was qawwali for the whole night, but I heard nothing of it. It was mock qawwali. And after it, this ghazal of respected Niyāz was sung and it became apparent that Allah made you see the history from the first day of the eternity until the day of resurrection like this. This Khanqah-e-Niyaziya of the Nizami lineage is a blessing upon us. God... God, accept our thanks for it and let it always remain a source of felicity to us. [He switches from Urdu into Arabic for the closing phrases.] May Allah bless the best of his creations, Muhammad, and all his family members and companions. By your mercy, o Most Merciful of the Merciful!

After the *du'ā* Khwaja Hasan Sani retires to his house and the rest of the audience disperses.

The last item is an excellent, yet relatively rare example of an extremely successful qawwali performance. The performers received an ample remuneration for their singing, but much more was involved in the process; they were able to deeply touch the *mūr-i mahfil*, who also used the occasion for sharing his personal insights into the poetic text with his disciples. His final comments on everything else being 'mock qawwali' (*fi'l qawvālī*) also guided his disciples to be more conscious on what to expect from a qawwali performance. The comment was all the more striking considering that the Rampur qawwals had delivered extremely refined performances earlier in the night. But, from his point of view, something was lacking in them. Furthermore, the constant dialogue between the *mūr-i mahfil* and the qawwals offered an outside observer a rare glimpse into the meanings a qawwali performance could generate in a listener.

When I had the opportunity to attend the 'urs of Nizām al-Dīn for the next time in March 2011, other qawwals, among them Mohammed Ahmed, had started to sing this ghazal in Khwaja Hasan Sani's *samā'* assemblies. However, they were never able to create a similar atmosphere and elicit similar response from the listeners. When Shaheed Barelwi attended the *samā'* in Khwaja Hall for the next time during the 'urs of Nizamuddin in March 2012, he again arrived in the very end of the programme. This time, he selected another Urdu ghazal of Niyāz, *Choro mujhe be-khyud mirā ārām yahi hai* ('Leave me unselfconscious, this is my rest'),⁷⁵¹ again singing for about one hour.

749 Here he refers to the Chilla and the *samā'* assembly that took place there in the morning. He and his followers call the Chilla *Khanqah Shareef*.

750 Hasni Miyan, i.e. Shah Muhammad Hasanain Niyazi, the *sajjadanashīn* of the Khanqah-e-Niyaziya, always arrives from Bareilly to Delhi for *barā qul* that will take place the following morning.

751 See Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 32.

This was followed by another ghazal, *Yār ko ham ne jā ba-jā dekhā* ('I saw the friend everywhere'),⁷⁵² during which Khwaja Hasan Sani imparted teachings on *vaḥdat al-vijūd* to his disciples. The same happened again in February 2014, this time with a Persian ghazal *Raftam andar tah-i khāk uns-i butān-am bāqī'st* ('I go under the dust, but my intimacy with idols remains').⁷⁵³ In a situation where other qawwals had appropriated an item made successful by him, he showed acumen by choosing a fresh poetic text. Unlike most qawwals who often opt for items that are fairly sure to receive a favourable response from the audience, Shaheed Barelwi has been taking risks by singing less known poems. This has paid off and he has been able to capitalize on the elements of freshness and surprise in intensifying the experiences of the listeners.

Khwaja Hasan Sani's reactions to the qawwali performances in his *samā'* assemblies reveal his general attempt to avoid the stagnation of the Sufi practice. His expectations of the qawwals' performances have always been high, and even during the *urs* of Nizamuddin in February 2014, when his memory was visibly affected by old age, his comments on music and poetry were always accurate and to the point. He has always kept the qawwals, especially those hailing from the prestigious performing lineages, alert. He has criticized Meraj Ahmed severely for the dissonant singing of his family with the result that they did not sing in Khwaja Hall for many years. He has interrupted Mohammed Ahmed several times. This has always happened with a poem that had previously been a success in Khwaja Hasan Sani's assemblies. In 2006, he stopped him in the middle of singing a ghazal attributed to Rūmī, *Ārzū dāram kih mihmān-at kunam* ('I yearn to make you my guest').⁷⁵⁴ Mohammed Ahmed never sang the poem again in his presence. The same applies to Taskeen's ghazal discussed above (Item 4), which had so much stirred the audience during the previous years. A similar pattern would repeat itself with the last item of this occasion. Its immense success inspired Mohammed Ahmed to sing it in the assemblies of Khwaja Hasan Sani in the coming years. However, when Majid Warsi attempted to sing it in Khwaja Hall in February 2014, Khwaja Hasan Sani told him that his rendition did not do justice to such the beautiful and important poem and it appeared as if he was having a headache. This behaviour indicates a desire to keep the musical standard of *samā'* high and to simultaneously protect the practice from becoming a ritualized, predictable series of items that acquire their effectiveness only because they were once liked by the Sufi guide. Thus, for Khwaja Hasan Sani, the aesthetic quality of the performances, combined with the element of freshness, is an essential means to preserve the dynamism of *samā'*. This gives each performed item more potential to induce the sudden effect of *samā'* that has been described in the textual sources discussed in Part I of this study.

752 See Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 9; Meraj, *Surūd*, 321.

753 See Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 18. The text is also included in all the qawwali anthologies discussed in this study. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 65–66; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 48; Meraj, *Surūd*, 108.

754 For a discussion of a performance of this poem, see Anis Miyan's, Item 7.

6.5 A *samāʿ* assembly at the home of Anis Ashrafi in Old Delhi

Samāʿ assemblies are also arranged in private homes for selected listeners. Although many Sufi *khānqāhs* are situated adjacent to the house of the head of the brotherhood – like in the case of Khanqah-e-Kamil discussed below – a separate space is usually reserved for public functions, while the house itself remains closed to non-family members. The *samāʿ* assembly discussed in this chapter took place in a private home in Old Delhi, in the bed-cum-living room of the *mīr-i mahfil*. Although the venue is situated outside the Nizamuddin Basti, the Sufi tradition followed by the organizer is closely linked with the shrine.

The *samāʿ* took place on the occasion of the *ʿurs* of Sufi Mohammed Ayyub Chishti Nizami (d. 1994) on 4 Rabiʿ al-Awwal (8 February) in 2011. Sufi Ayyub was a main disciple of Maulana Abdussalaam (d. 1966), a notable personage in the twentieth-century Sufi scene of Delhi. Their *silsilah* is traced back to Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn’s *khalīfah* Ḥājī Laʿl Muḥammad. The most devoted follower of the late Sufi Ayyub was his grandson Sufi Anis Miyan Ashrafi, who would organize the *ʿurs* festivities at his home. Although Sufi Ayyub had several sons and grandsons, Anis Miyan was the only one to actively continue the Sufi tradition of his grandfather alongside the family business in jewellery.

In his *samāʿ* assemblies, Anis Miyan strives to recreate the atmosphere that prevailed when his grandfather was still alive. He encourages singing the classics of the core qawwali repertoire and often prompts the performers to sing in Persian. Overt display of ecstasy is discouraged. The functions he organizes have a good reputation in Old Delhi and they attract the participation of many local Sufis. Although Anis Miyan does not belong to a *pīrzādah* family, he is also well known in the Nizamuddin Basti because of the mass feeding of people he arranges during the *ʿurs* festivities. No small undertaking, the food is cooked in shifts in Langar khana (‘the House of Soup Kitchen’) throughout the day. Langar khana also houses the tombs of Anis Miyan’s predecessors, Maulana Abdussalaam and Sufi Ayyub, and he organizes a *samāʿ* assembly there during the *ʿurs* festivities of Niẓām al-Dīn and Amīr Khusrāu.¹ Through these activities, he has been able to carve himself a niche in an environment that is dominated by Sufi elite belonging to established familial lineages.

The programme of Sufi Ayyub’s *ʿurs* began with a *fātiḥah* in the reception room of the house Anis Miyan shares with his brothers, and a dinner was served in the same space. Having finished their meals, the guests squeezed themselves into Anis Miyan’s bed-cum-living room, where the bed served as a podium for the qawwals. First, the

¹ The information on the Sufi tradition of Anis Miyan was provided by him during an interview at his house in Old Delhi on 2 March 2014.

father of Anis Miyan acted as the *mīr-i mahfil*, but when he retired to his quarters some time later, his son assumed this role.

According to his own words, Anis Miyan has several disciples, both in Delhi and in the surrounding cities. However, only a few of them were present during the function. Interestingly, they were all middle-class Hindu professionals. The majority of the audience was comprised of Old Delhi merchants and scholars operating in the traditional madrasa framework. The motivations behind their attendance varied from being affiliated with a Sufi brotherhood that encourages *samāʿ*, to being purely interested in attending a cultural program of qawwali music. The presence of a non-local qawwal, Iftekhar Ahmed, enhanced the prestige of the occasion. Normally, the qawwali would be the responsibility of Meraj Ahmed, but Iftekhar happened to be in Delhi during Anis Miyan's function because he had been singing at the *ʿurs* of Inayat Khan the previous day.

Once the guests had been seated inside the room, in the corridor and the terrace outside, the senior members of the audience began discussing the appropriate order for the items to be performed. Some suggested that the *salām* written by Niẓām al-Dīn should be the first item. Others argued that the qawwals should begin with *Qaul* and *Rang*, because the *samāʿ* was preceded by a *fātiḥah*, even if dinner was served in between. Eventually, the latter view prevailed and it was decided that the *salām* should be sung at the very end of the occasion. The discussion illustrates that the arrangement of items is not fixed in a *samāʿ* assembly. Instead, it is often a result of negotiations that take contextual parameters into consideration.

As a special guest-performer, Iftekhar Ahmed was first to sing. He adopted a classical approach and began with *naghmah-yi quddūsī*. This was followed by an elaborate *Qaul* that was prefaced with three *rubāʿīs* and altogether fourteen inserted *girahs*. Some of the adjunct items are commonly incorporated to the *Qaul* (for example, 1st and 2nd *rubāʿīs*, 2nd, 5th, 7th and 9th *girahs*), whereas Iftekhar's idiosyncratic approach becomes evident in his employment of the *maqṭaʿ* from a ghazal by Ḥāfiẓ as a *rubāʿī* (3rd *rubāʿī*), as well as in his elaboration of the significance of Ali for a person lying in his grave. This he does in a sequence of three *girahs* (7th, 8th and 9th *girahs*). It is significant that the qawwals also deem it suitable to praise Ali by evoking the heroic acts of his son Husain in Karbala (10th and 12th *girahs*).

The Hindi verse (2nd *girah*) is an excellent example of how literary conventions associated with a particular language are utilized in the search for new ways to praise a saintly personage. The verse extols Ali's bravery and valour much like Persian and Urdu poetry do, but he is also described as *parmātmā* ('highest soul') and *dharmātmā* ('the soul of dharma; the soul of divine order'). The use of the adverb *kahīn* softens the meaning of these expressions somewhat by indicating that this is an assumption of the poetic subject. However, the fact remains that these claims are grandiose and suspicious from a strictly theological point of view. When expressed in Hindi, however,

they do not sound extreme at all. The habitual combination of languages and poetic registers in a qawwali performance facilitates accommodating such expressions into the environment of Persian and Urdu verses and poetic images without making them seem out of place.

Item 1: Qaul in Arabic

naghmah-yi quddūsī

<alāp>

1st rubā'ī (in Urdu) *Sometimes the walls shake, sometimes the gate shudders
Hearing the name of Ali, Khaybar shudders even today.*

2nd rubā'ī (in Persian) *It is written at the door of the Paradise, in the tribunal of fate:
The Messenger is the prophet, the Attacking Lion the designated successor.*

3rd rubā'ī (in Persian) *Hāfīz, befriend my enemies from now on
Pursue your own comfort, the battle is with the soul.*

Qaul *Whose master I am.*

1st girah (in Urdu) *He became a manifestation of the divine mercy
In penury, he became the hand of God
An entire life was spent in difficulty, but
He became the solver of difficulties for the entire world.*

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

2nd girah (in Hindi) *Ali-ji, you are a hero, you are a strong man, you are the father of the earth
Remover of obstacles, valiant warrior of the Lord of the universe
Your play is extraordinary, I know not what you are²
Maybe you are the highest soul, maybe you are the soul of the divine order.*

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

3rd girah (in Urdu; re- *When the time gave [me] immedicable grief
The Truth gave [me] a clue about master Ali*

2 In this line, Iftakhar renders the more common reading *anokhī tumrī līlā hai ko'ī kyā jāne kyā tum ho* ('Your play is extraordinary, does anyone know what you are?') more akin to contemporary Urdu/Hindi by substituting *ko'ī kyā jāne* with the synonymous expression *nahīn ma'lūm*. It is noteworthy that he takes care to retain the poetic meter despite the change.

peated
twice) *The troubles themselves began to give up their persecution
But I involved Ali against them!*

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

4th girah (in
Urdu) *Whose mind and heart are sincere
Every word of his is an arrow.
How would he be a poor stranger in the world?
He possesses his master's arrow!*

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

5th girah (in
Persian) *Bravo the might and majesty of the Father of Dust, the pride of humanity
Ali with whom God is pleased, remover of obstacles, lion of the Omnipotent.*

*Friend of the Truth, assignee of Mustafa, ocean overflowing with bounty
Imam of the two worlds, the direction for the prayers of religion and faith.*

*Niyāz, during the resurrection, you will not be destitute
Since the love and affection for Ali will be your possessions.³*

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

6th girah (in
Urdu) *I searched in every assembly, lamp of the heart in hand
By God! I was not able to find Ali's equal.*

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

7th girah (in
Urdu) *I will remember the Father of Dust in the grave
I will silence every question
Angels, desist, do not ask me anything
Just let Ali arrive [and] I will settle the whole bill.*

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

8th girah (in
Urdu) *Munkir and Nakīr,⁴ why do you torment me in the grave?
I am a slave of the five holy ones,⁵ did you not recognize me?*

³ Verses from a *manqabat* by Niyāz. See fn. on Chilla, Item 1 above.

⁴ Munkir and Nakīr, the angels who interrogate a human being about his faith in the grave and punish him until the day of resurrection, if he fails to give the correct answers.

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

9th *girah* (in *When angels interrogated me in the grave [saying]:*
Urdu and *'Give an explanation about your prophet and your faith!'*
Persian) *Though dead, I managed to sit up*
 Taking the name of Muhammad after [mentioning] God, I said:
 'Ali is my imam, I am a slave of Ali
 Let thousand precious names be sacrificed in the name of Ali.'

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

10th *girah* (in *The Prophet is God's messenger, what can one say about him?*
Urdu; re- *Everyone joined the religion of the Prophet, dumbfounded.*
peated *When Ali arrived, the lips of Islam would not keep closed*
thrice) *When Husain arrived, Islam reached the prime of manhood.*

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

11th *girah* (in *The rank of God's lion is most extraordinary*
Urdu) *The Messenger of God brought Ali up.*
 The precious person of Ali is higher than anyone else
 Among all the people, that is the high place of Ali.

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

12th *girah* (in *Oh how Husain prostrated in front of God!*
Urdu) *Husain paid off the debt of the community of believers.*
 There is no prostration now, this just imitation
 [Real] prostration was offered by Husain in Karbala.

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

13th *girah* (in *For the sake of the peace of mind, Khvurshid*
Urdu) *Keep the discourse about the Master on your lips.*
 He is soon to appear
 [So] keep your eyes ritually pure!

5 *Panjtan*, i.e. Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain.

Qaul *Master, master Ali.*

14th *girah* (in *Every saint is a sacrifice for the sake of Ali*
Urdu) *Wherever you look, there is Ali, Ali.*

Qaul and *Master, master Ali.*
tarāna

Master Ali Ali Ali, Master Ali Ali.

ham tum tanā nānā nā tanānānā re

yalālī yalālī yalā lālālī

yalā lālā yalā lālā yalā lālālī

The performance is greeted with enthusiasm. Many listeners exclaim that the qawwals have given an entirely new colour to the *Qaul* (*qaul ko bi'l-kul nayā rang diyā*). Both Iftekhār's approach to the song text and the response of the audience establish a pattern of interaction between the performers and listeners that would characterize all his subsequent numbers during the evening. Iftekhār is known for a wide repertoire of adjunct items that he can expertly interweave with the salient text. When he performs, he keeps the structure of an item coherent by skilfully balancing between the salient text and the adjunct items. In practice this means that despite the plethora of *rubā'īs* and *girahs*, the salient text continues to define the performance.

In the case of the *Qaul*, the salient text is often lost behind the numerous adjunct items. In the present performance, moreover, the qawwals exhibit remarkable non-chalance towards the *Qaul* itself. The *girahs* are indispensable for the *Qaul*, and the qawwals are in general fairly free to modify the song text. However, it is striking that Iftekhār omits the second half of the *Qaul* (*fā-'aliyyun maulā*, 'his master is Ali') as well as the first line of the *tarānah* (*dar dil dar dil dar dānī*) and instead focuses on the adjunct items. At the Nizamuddin shrine, for example, this would elicit outrage from the listeners. At Anis Miyan's home, the listeners react instead by interjecting *Subhān Allāh!* ('Praised be God!') and *Vāh vāh!* ('Bravo!'). In Qureshi's typology of audience responses, these belong to the forms of common Indo-Muslim cultural expression.⁶ Such responses are more typical to *mushā'irahs* and musical recitals outside the Sufi context. They are rarely encountered in the formal *samā'* assemblies like those organized at the Chilla or Khwaja Hall. The qawwals' approach to the song texts in Anis Miyan's *samā'* assembly resembles more a poet's presentation of his works in a *mushā'irah* than a qawwal's conventional approach in a *samā'* assembly. The textual content is extremely elaborate and appreciating verbal artistry occasionally overshadows absorbed listening. Also *takrār* that aims at unearthing meanings from a relatively

6 See Qureshi 2006: 120.

small bulk of text is exiguous. After the assembly, when the guests had departed, Anis Miyan himself expressed his exasperation with what he perceived as the lack of befitting attitude on the part of some listeners. But since they were not his disciples, he could not instruct them on what he thought was suitable *adab*.

The *Qaul* is conventionally followed by the *Rang*. In addition to certain stock adjunct items (1st *rubāʿī*, 2nd *girah*), Iftekhār introduces a highly unusual selection of inserted verses into his performance. Especially the fifth *girah* is innovative. The two verses list the qualities of the beloved in a manner that is typical to ghazals. The second verse ends surprisingly with a question *na jāʿūn main kaise ab kahīn mān* ('How could I not go now, mother?') that introduces one of the protagonists of Hindi poetry, the mother, into the poem. This indicates that the protagonist of a poem is a girl who describes her male beloved. Thus the statement upturns the conventional discourse of a male lover describing his male or female beloved and introduces a female lover into the poetic universe of the ghazal. The phrase links the poetic conventions of Persian and Urdu with Hindi and firmly connects the *girah* with the *Rang*.

Iftekhār also reworks the salient text by introducing the passage *jo tū māṅge rang kī rangāʿī / merā joban girvī rakh le rangīle* ('If you want a fee for dyeing / Keep my youth as a pledge, you colourful rake') from another Hindi poem often sung in conjunction with the *Rang*. By addressing both Niẓām al-Dīn and Ṣābir 'Alā' al-Dīn in the fillers employed in *takrār kā ḥalqah*, he acknowledges the members of both branches of the Chishti brotherhood who are present among the audience.

Item 2: *Rang* in Hindi

1st *rubāʿī* (in Hindi) *The colour of the Prophet was thrown into the air, and there was colour in the hand of the Master⁷*
 Whose shirt⁸ gets dyed, his being dyed is indeed fortunate.

Rang *Today there is colour, O mother, there is colour, hey!*

7 This *dohā* is frequently translated incorrectly into English. The expression *rainī caḥī rasūl kī* is interpreted, for instance, by Saleem Kidwai to mean nocturnal (*rainī*) ascension (*caḥī*) of the Prophet (*rasūl kī*). (*Jashn-e-Khusrau* 2012: 181.) While *rainī* could formally be an adjective derived from *rain* ('night'), the common meaning of the word is colour. *Rang/rainī caḥī* is an ordinary enough expression for dyeing or throwing colours. (Cf. verses by Ḥasrat [Khwaja Hall, Item 8], Bedam [Khwaja Hall, Item 3] and Kamil [Khanqah-i Kamil, Item 11].) The reference to *holī* in the second line indicates that the intended meaning of *rainī caḥī rasūl kī* is, indeed, 'The colour of the Prophet went up,' that is 'The colour of the Prophet was thrown into the air.'

8 *Jholā* denotes a bag, but also a loose shirt or its hem that has been extended in order to receive something in it. See Dasa 1965–1975: 1861 and McGregor 2000: 398. The variant Iftekhār sings is rare, since usually a veil (*cūndar*) is dyed instead of the hem. Cf. with Item 13 in the following chapter. The use of the word *jholā* may echo a common theme found in Persian and Urdu poetry, where the hem (*dāman*) is often soiled by sins and requires washing. In Hindi poetry, the washing has been substituted by dyeing.

*There is colour in the house of my beloved! (Let's go, friend, let's go!)
I⁹ found my master Nijām al-Dīn Auliyā'
(Nijām al-Dīn, Ṣābir 'Alā' al-Dīn Auliyā'.)*

1st girah (in Hindi) *Look at the disciples of Bābā Farīd:
One form that has two shapes!*

Rang Khvāja Nijām al-Dīn, Ṣābir 'Alā' al-Dīn!

2nd girah (in Urdu) *Except for me, who is a master of destiny like this?
My fate gave this kind of master of mine!*

Rang Khvāja Nijām al-Dīn, Ṣābir 'Alā' al-Dīn!

3rd girah (in Hindi) *Colour me so that the colour will not fade
Even if the entire life got drained from my eyes.*

*I celebrate the good fortune of ید
Having set my eyes on Khāja Nijām.*

*Rang If you want a fee for dyeing (Master Ṣābir! Ganjshakkar's darling! Khvāja Farīd's
darling!)
Keep my youth as a pledge, you colourful rake. (Divine Beloved!)*

4th girah (in Urdu) *One is more beautiful than the next
But no one is like you.*

Rang Keep my youth as a pledge, you colourful rake. (Divine Beloved! 'Alī Aḥmad Ṣābir!)

5th girah (in Urdu) *Two intoxicated eyes, long tresses; when eyebrows are wrinkled, eyelashes become ar-
rows.*

*Thousands of amorous glances in every graceful gesture, thousands of calamities hid-
den in the glance.*

*Eyes are sweet, but the manner is crooked; intoxication in amorous glance, mischief in
playfulness.*

His glances are full of charm. How could I possibly not go now, mother?

9 The archaic Hindi expression *mohe* ('to me') has been substituted with a less archaic Urdu expres-
sion *main ne* ('I').

Rang *Keep my youth as a pledge, you colourful rake. (Divine Beloved!)*

6th *girah* (in *Who touches the body, knows the body*
Hindi) *But there is no way to know the matters of the heart*
 Yet I know, my beloved knows.

Rang *Keep my youth as a pledge, you colourful rake. (Divine Beloved!)*
 I have wandered searching from one country to another
 My heart cherishes only your colour. (Divine Beloved!)

After the *Rang*, Iftekhar sings *Ba-khūbī*, a Persian ghazal attributed to Amīr Khūsrau and associated with the ritual context. He inserts Urdu translations by the celebrated Hyderabadī qawwal, Aziz Ahmed Khan Warsi in between the Persian verses. When the listeners hear the first translation, they are thrilled. Although some listeners know Persian intimately and many others are acquainted with the general meaning of Persian qawwali standards, they also enjoy the translation. None of the Urdu verses is a word to word translation and the slight changes in the angle of vision have a potential to add another layer of meaning to the original. When Iftekhar begins the third verse in Persian, the listeners look at him inquisitively, unsure if he would sing the translation or not. When he does, his performance is greeted with verbal praise and *nazrānah*.

Item 3: A ghazal in Persian

1st verse *May you shine in beauty like the moon*
 May you always remain in the kingdom of attraction.

2nd verse *You killed me with amorous glances*
(Urdu trans- *My prayer is that you would live [long].*
lation)
 You killed me, the poor, by an amorous glance

2nd verse *You were merciful,¹⁰ my God, may you live [long]!*

3rd verse *I am released from the captivity of the two worlds*
 If you just sit together with [your] slave.

3rd verse *I remain free from the two worlds*

¹⁰ This phrase (*karam kardī*) is always repeated extensively by the qawwals. Even listeners not acquainted with Persian can understand it, as it resembles the Urdu phrase *karam kar diyā* ('were merciful').

- (Urdu translation) *If you sit, resplendent,¹¹ next to me.*
- 3rd verse *I am released from the captivity of the two worlds
If you just sit together with [your] slave.*
- 4th verse *Do not be so cruel, lest tomorrow, in the day of judgement.*
- 4th verse *Let it not be so that killing the lovers
(Urdu translation) Should make you ashamed in the day of judgement.*
- 4th verse *Do not be so cruel, lest tomorrow, in the day of judgement
You should feel ashamed in front of the lovers.*
- 5th verse *By debauchery and frolic, like Khusrau
May you also tear up thousands of households.*
- 1st verse *In beauty like the moon.*

Next, it is decided that the qawwals should sing a *na't*. The Urdu *na't* Iftekhar selects is one of his signature songs belonging to his varying repertoire, and I have never heard anyone else to perform it. The *na't*, sparingly decorated with well-placed *girahs*, explores the themes of mediation (*shafā'at*) and the light of Muhammad (*nūr-i muḥammadī*). The first *girah* is a rare example of a polemical verse employed in a *samā'* assembly. It assumes a stance against the non-Sufi reformists who claim that the Prophet Muhammad is no more alive, but as dead as the rest of the people who have died. The performance entices tumultuous response from the listeners, most of whom are probably hearing the poem for the first time.

In this item, the qawwals rely on *takrār*, especially in the case of the last quarters of the verses. This reflects the semantic and formal structure of a ghazal, wherein the first line always presents a situation which requires a solution while the second line resolves it. Both lines are generally further divided into two equal halves by the cesura, and the final conclusion often comes only in the last quarter. The qawwals invariably sing the first line in the higher-pitched *antarā* section, which, according to Qureshi, 'musically suggests an excursion to the new territory.' The second, rhyming line that includes the resolving statement is sung in lower-pitched *asthāyī*, musically suggesting 'stability and conclusiveness.' The transition from the first line to the second is one of the few occasions where qawwals are able to insert purely musical, improvised pas-

¹¹ *Rakhshandah ho tum*, lit. 'you are shining, resplendent.' This is an extremely polite way to invite someone to sit down. Cf. with the Hindi phrase *virājiegā* (lit. 'please, do shine') used for a similar purpose.

sages. While singing the pure tune seldom leads to a reward from the audience, it can happen, when such passage is inserted between the verse lines so that it leads from the first line to the second.¹²

Each of the parts of a verse can be repeated the necessary number of times, and the qawwals frequently use the combination of inconclusive semantic statements and high-pitched singing in order to delay the lower-pitched concluding statement of the verse. If the concluding statement is considerably delayed, like in Iftekhar's performance at hand, it acquires so much weight that when it is eventually sung, the audience response is tumultuous and calls for a prolonged *takrār*.

Item 4: A *na't* in Urdu

<alāp>

1st *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) *If the wealth of the two worlds is lost, so what?
But, God, do not let the hem of Muhammad slip from my hand.*

1st verse *From whose breath the two worlds gleam, that is you for sure
Mercy of the Truth from head to toe (Lord!) you are the mercy for the two worlds!*

1st *girah* (in Urdu) *Both day and night are illuminated by his light
Well, he is a human being, but [in reality] he is such a person.
He who says that his honour is no more, is an infidel
The Koran says that Muhammad is still alive.*

1st verse *Mercy of the Truth from head to toe (Lord!) you are the mercy for the two worlds!*

2nd verse *I am bad, but I do not call myself bad just like that
Because there is a heart in my chest (Lord! The Prophet of God!) and you live in that
heart.*

3rd verse *What is the punishment for the sins? I have never thought about that
But I know (Lord! My lord!) that you speak on behalf of the sinners.*

2nd *girah* (in Urdu) *I do not love you just because you are [in rank next] after God
[But because] in the place of congregation, you will ask after me.*

3rd verse *But I know (Lord! My lord!) that you speak on behalf of the sinners.*

¹² Qureshi 2006: 62, 204.

3rd girah (in Urdu) *Where would the glance go after [turning to] the door of the best of men?
Whom would it search after [finding] him who fills the needs of the world?
The religion has become perfect and the blessings have become full
No prophet will now arrive after Mustafa.*

3rd verse *But I know (Lord! My lord!) that you speak on behalf of the sinners.*

4th verse *The matter is huge and the mouth is small, but why should I lie?
My perception tells me that wherever I am, you are there too.*

4th girah (in Urdu) *There is no one, who is like him
He has met with God.*

*I am false, how could I praise him?
Great is my lord, great is his matter.*

*Beggar is a beggar; what is [the claim] of the beggars?
If the king of kings seats [them], it is [only] his good will.*

4th verse *My perception tells me that wherever I am, you are there too.*

1st verse *Mercy of the Truth from head to toe.*

The *na't* is followed by another of Iftekhār's signature songs, a contemporary Urdu ghazal by his teacher. Neither the salient text nor any of the adjunct items belong to the widely known classics of the core qawwali repertoire. Instead, they are part of the regionally important poetic tradition of western Uttar Pradesh and feature in the performances of qawwals hailing from that area. Iftekhār begins the performance with a long series of *rubā'īs*. The qawwals sing in a leisurely pace and occasionally insert melodic improvisations without departing too far from the text. The *rubā'īs* evoke the presence of the beloved or his phantom from various angles. In each *rubā'ī*, he appears both present and absent simultaneously. This is graphically illustrated by the fifth *rubā'ī* where he is so near that the breath of the lover collides with the breath of the beloved. However, he is simultaneously so far that the lover is forced to search for him even when he meets him face to face.

When Iftekhār is about to sing this delicate verse, some of the listeners start to chat with each other. Instead of ignoring them, he stops singing and asks '*Hān, miyān?*' ('Yes, sir?') and continues only after everyone is absolutely still again. At Anis Miyan's home, the qawwal is able to assert his position as an artist, who has the right to ask for the undivided attention of the audience. In formal *samā'* assemblies, which are

presided over by Sufi masters or *pīrzādahs*, the qawwals are pushed to a role of service professionals, but here they are in the limelight and, furthermore, very conscious of their position.

In the course of the performance, Iftekhar crafts intricate webs of meaning around the salient text. Although he sings only three verses out of the total five, the recurrent returning to the salient text keeps the structure of the performance coherent. On the level of meaning, the *girahs* sung by Iftekhar form an elegant succession that deepens the import of the salient text instead of losing sight of it.

The performance is also an excellent example of striking a balance between the profane and sacred notions of love. Each of the verses could refer to love between two human beings, but the references to ritual prayer (*namāz*), prostration (*sajdah*) and finding the beloved in oneself scattered throughout the performance act as gentle pointers towards their mystical interpretation. However, the qawwals never assume the role of a preacher who would explicitly state the metaphorical references to the listeners instead of letting them discover them themselves.

The performance has four distinct sections. The first consists of the seven *rubāʿīs* and paves the way for the mood of sweet sadness. This emotional charge is in stark contrast with the vigorous jubilation of the preceding *naʿt*, which indicates how radical the changes of mood between two successive items can be. The second section comprises the *girah* verses elaborating on the yearning for union with the beloved that is expressed in the first verse of the ghazal. As the *girahs* indicate, the lover has to be willing to endure grief and adversities on his way to the final fulfilment. The third section is built around the second verse and consists of *girahs* that elaborate on the different types of prostration. The final, fourth section comprises the *girahs* that throw light on the state of intoxication mentioned in the third verse of the ghazal.

Item 5: A ghazal in Urdu

<alāp>

1st *rubāʿī* (in Urdu) *I had not even raised my hands into supplication after the prayer
When I found him after a long period of time.*

*Thousand times I have looked at him face to face
Sometimes before the prayer, sometimes after the prayer.*

*I have roamed the land of flowers and intermingled with roses
But I did not feel at home there after your banquet of amorous playfulness.*

2nd *rubāʿī* (in Urdu) *I had not even raised my head from prostration
When I heard the voice:¹³ 'I am in front [of you].'*

- 3rd *rubā'ī* (in *The soft sound of his footsteps resounded throughout the night*
Urdu) *With every beat of heart, I thought he had arrived.*
- 4th *rubā'ī* (in *As much as I become absorbed in waiting*
Urdu) *My whole being turns into a fantasy about the friend.*
- 5th *rubā'ī* (in *[You are] so close, that a breath collides with a breath*
Urdu) *[But] so far, that I keep searching for you in you.*
- 6th *rubā'ī* (in *In search for you, where could I go except into myself?*
Urdu) *I found this path after [trying] every other path.*
- 1st verse *You occupy every corner of the heart (Beloved, my beloved!) – let there be love like that*
I become yours and remain yours (Beloved, my beloved!) – let there be life like that now.
- 1st *girah* (in *I happily accept all the grief over you*
Urdu) *So that you may say, smiling: 'He loves someone.'*
- 1st verse *I become yours and remain yours (Beloved, my beloved!) – let there be life like that now.*
- 2nd *girah* (in *Who longs for a respite from grief over you*
Urdu) *Oh God, let not a life like that be my fate.*
- 1st verse *I become yours and remain yours – let there be life like that now.*
- 3rd *girah* (in *Stay sometimes in the mind, sometimes in the heart, sometimes in the eyes*
Urdu) *This is all for you, dwell in whichever abode [you like].*
- 1st verse *I become yours and remain yours (Life of the souls!) – let there be life like that now.*
- 4th *girah* (in *Without you, I find no peace of mind, what should I do?*
Urdu) *I see only you in everything, what should I do?*
- 1st verse *I become yours and remain yours – let there be life like that now.*
- 5th *girah* (in *Who loves someone, should follow it to the utmost limit*
Urdu) *Who then offers false riches, should relinquish his life.*

13 *Ek āvāz yih ā'ī*, lit. 'this certain voice came'.

1st verse *I become yours and remain yours (Beloved, my beloved!) – let there be life like that now.*

6th *girah* (in *Your face illuminates my solitude*
Urdu) *Where has a lamp been lit, where is the day-light?*

1st verse *I become yours and remain yours – let there be life like that now.*

7th *girah* (in *When I assigned my heart to you*
Urdu) *I decreed [for myself] whatever consequences intimacy might entail.*

Loss of reputation is involved in every act of love
My kith and kin wrote off my name as disgraced.

God raised the pen and ink
And assigned all the beauty in the world to you.

1st verse *I become yours and remain yours – let there be life like that now.*

2nd verse *Let my head remain bowed on the feet of the beloved for the entire life.*

8th *girah* (in *In your eyes, there is a beautiful reflection*
Urdu) *That is why my prostration is prolonged.*

2nd verse *Let my head remain bowed on the feet of the beloved for the entire life.*

9th *girah* (in *I feel pity over the worship of the people*
Urdu) *Who could not bow down their hearts together with the forehead.*

2nd verse *Let my head remain bowed on the feet of the beloved for the entire life.*

10th *girah* (in *Whenever my fate took its revenge on me*
Urdu) *Each time the memories of you held [my] hand.*

2nd verse *Let my head remain bowed on the feet of the beloved for the entire life.*

11th *girah* (in *Bowing one's forehead on the threshold is not worship*
Urdu; re- *Rather look, there is nothing lacking in my love.*
peated
twice)

2nd verse *Let my head remain bowed on the feet of the beloved for the entire life
When I derive pleasure from worship, let it come from worship like this.*

3rd verse *Let being in senses never be my lot in life.*

12th girah (in Urdu) *Sometimes he penetrates [my thoughts] to such an extent
That when I think, he hears it.*

3rd verse *Let being in senses never be my lot in life. (Never in life!)*

13th girah (in Urdu) *If you have to give something, give this much capability to the sight:
If I look at the mirror, you appear to me.*

*What a curious condition there is for seeing:
If the eyes are closed, you manifest yourself.*

3rd verse *Let being in senses never be my lot in life. (Never in life!)*

14th girah (in Urdu) *I have drunk from the intoxicated eyes of someone and lost control over myself
The spirit of reason is also there in my wine.*

3rd verse *Let being in senses never be my lot in life. (Never in life!)*

15th girah (in Urdu) *I have been given a drink by the eyes
My inebriation will dissipate after a long while.*

3rd verse *Let being in senses never be my lot in life (Never in life!)
Let [me] drink such wine from the proud, intoxicated eyes. (Intoxicated eyes!)*

16th girah (in Urdu) *The eyes made the beauty of the two worlds vanish¹⁴ from the sight
God knows which world you showed me.*

3rd verse *Let [me] drink such wine from the proud, intoxicated eyes. (Intoxicated eyes!)*

17th girah (in Urdu) *This is the enigma of worshipping God; do you [think you] know something?
It is necessary to remain under his gaze.*

I need the stone of the friend's threshold for my prostrations

14 *Girā dī*, lit. 'dropped away'.

Otherwise, how far will the Sanctuary remain from the heart.

*Shamīm, people may call me an infidel; let them!
The one I love is nothing else but the light of the Truth.*

3rd verse *Intoxicated eyes. (Intoxicated eyes!)*

18th *girah* (in Urdu) *By God, there is such intoxication in those eyes
That, just look, whoever sees them gets drunk.*

3rd verse *Intoxicated eyes. (Intoxicated eyes!)*

19th *girah* (in Urdu) *Your eyes cast a spell on my heart
Your eyes emit the fragrance of love.*

3rd verse *Let [me] drink such wine from the proud, intoxicated eyes. (Intoxicated eyes!)*

1st verse *I become yours and remain yours – let there be life like that now.*

Ghulam Hasnain, the son of Meraj Ahmad, has arrived during Iftekhar's performance. The latter has noticed him and is preparing to leave. The audience, however, requests him to sing one more song. He complies and sings four verses (verses 1, 4, 3 and 6) of a six-verse Persian ghazal attributed to Rūmī.¹⁵ The Persian verses are part of a *mukhammas* written on the ghazal by a poet who uses the pen name Aḥmad. Unfortunately, I have not been able to ascertain the identity of the author. The text is, however, widely known and it is sung by qawwals both in India and Pakistan. Iftekhar again asserts his position as the centre of the attention and chastises an elderly gentleman who tries to sneak out mid-performance.

Item 6: A macaronic *tazmīn* in Urdu and Persian

1st verse *Lovely sweetheart of mine, be kind
According to what is possible, protect my honour
Beloved, come, just for a moment
I am yearning to make you my guest
Friend, I sacrifice my soul and heart [to you]. (Everything I have is a sacrifice!)*

¹⁵ The ghazal is not found in *Dīvān-i Shams*, but it is included in all the three qawwali anthologies. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmat*, 279; Fārūqī, *Naghmat*, 146; Meraj, *Surūd*, 117.

- 2nd verse *When my restlessness grew intolerable
I reiterated this affliction to him
He laughed and said: 'You keep still repeating (?) [that]?'
If I knew for certain that you love me
I would dazzle you with your own beauty.¹⁶*
- 3rd verse *Oh, heart is full of pain, soul is restless.
Although you are wailing and emaciated in love
Sacrifice your existence to that idol.
If you relinquish your head like a man
I will make you a sacrifice like Ismael.*
- 4th verse *Aḥmad, how long will you stay here and there?
What would the shadow of his favourites (?) do?
I am a sacrifice, but accept his secrets [as] a gift:
Shams-i Tabrezī, say to Maulānā:
I will make you a record of the secrets of the court.¹⁷*

After the performance, Iftekhar and his group collect their instruments and the *naẓrānah* while a round of tea is being served to everyone. Most of the outside guests leave as well. As the bed-cum-living room becomes less crowded, the women of the family as well as a female disciple are invited to sit inside.

After the break, Ghulam Hasnain, who is deputizing for his ailing father, begins. Compared to Iftekhar, his numbers are straightforward and succinct. He uses *rubā'īs* and *gīrahs* sparingly and hardly ever employs *takrār*. The overall impression is that he is merely fulfilling his professional duty. For the most part, he fails to enthral the audience, whose sole reaction to his singing is to offer *naẓrānah* whenever a name of a saintly personage is mentioned. Most of the items he sings are part of the repertoire learned from his father. The qawwals begin with a *naghmah*, *alāp* and two *na'ts* belonging to the core qawwali repertoire. The first one, written in Hindi by Khāliq Kānpūrī, is prefaced by a common Persian *rubā'ī* whereas the second one, a Persian poem attributed to Jāmī, is sung without textual embellishments.

16 According to the interpretation prevalent among contemporary Indian Sufis, this verse refers to the mirror as the only gift a lover can offer to the beloved. When presented to him, it will dazzle him with his own beauty, not with the beauty of the lover. This is the reason for translating *az jamāl-i khayesh* as 'from your own beauty' instead of 'from my own beauty'.

17 The last line reads in the qawwali anthologies *vaqif-i asrār-i yazdān-at kunam* ('I will make you familiar with divine secrets').

Item 7: A *naʿt* in Hindi

naghmah

<alāp>

1st *rubāʿī* (in Persian)

Messenger of God!
Muhammad is the rose, Ali the fragrance of the rose
Fatima is inside that petal of the rose
Husain and Hasan came forth like its perfume
Which scents the earth and the time.

1st verse
When Muhammad Mustafa was born, aunt Halima took him to her lap and said:
*'Do light the ghee lamps, Amina's darling was born!'*¹⁸

1st *girah* (in Hindi)
Aunt Halima gave lovely Muhammad milk to drink
Lifted him on her arms and
*Brought him a small basket of molasses (?).*¹⁹

1st verse
'Do light the ghee lamps, Amina's darling was born!'

2nd verse
*In the Heaven the cries of joy resounded, the earth sung merrily.*²⁰
Gabriel called out: 'Muhammad was born today!'

3rd verse
Today, the huris danced in Abdullah's courtyard, ankle bells tinkling.
All the prophets from Adam to Jesus came to present their felicitations.

4th verse
Angels came reading blessings and stars twinkled
On the lap of his mother, he was just like a jewel in a ring.

Item 8: A *naʿt* in Persian

1st verse
Zephyr, travel towards Batha [in Mecca]
*Tell about my condition to Muhammad.*²¹

18 Meraj, *Surūd*, 148.

19 *Lāvar*, possibly from *lāgar*.

20 *Dhartī gāʿe malhār*, lit. 'the earth sung *malhār*,' the raga of rainy season. Since the dry earth is thought to rejoice from the rain, the expression also means to sing merrily. See, e.g. McGregor 2000: 795.

21 The poem is not found in *Kulliyāt-i Jāmī*. In Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt*, it lacks the *maqtaʿ* and is classified as anonymous. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 309–310. The *maqtaʿ* bearing the *takhalluṣ* Jāmī appears in Fārūqī's *Naghmāt* and in *Surūd*. See Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 163; Meraj, *Surūd*, 53.

- 2nd verse *Muhammad, you are the king of the world
Kindly, bestow a glance towards me.*
- 3rd verse *Take this longing soul of mine there
Sacrifice it for the sake of the tomb of the best of the men.*
- 4th verse *Although Jāmī was already honoured with his kindness
God, be merciful like that another time too.*

Following the prescribed thematic order, the qawwals sing a *manqabat* after the *naʿt*. The poem in praise of Muʿīn al-Dīn is a favourite of the *pīrzādahs* of the Nizamuddin shrine.

Item 9: A *manqabat* in Urdu

- 1st *rubāʿī* *The sweetheart of Khvājah ʿUsmān, Saintly Master of India
You are the darling of Fatima Zahra, you are the dearest of Ali.*
- Refrain *You are a great nurturer of the poor strangers, (Muʿīn al-Dīn!) saintly master of India.*
- 1st verse *You are explicitly the saint of India, you are called the king of saints
We are also beggars at your door, give us, too, for the sake of Husain.*
- 2nd verse *Give me, for the sake of Ali,²² my hem is still empty
My master, be merciful to everyone, I implore you for the sake of Ghāus Pāk.²³*
- 3rd verse *He invited to his door whom he wished and made his own whom he wished
These decisions are made with great mercy, glorious fate is in question.*
- 4th verse *Restore my damaged fortune, be kind to the sinner
My reputation is in your hands, my life is at stake.*
- 5th verse *Due to your blessings they became all saints, Quṭb, Farīd and beloved Šābir*

22 The line does not properly fit into the tune and the qawwals have to sing *ʿālī*, lengthening the short vowel against the musical conventions of the genre.

23 *Ghāus Pāk*, 'Pure Helper'. Conspicuously South Asian way to refer to 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī that combines affection and reverence. In a similar vein, Nizām al-Dīn is referred to as Maḥbūb Pāk and Šābir 'Alā' al-Dīn as Šābir Pāk.

The thing that makes Nizām and Khusrau saints, my Master, is your blessing.

6th verse *If I see you, I celebrate my ʿīd, if I take your name, my work gets done
I, too, remain always hopeful; he always nurtures the human kind.*

7th verse *I never told you that your essence is my goal
You made me your own, it is a question about the trust in you.*

Refrain *You are a great nurturer of the poor strangers, saintly master of India.²⁴*

The slow and strenuous performance is followed by a Hindi *manqabat* in praise of Ṣābir ‘Alā’ al-Dīn. Its inclusion in the performance is motivated by the presence of a listener who is a disciple in the Chishti Sabiri lineage. For some reason, the qawwals decide to begin with a Hindi *dohā* Amīr Khusrau is said to have composed after he was told the news about the death of Nizām al-Dīn. The qawwals have found some inspiration and they execute their performance with considerable skill. They are momentarily able to stir the listeners who are already exhausted by a programme that has continued for over three hours. I have never seen the text of this item in writing, but the way it is performed indicates that it formally follows the structure of a *mustazād* ghazal.

The topics inspired by everyday life are typical to Hindi poems that simulate folk songs. The description in the second verse of a common ritual followed in Sufi shrines is an excellent example of this poetic convention. As in real life, the pilgrim of the poem kindles lights in front of the tomb and presents her request to the saint. If she becomes happy and satisfied, that is, the request is granted, she fulfils her part of the pledge by offering a ceremonial cover (*cādar*) on the tomb. The use of the diminutive ending *-iyā* appearing throughout the text is a common feature in Hindi poems sung by the qawwals.

Item 10: A *manqabat* in Hindi

1st *rubāʿī* (in *Fair beauty sleeps on her bed, hair covering her face*
Hindi) *Khusrau, go home, twilight has engulfed the four directions.*

2nd *rubāʿī* (in *In my view, the gate of Ṣābir is envied by Rīḡvān*

²⁴ The version recorded in *Surūd* includes verses 1, 3 and 6 as well as a variant of verse 4 from the performance of Ghulam Hasnain. See Meraḡ, *Surūd*, 178. Apparently, the popularity of this item has led to inserting new verses to the basic version. Some have perhaps been composed for the purpose while others have been adapted from other poems that feature a similar poetic metre. For instance, the last verse is adopted from a famous ghazal *Maiñ zabān se kaise bayān karūñ dil-i sogvār kī bāt hai* ('How would I explain with the tongue, it is about the sorrowful heart?'), written by Ṣādiq Dihlavī.

- Urdu) *I am a nightingale of that meadow, Kaliyar is my rose garden.*
- 1st verse *Master 'Alī Aḥmad, your town of Kaliyar
Has settled into my eyes. (Şābir!)
I am in deep distress. Beloved, take notice of my heart (My Şābir!)
Which has become yours.*
- 2nd verse *When I place²⁵ lamps in front of you and light them
I will swear an oath to you.
If I become happy, I lay a cover on you tomb.
This is the method.*
- 3rd verse *Among the girlfriends, lacs are fortunate. I alone am worthless
I have fallen to your door. (Şābir!)
Dearest, sometimes ask about the condition of this distressed girl
Who has become yours. (Şābir!)*
- 4th verse *Life of Ali, darling of the cupbearer of Kausar
Bride of Bābā (Of Bābā Farīd! Şābir!)
Every day, fill my water pot through their hands
[The water pot of the girl] who has become yours.*
- 1st verse *Master 'Alī Aḥmad, your town of Kaliyar
Has settled into my eyes.*

After the *manqabat*, Anis Miyan's father, who has returned downstairs, tells the qawwals to sing something written by Niyāz. They begin with *'Ishq meñ tere koh-i ḡham sar pih liyā jo ho so ho*. They attempt to stop after singing five of its nine verses (verses 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7), while leaving the *maqta'* out. They are, however, told to include it as well. The ghazal is relatively long and remembering the exact order of the verses can be challenging. Both Shaheed Barelwi in Khwaja Hall and Ghulam Hasnain in Anis Miyan's home rearrange some of the verses and omitted others. However, the only omission to elicit comments from the listeners was Ghulam Hasnain's attempt to omit the easily recognizable *maqta'*. The performance is brief and lasts barely ten minutes. It involves no textual embellishments, unlike the successful performance of the same poem in Khwaja Hall.

Item 11: A ghazal in Urdu

²⁵ Here, the present participle *dete* is used as an absolutive.

- 1st verse *In your love, I took a mountain of grief on my head, come what may
I forwent the luxury and enjoyment of life, come what may.*
- 2nd verse *Do not lay your hand on a patient like me, doctor!
Leave it to God, for God's sake, come what may.*
- 3rd verse *Rise from the school of reason, come to the wine house of love!
I have now drank the goblet of annihilation and unselfconsciousness, come what may.*
- 4th verse *As soon as love caught fire, [all] this burned like cotton:
The chattels of existence, soul and body – nothing remained, come what may.*
- 5th verse *I stated all the afflictions of separation to him face to face
He smiled charmingly, coquettishly and said: 'Come what may!'*
- 1st verse *In your love, a mountain of grief...*
- 6th verse *Niyāz, I have no use for good and bad of the world
What is it to him, who has passed away from himself, come what may.*
- 1st verse *In your love, I took a mountain of grief on my head, come what may.*

The qawwals start another ghazal immediately after the previous one. The two items are often sung in succession because of the similarity of their *radīfs jo ho so ho* ('come what may') and *koī ho ho nah ho nah ho* ('it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or nor', lit. 'if there is someone, let there be; if not, then not'). Although the qawwals sing both items as if they were written by Niyāz, the latter is actually found in the *dīvān* of a nineteenth-century Hyderabadī Sufi poet Imdād 'Alī 'Ulvī.²⁶ The same version is recorded in *Surūd*.²⁷ However, the ostensible *maqṭa'* of Ghulam Hasnain's performance is found in neither source. The verse is often included in the performances of the ghazal, but never as the final verse. In its present position, the word *beniyāz* becomes the pen name of the Sufi poet who is popularly known as Shāh Niyāz Beniyāz among his followers. However, he never used this appellation as the pen name in his poetry.

In addition to incorporating the incorrect *maqṭa'* to the poem, the qawwals stumble over the accurate combination of lines. As a consequence, they perform the third verse in two different variations. The audience seems somewhat baffled by the

²⁶ For the text of the original ghazal, see 'Ulvī, *Khumkhānah*, 89.

²⁷ See Meraj, *Surūd*, 184.

performance, but no one is well-enough acquainted with the poetic oeuvres of Niyāz or ‘Ulvī so as to be able to correct the qawwals.

Item 12: A ghazal in Urdu

- 1st verse *If the friend is with you, it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or not*
 When the beloved is yours, it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or not.
- 2nd verse *If the entire world, all its people were not in hundreds of thousands*
 When there is your promise, it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or not.²⁸
- 3rd verse *What is self and what is other, if I myself am not, am not?*
 Your breath is enough, it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or not.²⁹
- 3rd verse (cor- *What is self and what is other, if I myself am not, am not?*
 rected) *If you are, I assure you, it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or not.*
- 4th verse *Whether there is higher and lower world, I do not give a damn³⁰*
 O most perfect manifestation, it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or not.
- 5th verse *If someone complains about your Beniyāz*
 This is a new affliction, it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or not.

After the two ghazals, Ghulam Hasnain starts a *manqabat* written by a Bombay-based Hyderabadī Sufi master Ḥabīb ‘Alī Shāh in praise of Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn.³¹ Despite the significance of Fakhr al-Dīn for the prominent Chishti Nizami lineages of contemporary South Asia, this is to my knowledge the only item in qawwali repertoires that praises him. The abridged version sung by Ghulam Hasnain is found in *Surūd*.³²

Item 13: A *manqabat* in Urdu

28 The qawwals not only simplify the meaning of the verse, but also obscure it. In the literary version, this verse reads:

If the world was not and all the hundreds of thousands [of others] were not here
Your breath would be enough, it would not matter, if there was someone [else] or not.

29 Here, the qawwals attach the actual second line of the previous verse to the first line of the verse at hand. They correct themselves by singing the correct form as well.

30 *Pāposh se mirī*, lit. ‘from my shoe.’ This is a colloquial expression for utmost disregard.

31 For a discussion on Ḥabīb ‘Alī Shāh’s Sufi career in colonial Bombay, see Green 2011: 179–207.

32 See Meraj, *Surūd*, 177. This version includes verses 1, 8, 2 and 9 of the total nine verses. For the full text, see Ḥabīb, *Dīvān*, 189–190.

- 1st verse *Manifestation of oneness, direction for the prayers of religion, Maulānā Muḥammad Fakhr al-Dīn*
Character like that of Uthman, radiance <king> of Mu'īn, Maulānā Muḥammad Fakhr al-Dīn.
- 2nd verse *After I was called only yours, whom else should I tell the wish of my heart?*
Except for you, I have no one, Maulānā Muḥammad Fakhr al-Dīn.
- 3rd verse *When the spirit leaves my body and it is time to say goodbye to body and soul*
Let there be your door and my forehead, Maulānā Muḥammad Fakhr al-Dīn.
- 4th verse *I am a dog at the door of Ḥāfiz;³³ Ḥabīb, why be anxious over sins now?*
Somehow, quickly take the blessed name: Maulānā Muḥammad Fakhr al-Dīn.
- 1st verse *Manifestation of oneness, direction for the prayers of religion, Maulānā Muḥammad Fakhr al-Dīn.*

It is already almost four in the morning and Anis Miyan signals the qawwals to proceed to the *salām* that concludes the assembly. Ghulam Hasnain inserts some Urdu verses paraphrasing the Persian *salām* that is attributed to Nizamuddin. At the shrine, the qawwals sing the poem every day when the curtain of the shrine is lowered and the door locked for the night. According to the custom, the listeners stand during the *salām*, since it is considered possible that the Prophet is present in order to accept the greetings conveyed by the text.³⁴

Item 14: A *salām* in Persian

- 1st verse *Zephyr, turn towards Medina and recite greetings from someone who prays for him³⁵*
Circle around the King of Prophets³⁶ and recite the message with great humility.
- 2nd verse *In a form resembling my burning, pray in that place*

33 Ḥāfiz 'Alī Shāh, the Sufi guide of Ḥabīb 'Alī Shāh.

34 I have once witnessed an occasion when the *mūr-i mahfil* told the audience of a *samā'* assembly to stand up to respect the presence of the Prophet when a Persian *na't* attributed to Jāmī was being sung by the qawwals. This happened in Khwaja Hasan Nizami's *samā'* assembly organized in Khwaja Hall during the 'urs of Nizām al-Dīn on 11 March 2012.

35 For the text of Nizām al-Dīn's *salām*, see Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Nagh̃māt*, 299–300; Fārūqī, *Nagh̃māt*, 159; Meraj, *Surūd*, 43.

36 Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Nagh̃māt* and *Surūd* read *ba-gird-i shāh-i madīna gird o* ('Circle around the King of Medina'), but the Nizamuddin qawwals follow the reading found in Fārūqī's *Nagh̃māt*, *ba-gird-i shāh-i rusul bi-gird o*.

Stand inside and recite the entire Sura of Muhammad in a sweet voice.

- 3rd verse *Sometimes, pass through the Gate of Mercy, sometimes rub your forehead [on the ground] at the Gate of Gabriel
Sometimes, say 'Salutations, my Lord, to my beloved!' ³⁷ at the Gate of Peace.*
- 4th verse *Bow your wishful head to the dust of that street, adorning it with all this reverence
Recite abundant blessings to the pure spirit of the honoured, the best of the humankind.*
- 1st girah (in Urdu) *Zephyr, tell the greetings of us disconsolate to Mustafa in Medina
If he accepts my greetings, then convey the message of meeting.³⁸*
- 2nd girah (in Urdu) *Let me have a place in Medina opposite to your tomb
I yearn to live there, call me a slave of that place.*
- 3rd girah (in Urdu) *I give up my life for you, I sacrifice myself for you, I am an offering for you, sacrificed for your sake
Relate to the Prophet all that is happening to me, zephyr.*
- 5th verse *Sing together with David's melody, become acquainted with the lamentation of pain
Recite this ghazal by Niẓām, the dejected slave, in the assembly of the Messenger.*
- 1st verse *Zephyr, turn towards Medina and recite greetings from someone who prays for him.*

After the *salām*, the listeners sit down and Anis Miyan reads a formal Arabic *du'ā* that includes passages from the Quran (e.g. 2:286) as well as the *du'ā-yi farīdī*, originally recited by Bābā Farīd and commonly known among the Chishtis. He concludes by asking God to accept all the parts of the celebrations. The last round of tea is served and the guests leave while a few disciples sit with their master until six in the morning. One of them has promised me a lift to my lodgings, so I stay with them. We left his house at the break of dawn and entered the deserted alleyways of Old Delhi.

37 All the three qawwali anthologies read '*alā nabiyyin*' ('to the Prophet') instead of '*alā ḥabībī*' ('to my beloved').

38 Here, Ghulam Hasnain mixes lines from two verses. However, the new version works well despite that it skips some steps in the procedure prescribed for the wind. The omission elicits no comments from the listeners. In *Surūd* (Meraḥ, *Surūd*, 134), the lines read in their original context as follows:

*Zephyr, tell the greetings of us disconsolate to Mustafa in Medina
There is no one else but you, just tell this much as our message.*

*Zephyr, go first to Medina and tell my greetings to the Messenger of the Truth
If he accepts my greetings, then tell again a message of meeting.*

The less formal setting of a *samā'* assembly organized in a private home offers qawwals an opportunity to express their creativity to a greater extent than would be possible on more formal occasions. In Anis Miyan's *samā'* assembly, Iftekhār Ahmad capitalized on this possibility. His performance was a dazzling display of most of the textual techniques available for the qawwals. In addition to the numerous *rubā'īs*, *girahs* and *takrār*, he incorporated an Urdu paraphrase into a Persian poem and performed an Urdu *tazmīn* written on a Persian text. He skilfully mixed languages and poetic registers and evoked a wide range of moods ranging from the jubilant celebration of the Prophet's mediation, to the sad longing of a tortured lover. Notwithstanding the diversity of textual and performative techniques used, each of Iftekhār's performances was a coherent whole, and he managed to keep the audience enthralled throughout his turn. The contrast with Ghulam Hasnain could not have been greater. The latter manipulated the song texts to the minimum and opted for a simplified approach. While it can work in suitable circumstances, it failed to impress the listeners after Iftekhār, and his turn was soon over.

6.6 The legacy of a contemporary Sufi poet at Khanqah-e-Kamil, Hyderabad

In order to avoid giving an impression that the *samā'* assemblies organized in Delhi would be representative of India and Pakistan in general, I will also discuss a qawwali performance in another important centre of Sufism, Hyderabad. Hyderabad is located in the Deccan plateau, and it served as a capital of an influential Muslim princely state that was annexed to India in 1948. In Hyderabad, Muslim religious institutions enjoyed generous state patronage under the Nizams and men affiliated with one or another Sufi *silsilah* – Chishtiyya, Qadiriyya and Abu'l-'Ula'iyya being the most prominent – have continued to dominate the religious scene. Nowhere else in India is the conscious combining of the roles of a Sufi shaikh and an *'ālim* as conspicuous as in Hyderabad. The projection seems to have been successful, since the presence of reformist Muslim groups is not as conspicuous as it is, for example, in Delhi. The combined effect of the state patronage and the prestige of Sufi scholars made Hyderabad also a flourishing centre of Sufi poetry and qawwali music in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In Hyderabad, Sufi disciples and pilgrims still form the predominantly Muslim audience of qawwali, and the impact of the popular interest in Sufism that has affected the Nizamuddin shrine in Delhi is barely felt there.

The occasion discussed in this chapter is the centenary *'urs* of Sayyid Shāh Ghulām Ghaus Ḥusainī Qādirī al-Shattārī (d. 1913). Ghulām Ghaus was a religious scholar and Sufi guide who headed the branch of Shattari-Qadiri *silsilah* based in the Dabeerpura area of Hyderabad.¹ Like many other contemporaries, his predecessors had emigrated from northern India towards the south in the wake of imperial forces. The commonly remembered history of the *silsilah* begins with the departure of Sayyid Aḥmad Shāh Gujarātī from Gujarat during the latter half of the seventeenth century and his arrival in Aurangabad during Aurangzeb's Deccan campaigns. When the Asif Jahi dynasty had established itself in Hyderabad during the 18th century and made the city an appealing centre for scholars, poets and Sufis, the great-grandfather of Ghulām Ghaus, Sayyid Shāh Shaikhān Aḥmad (d. 1821) moved there during the rule of the second Nizam, Niẓām 'Alī Khān (r. 1762-1803).²

According to the biographical sketches published during the *'urs* festivities, Ghulām Ghaus was a celebrated hadith scholar, whose fatwas were in great demand as

¹ The members of the *silsilah* usually refer to themselves with the term Shuttari instead of Shattari, holding that their lineage is named after the eponymous town Shuttar. They consider the *silsilah* as a branch of Qadiriyya-Taifuriyya. Although they occasionally refer to Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī and 'Abd Allāh Shattārī as key figures of their lineage, the most important phase of its history begins with its transfer from Gujarat to Aurangabad. Interestingly, I have never heard the most famous Shattari, Muḥammad Ghaus mentioned by the members of the *silsilah*. On the early history of the Hyderabad Shattari *silsilah*, see Qādirī 2010: 23. For a general discussion on the Shattari brotherhood, see Ahmed 2012 and Rizvi 2002: I, 151–173.

² Qādirī 2010: 21. For an itinerary of a contemporaneous courtesan and poet Mah Laqā Bā'ī Candā (1768–1824) to Hyderabad and her successful career there, see Kugle 2010a.

far afield as in al-Azhar in Cairo. He is also credited for making the celebrations of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday the grand-scale occasion it is in contemporary Hyderabad. His influence is further attested by the fact that he enlisted the high-ranking aristocrats of the Paigah and Salar Jang families as his followers.³

The most renowned offspring of the lineage is no doubt the son of Ghulām Ghaus, Syed Shah Shaikhan Ahmed Quadri al-Shuttari, popularly known by his pen name Kamil (d. 1976). He was a renowned scholar of religious sciences, a Sufi guide for numerous disciples, as well as a political and social activist who had a prominent and sometimes foundational role in various organizations, such as the Muslim political party All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM; 'All India Council of the Union of Muslims'), Muslim Personal Law Board and Majlis-e-Ulema-e-Deccan ('The Council of the Religious Scholars of the Deccan'). However, he is best known as a poet whose texts are widely sang by the qawwals. His followers refer to him as Ḥassān al-Hind ('Ḥassān of India'), because, in their view, his verses pleased the Prophet as much as the poetry of Ḥassān ibn Thābit.⁴ They hold that his poetic excellence was a result of the period of one and half years spent in the *dargāh* of Mu'īn al-Dīn in Ajmer. It was only after this phase in his life that his verses acquired 'the colour of love and mystical knowledge' (*rang-i 'āshiqānah o 'ārifānah*).⁵

The poems of Kamil were published as a *dīvān* entitled *Vāridāt-i Kāmil* ('Inrushes of Kamil' or 'Perfect Inrushes') in 1963, when the author was still alive. Since then, the book has been reissued three times under the auspices of Kamil Academy, the latest edition being published in 2011. *Vāridāt* is readily available in the bookshops that cluster around Charminar in the heart of the old city. Although Kamil's poems have been in print for the past fifty years, they have reached their broadest audience through the popular renditions of qawwals. In his work on Hyderabadī Sufi poets in independent India, Basheer Ahmed notes that qawwals would heat up the hearts of people by singing his verses during *samā'* assemblies and thus spread the fame of his poetry.⁶ However, performing his poetry has not been limited to live performances. Celebrated Hyderabadī qawwals like Aziz Ahmed Khan Warsi have sung them on records, sometimes in traditional musical setting and sometimes as catchy adaptations that were accompanied by clarinet, *bulbultarang* and strings.⁷

The poems Kamil wrote during the latter part of his life remain unpublished. The loose sheets on which they were written are waiting to be edited and published in a small bag with Kamil's successor, Syed Mohammed Qubool Badshah Hasani Alhussaini

3 Qādirī al-Shattāri 2010: 8; Qubool 2010: 11–12.

4 Qādirī al-Shattāri 2010: 38–39. Another poet vying for the title of *Ḥassān-i Hind* is Aḥmad Rizā Khān Barelvī.

5 Qādirī 2010: 23.

6 Ahmad 2007: 55

7 For a popular rendition of Kamil's poem *Hai ḥāṣil-i ḥayāt muḥabbat rasūl kī* ('The object of life is love for the Prophet'), see Warsi, *Kab tak Mere Moula*, track 10. For the text of the poem, see Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 173.

Quadri Shattari (b. 1942). As Kamil had no descendants, he named his devoted disciple and nephew as his designated follower before embarking on Hajj in 1965. Like his predecessors, Qubool Badshah has received a traditional education in religious sciences, but he also holds an MA in Arabic from a modern educational institute, the Osmania University. After his retirement from the government service, he has continued to function as the head of the Majlis-e-Ulema-e-Deccan and as a member of the Muslim Personal Law Board. He has considerable influence in the affairs pertaining to the Sufi institutions of Hyderabad as a member of a subdivision of the Andhra Pradesh Waqf Board called *Anjuman-i sajjādagān o mutavalliyān o khidmatguzārān* ('The assembly of the heads, superintendents and servants of shrines').⁸ He has earned fame as a reciter of the Koran (*qārī*) and written poetry using the pen name Adīb.⁹

The centre of the *silsilah*, Aastana-e-Shattaria, stands by the busy Dabeerpura road intersecting the northern part of the old city. The Aastana is dominated by a mosque and a courtyard where Kamil and his predecessors lie buried. The present mosque was built in 1908 to replace the smaller one, in the vicinity of which the heads of the *silsilah* settled in the 18th century.¹⁰ The edifice is a typical specimen of the Asif Jahi mosque architecture with a flat roof surrounded by a balustrade and flanked by short, decorative minarets on both corners. Today, numerous layers of whitewash have all but concealed the stucco ornaments and an angular concrete extension covers the original frontispiece. Despite the extension, the space is too small for the crowd that is drawn to the mosque by Qubool Badshah's sermons during the Friday prayers. For the time being, the Dabeerpura road is closed by the police for the duration of Friday prayers in order to accommodate all the devotees.

Another centre of the *silsilah's* activities is Khanqah-e-Kamil, situated inside the residential block behind the Aastana, in the courtyard of Qubool Badshah's house. A roofed platform serves alternately as a dining-hall, venue for seminars, *mushā'irahs*, communal *zīkr* and *samā'*. No weekly or monthly *samā'* assemblies are organized at Khanqah-e-Kamil, but communal *zīkr* takes place every Sunday in a manner typical to the Sufi institutions of Hyderabad.

It is noteworthy that although the tombs housed in Aastana-e-Shattaria are clearly visible from the busy road and bound to attract the attention of passers-by because of the pink clothes that cover them,¹¹ they are not popular sites of pilgrimage among the general public. Instead, only the family members and the disciples of Qubool Badshah seem to visit them whenever they pray at the mosque. The crowds attending the Friday

8 The relations between the Waqf Board and the *Anjuman*, however, have not always been cordial. In May 2014, the tensions developed into a full-fledged crisis when the Waqf Board alleged that the *sajjādanashūn* and *mutavāllī* of the *dargāh* of Shāh Khāmosh had sold land that was *waqf* property, whereas the *Anjuman* maintained that the land in question was in his personal possession.

9 Qādirī al-Shattārī 2010: 34–35.

10 Qādirī 2010: 21.

11 Pink is the identifying colour used by the Shattaris in Hyderabad.

prayers generally remain oblivious to the tombs. Significantly, a modern hagiographer, Sayyid Murād ‘Alī Ṭālī’ does not mention any of the personages buried in Aastana-e-Shattaria in his *Tazkirah-yi Auliya’-i Haidarābād* (‘Biography of the Saints of Hyderabad’), a comprehensive work that includes the biographies of all the saints whose tombs are sites of pilgrimage. On the other hand, a son of Shāh Shaikhān Aḥmad, Ghulām Ḥasan Abban (d. 1795), whose tomb in the same Dabeerpura neighbourhood attracts pilgrims, is included.¹²

In the course of my field work, I have had a chance to attend different functions organized by this particular *silsilah*. In February 2009, I attended the ‘*urs*’ of Aḥmad Shāh Gujarātī in Aurangabad. In February 2011, I observed the celebrations of the Prophet’s birthday that included exhibiting the hair of the Prophet at Aastana-e-Shattaria. In March of the same year, I witnessed the annual *fātiḥah* of one of the family members of Kamil. However, the centenary ‘*urs*’ of Ghulām Ghauṣ in 2010 was by far the grandest occasion. It comprised a wide range of programs organized over a period of five days from 12 to 16 January (25 to 29 Muharram). On the first day of the ‘*urs*’, several *qārīs* recited the Koran in the mosque. On the second day, *Jalsah-yi Faiẓān-i Auliya’* (‘An Assembly Discussing the Blessings of the Saints’) was organized nearby, where a stage had been erected for the speakers. Unlike the other functions, the *Jalsah* targeted a broad public. Roughly estimated, around five hundred people (exclusively men) listened to speeches delivered by the heads of various local shrines and the staff of the most important religious school of Hyderabad, Jamia Nizamia.¹³ Many of the addresses were openly polemic, challenging the views of the Deobandis and Ahl-i Hadis. They were denounced as lacking in the inner dimensions of religion and merely advocating outward performance of religious duties. The speakers singled out the influence of the Sufi ‘*ulamā*’ as the major factor in preventing the spread of such ideas in the Deccan. Throughout the speeches, the special position of the Deccan as a bastion of genuine, unpolluted Islam was emphasized.

The actual day of the ‘*urs*’, 27 Muharram, fell on 14 January. The close family and the disciples of Qubool Badshah started to gather at Aastana-e-Shattaria after the afternoon prayer (‘*aṣr*’). Following the common custom observed in Hyderabad, the *fātiḥah* was preceded by reading the entire Koran (*khatm al-qur’ān*). In practice this meant that everyone picked one of the Koran’s thirty parts and kept reciting it in a low voice until the sunset prayer (*maghrib*). Qubool Badshah then led the participants on a *ziyārat* to the tombs situated in the courtyard. He read a short *fātiḥah*, and sandalwood paste was patted on the head side of each tomb and flowers were laid on top of them while everyone was chanting *durūd*. The ritual was more elaborate on the tomb of Ghulām Ghauṣ which was covered with numerous flower sheets made by tying strings of roses together. This was accompanied by a Hindi poem evoking wedding imagery.

¹² See Ṭālī, *Tazkirah-yi auliya’-i Haidarābād*, 22–25.

¹³ On Jamia Nizamia, see Kozlowski 1995.

The participants then returned to the mosque to listen to poems in praise of the Prophet written by Kamil and recited by local *na'atkhvāns* and Qubool Badshah's family members. The atmosphere was turning emotionally charged, and many older men cried openly during the recitation. After leading the night prayer (*'ishā'*) at the mosque, Qubool Badshah led everyone to the *khānqāh* through a claustrophobic passage that winds its way between the residential buildings surrounding the mosque.

The *samā'* assembly in the *khānqāh* was the major part of the *'urs* programme. Thus far, family members and disciples had taken part in the festivities, but the audience gathering at the *khānqāh* was considerably wider and filled the courtyard to the brim. The function at the *khānqāh* was filmed by a hired camera crew that shoot the activities from different angles, illuminating the tiniest details with a portable spotlight. Distributing the filmed *'urs* festivities on VCDs or uploading them on YouTube is a fairly recent phenomenon. When I visited Hyderabad for the first time in 2009, this was done only in the most popular shrine of the city, the Yousufain Dargah located in Nampally. In a couple of years, the practice has been adopted by many smaller shrines and *khānqāhs*, as well.

Another indicator suggesting the amount of effort (and money) put into the organization of the centenary *'urs* celebrations was the publication of two books. The first one is titled *Souvenir (Sā'uvnir)*. The eighty-page book contains short essays on the life Ghulām Ghaus, Kamil and Qubool Badshah written by the family members. It also includes seven poems by Kamil that are not found in his *dīvān*, but are nonetheless included in qawwali repertoires. This indicates that they were written and given for qawwals to sing after the contents of *Vāridāt* were fixed.¹⁴ The final thirty pages are filled by the wishes of the Hyderabad business community. They also serve as advertisements for a range of businesses from restaurants and bakeries, to medical halls and providers of electric appliances. The second book, titled *Al-qaul al-vasīṭ bain al-ifrāṭ va'l-tafrīṭ* ('A Statement Arbitrating between Excess and Lacking'), was written by Ghulām Ghaus. It is a fatwa that explains the legal premises of reading a *fātiḥah* and offering food in someone's name (*niyāz*). Like the *Jalsah* of the previous night, the republication of the lithographed edition is a part of the Sufi *'ulamā's* efforts to counteract the attacks of Deobandis and Ahl-i Hadis against their practices.

Like filming, publishing books during the most important *'urs* celebrations has become an established practice in Hyderabad. When the centenary *'urs* of Shāh Muḥammad Qubūl Bādshāh Ḥasanī al-Ḥusainī Qādirī Cishtī Goshanashīn Zarrīnkulāh, the grandfather of Qubool Badshah, was celebrated in 2009, a similar commemorative volume was published by the *sajjādanashīn* together with a collection

14 One of these poems is *Sarvar-i 'ālam murād-i bandah o maulā hai āp* ('Master of the world, both the people and the Lord are longing for you;' or 'Master of the world, both expressions, a human being and the lord designate you') recorded by Aziz Ahmed Khan Warsi. See Warsi, *Akashvani Sangeet: Qawwali II*, track 4. For the text of the poem, see *Souvenir* 2010: 46.

of his letters and other Sufi writings.¹⁵ Unlike the popular poetic works like *Vāridāt*, such books rarely find their way to the bookshops and can be only obtained from respective *khānqāhs*.

After copies of the books were distributed to the participants, Qubool Badshah garlanded the guests of honour and wrapped shawls around their shoulders. The presence of numerous *sajjādanashīns* of the city emphasized the prestige of the occasion. After the lengthy ceremony, Qubool Badshah and other members of the Sufi elite took their places in the front rows of the audience and the qawwals began their performance. The first qawwal to perform was Mohammed Mahboob Bandanawazi Qawwal, who has the right (and obligation) to perform the ritual items during the ‘*urs*’ festivities at Khanqah-e-Kamil. In contrast to the Nizamuddin shrine, *Qaul* and *Rang* are in Hyderabad performed in the end of a *samā’* assembly. An alternative beginning during ‘*urs*’ festivities is a *salām*, a poem that greets the Prophet and conveys the prayers of the believers to him. The Urdu *salām* sung by Mohammed Qawwal is in part a paraphrase of Niẓām al-Dīn’s Persian *salām* that was performed at Anis Miyan’s home. The text exists in myriad variations in the repertoires of qawwals and *na’tkhvāns*. It is probably a composite poem into which verses by different authors have been incorporated in a manner of *‘Īdgāh-i mā gharībān kū-yi to* (Khwaja Hall, Item 3) and *E Khvājah-yi Hind al-Valī* (Anis Miyan’s, Item 9) discussed above.¹⁶ Like many other *salāms*, this poem asks the morning zephyr blowing from the east to deliver a message to the Prophet in Medina.

Item 1: A *salām* in Urdu

naghmah

<*alāp*>

1st *rubā’ī* (in Persian) *Zephyr, convey my affectionate greetings to his honour*

Relate the story of the poor speck of dust to the sun.

There, in his holy resting place

Kiss the ground and convey the salutations from me, the wretched.

1st verse *Zephyr, tell the greetings of us disconsolate to Mustafā in Medina*

‘There is no one else (Muhammad, who wears the cloak! My beloved Muhammad!) but you.’ Tell this much as our message.

2nd verse *I am walking on foot, Muhammad, support me, support me!*

Tell me, to whom could your humble slave call out except for you? (Lord!)

15 See *Souvenir* 2009; Zarrīnkulāh, *Tuḥfa-yi qubūl fī madārij al-rasūl* and *Vāridāt-i bātīn*.

16 For the text of another, somewhat similar version, see Meraj, *Surūd*, 134.

- 3rd verse *Let me have a place in Medina opposite to your tomb
I yearn to live there, call me a slave of that place.*
- 4th verse *I give up my life for you, I sacrifice myself for you, I am an offering for you, sacrificed
for your sake
Relate to the Prophet all that is happening to me, zephyr.*
- 5th verse *If he asks, who is it that wails in separation from me
Bow your head politely to his feet and greet him saying: [it is] the poor Vājif.*

The phrases that most stirred the audience and lead to *takrār* are emotional statements that describe the believer's dependence on the Prophet (1st and 2nd verse) and the desire to live close to him in Medina (3rd verse). In the beginning of the occasion, it was difficult to tell if presenting *nazrānah*, the most common way of expressing appreciation of the qawwals' singing, was actually inspired by the performance, since there was a continuous commotion among the audience. New guests of honour kept arriving and making rounds among their peers and presenting them *nazrānah* as a token of social bonding. The first hour and half of the occasion was very much characterized by such actions.

After the *salām*, the qawwals continued with a *mubāarak*, an item often performed during the 'urs festivities in Hyderabad. *Mubāarak* is a song that presents felicitations on the occasion of the 'urs. The Urdu *mubāarak*s are responses to and partial paraphrases of a Persian ghazal attributed to Sarmad Shahīd, the antinomian Sufi executed by Aurangzeb in 1661. The most widely sung Urdu *mubāarak* is written by Bedam. The version sung by Mohammed Qawwal, however, shares only the *maqṭa'* with this poem. Even if most of the poem has been written by someone else, the qawwals still attribute the entire text to the celebrated Sufi poet through the inclusion of the *maqṭa'*.¹⁷ The following version evokes the presence of the important religious figures in a hierarchic order, beginning with the Prophet and continuing to Ali, 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī, referred to as *Ghaus-i A'zam* ('The Mightiest Helper') and *Pīrān-i Pīr* ('The Master of Masters'), and to Mu'īn al-Dīn, referred to as *Gharīb Navāz* ('Nurturer of the Poor Strangers') and simply as *Khvājah* ('The Master'). While singing about each personality, Mohammed Qawwal inserts *gīrah* verses to the salient text. In the case of the two Sufi saints, the *gīrah* verses (3rd and 4th *gīrah*s) are excerpts from *manqabats* written by Kamil. The application of *takrār* is indicative of the audience's preferences: praise of the Prophet and 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī stirs the audience, while the mention of Ali and Mu'īn al-Dīn elicit only mild response. The former two are in the focus of the *silsilah* and the con-

17 For the Persian poem attributed to Sarmad, see Meraj, *Surūd*, 71. For the Urdu poem by Bedam, *Nūr al-'ain*, 81. For another Urdu version resembling the original, see Meraj, *Surūd*, 155.

temporary interpretations of Islam prevalent among Indian Sufis that emphasize the love for the Prophet (*‘ishq-i rasūl*).

Item 2: A *mubārak* in Urdu

1st verse *May the shadow of Ahmad, the chosen one, be blessed!*

1st *girah* (in *Let my enemies boast on noble deeds*
Urdu; re- *I will take with me the affiliation with the Messenger.*
peated
twice)

1st verse *May the shadow of Ahmad, the chosen, be blessed!*
May the affiliation with the Attacking Lion¹⁸ be blessed!

2nd *girah* (in *I am helpless, I have no friend – Respected Lion, help!*
Persian) *Hand of omnipotence, help! Conqueror of Khaybar, help!*

1st verse *May the affiliation with the Attacking Lion be blessed!*

2nd verse *‘Solution of my problems!’ I called out to you in trouble*
The Mightiest Helper (Master of Masters!) is helping [you]. Blessings!

3rd *girah* (in *The domain of grief is flourishing in the heart, Master of Masters*
Urdu) *Oh, how I relish your memory, Master of Masters.*

If your honour is on my side, what do I need to worry about?
If you are there, then come what may,¹⁹ Master of Masters.

Whose world of love flourishes because of you
Will never be ruined, Master of Masters.²⁰

3rd verse *The Mightiest Helper (Master of Masters!) is helping [you]. Blessings!*

4th verse *The mercy of the respected Master of the World manifests itself. (Nurturer of the Poor Strangers!)*

18 *Ḥaidar-i karrār*, i.e. Ali.

19 *Har cih bādā bād* is the Persian equivalent of the phrase *jo ho so ho* (‘come what may’) encountered above as the *radīf* of Niyāz’ ghazal.

20 This *girah* is a part of a *manqabat* written by Kamil. See Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 65.

4th girah (in Urdu; the penultimate line repeated three times) *When no one asks after you, Khvājah is the refuge of the poor strangers [I am] a sacrifice for the sake of this manner of yours, my beloved Khvājah.
If you are the boatman, why should we be afraid of the storm?
We will reach the shore somehow, Khvājah.*

*By Khvājah ‘Uṣmān, look towards here once!
We have spent years on your threshold, Khvājah.*

*By the bond of love, by the perfect affiliation²¹
You are ours, you are ours, our Khvājah.²²*

4th verse *The mercy of the respected Master of the World manifests itself
Let those, who have eyes, see it. Blessings!*

5th verse *May you be safe (Shāh Ghaus!), may your lane flourish
May the dirt from the beloved's door be the blessed [lot] of ours.*

6th verse *Became a mirror house...<ākār tān>
The form in the mirror became a mirror house, Bedam
May the enjoyment of sighting the beloved be blessed.²³*

After the opening items, Mohammed Qawwal gives way to the most celebrated qawwals of Hyderabad, the Warsi Brothers. The current leading vocalists, Naseer and Nazeer Ahmed Khan Warsi are the grandsons of Aziz Ahmed Khan Warsi, the greatest qawwali superstar of the pre-Nusrat era. The family tree of the Warsi Brothers is traced to Muḥammad Ṣiddīq Khān, a nephew of Tānras Khān, who migrated together with

²¹ Or ‘by the affiliation of Kamil.’

²² This *gīrah* belongs to another *manqabat* written by Kamil. See Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 155–156. The poem is also included in *Surūd*. See Meraj, *Surūd*, 167–169.

²³ The *maqṭa‘* seems to pose difficulties to the qawwal, since he initially loses his words and takes a recourse to a short melodic improvisation. Even then the first line emerges somewhat muddled. The verse in the original poem reads:

*The world of form became a house of mirrors, Bedam
May the enjoyment of sighting the beloved be blessed.*

Bedam’s original verse evokes the poetic image of mirror in referring to the metaphysical concept of the creation as a reflection of the existence of God. If one recognizes that all the forms are mirrors of God’s existence, the world appears to him like a house full of mirrors that all reflect the beloved’s face. The variant found in *Surūd* (Meraj, *Surūd*, 155) reads:

*The form of Vāriṣ became a house of mirrors, Bedam
May the enjoyment of sighting the master be blessed.*

The verse adopts a distinctly less metaphysical and more devotional tone. Instead of the world, the verse describes Bedam’s Sufi guide, Vāriṣ ‘Alī Shāh, as a house of mirrors. The devotional flavour is further emphasized by replacing the word beloved (*jānānah*) with master (*sarkār*) in the second line.

his uncle from Delhi to Hyderabad after the 1857 uprising. The Warsi Brothers begin with a Persian *na't* attributed to Shams-i Tabrezī. Only some of the listeners have a good command over Persian. However, since the vocabulary in the poem is limited and familiar to Urdu speakers and the grammatical structures are clear and simple, even the listeners with no Persian skills are able to follow the performance.

The Warsi Brothers begin with *naghmah-yi quddūsī* and a Persian *rubā'ī* that explores the ontological depths of the Prophet's existence.

Item 3: A *na't* in Persian

naghmah-yi quddūsī

1st *rubā'ī* (in Persian) *Seal of the messengers, you are the Kaaba I seek
You are present in the form of everything that exists
Perfect verses of the Truth are clear to you
You are the essence that was hidden behind the veils.*²⁴

1st verse *Messenger of God, you are the beloved of the sole Creator
You have been singled out by the one who is Mighty, Pure and Unique.*²⁵

2nd verse *[You are] the precious one in the presence of the Truth, head of the assembly of the universe.*²⁶

1st *girah* (in Urdu; the last two lines repeated twice) *From head to toe, you manifest the perfection of the unity of the essence
You are the voice of the Truth, the melody of God.
There is no one like you, there is no one like God
God is unique and so are you.*

The somewhat daring *girah* verse that praises the Prophet by declaring him unique and singular like God elicits enthusiastic response from the audience. The success of the *girah* causes the Warsi Brothers to repeat the strong statement of the last two lines once more before returning to the main text.

2nd verse *[You are] the precious one in the presence of the Truth, head of the assembly of the universe.
Light of the prophets' eyes (Muhammad!), you are my eyes and my light.*

²⁴ Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 436.

²⁵ Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 353–354.

²⁶ Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt* reads *ṣadr-i badr-i kā'ināt* ('head of the full moon of the universe'). See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 354. Here the version of the qawwals makes more sense than the literary version.

3rd verse *O Messenger of God, o Messenger of God!*

Messenger of God! One glance towards us, the poor strangers! (One glance, one glance!)

Introducing the discussion of the Prophet's mercy into the performance through the poetic motif of the glance strikes a chord among the audience. Interestingly, this particular verse of the *naʿt* is not included in Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naḡhmāt*. It is possible that it has been added to the poem in order to adapt it to the religious atmosphere that is placing more and more emphasis on the mediation of the Prophet. Not only is the phrase 'One glance towards us, the poor strangers' repeated several times, but it is also expanded by two *girahs* (2nd and 3rd *girahs*). The third *girah* is the *maṭlaʿ* of an Urdu *tazmīn*, written on a Persian *naʿt* attributed to Jāmī.²⁷

2nd *girah* (in Urdu) *Your honour, I long for your kindness, too
I, too, am love-sick for your love-sick narcissus [eyes].*

*When you were in the world, you were the remedy for everyone who was without remedy
I just want to remind you that I am also without a remedy.*

*I am more wretched than the worst of the people, but, o Mercy of the World
I, too, am an unfortunate and abject individual who takes your name.*

3rd verse *One glance towards us, the poor strangers! (One glance, one glance!)*

3rd *girah* (in Urdu and Persian) *I have no one to console me, no companion, o Messenger of God
You are the protector, o life of the world, Messenger of God
Time for helping me has been fixed, o Messenger of God
Be merciful and look at my miserable condition, o Messenger of God
I am a poor stranger, I am unfortunate, I am damned, o Messenger of God.*

3rd verse *One glance towards us, the poor strangers! (One glance, one glance!)*

*Messenger of God! One glance towards us, the poor strangers!
You take the hand of the unfortunate, you are both the servant and the lord.*

4th verse *During the night of the ascension, Gabriel was part of your retinue
But you are the one who set his foot on the throne of the green vault of heaven.*

5th verse *What does Shams-i Tabrezī know about eulogizing you, Messenger?*

²⁷ For the text of the Persian *naʿt*, see Meraj, *Surūd*, 52.

You are the chosen one, elected one, the noblest lord.

4th *gīrah* *Among the courts, the court of Medina is the court*
The highest superintendent is the superintendent of Medina.

5th verse *You are the chosen one, elected one, the noblest lord.*

After the *maqtaʿ* agonizing over the inability to praise Muhammad after God has named him as the chosen one (*muṣṭafā*), elected one (*mujtabā*) as well as the noblest lord (*sayyid-i aʿlā*), the insertion of a simple, almost crude Urdu *gīrah* (4th *gīrah*) does not prove successful. The Urdu verse utilizes the imagery of the court (*darbār*) of Medina, where the Prophet is the best of superintendents (*sarkār*). Collating the words *sarkār* and *darbār* gives the verse connotations associated with government bureaucracy. Not surprisingly, the performance comes to an end with the *gīrah*.

Thus far the listeners have shaped the performance through their gestures, spontaneous sighs and wails as well as by standing up and offering *nazrānah* to the *mīr-i maḥfil*. Now, however, Qubool Badshah tells the qawwals what to sing by simply saying: ‘*Ek naʿrah!*’ (‘One cry!’). The qawwals catch the hint immediately and start singing a *manqabat* written by Kamil in praise of Husain. They preface the performance with a widely performed Persian *rubāʿī* attributed to Muʿīn al-Dīn. In the beginning of the performance, the qawwals rely on *takrār*, as the mere mention of Husain makes Qubool Badshah cry, stand up from his seat and walk back and forth in the space between the audience and the performers. Other listeners also wail openly. It should be kept in mind that only a fortnight has passed since *ʿāshūrā* has been observed by Indian Sunni, as well as Shia, Muslims, and the events of Karbala are still fresh in the memory of the listeners.

Item 4: A *manqabat* in Urdu

1st *rubāʿī* (in *Husain is the king, Husain is the emperor*
Persian) *Husain is religion, Husain is the refuge of religion*
He gave his head, but not his hand to the hands of Yazid
By God! Husain is the foundation of ‘No god.’²⁸

1st verse ‘*O Husain*’ often rises [from my lips] like a cry (*Husain!*)
Ever since ‘O Husain’ has been carved on the heart’s tablet.²⁹

28 See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 435; Muʿīn al-Dīn, *Kalām*, 236.

29 See Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 103–104. The qawwals sing verses 1, 2, 5, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9 of the nine-verse *manqabat*.

Husain! Husain!

- 2nd verse *My claim is that mankind has never again been able to produce
A lion in the battlefield of treachery (Husain!) comparable to you, Husain.*
- 3rd verse *We, too, are affiliated with the Attacking Lion
Let us also have some alms from the court of the Lion, Husain.*
- 1st girah (in Urdu) *If you obtain peace of mind in the world, you will get comfort and trust
If you obtain intense love, you will grind your teeth in grief.
Carrying the begging bowl of the heart, we are present at the prosperous door
Ali, let us have the alms for the sake of your descendants!*
- 3rd verse *We, too, are affiliated with the Attacking Lion
Let us also have some alms from the court of the Lion, Husain.*

After prolonged *takrār*, the qawwals start inserting *girahs* into the performance. The first one picks up the theme of alms discussed in the third verse of the *manqabat*. It identifies these alms as the peace of mind in a world of intense suffering and restlessness in divine love, and implores Ali to give them something for the sake of his descendants. After finishing with the third verse, the qawwals return to the second verse, so that a *girah* describing the heroic suffering of Husain's companions in Karbala could be inserted into the performance.

- 2nd verse *My claim is that mankind was never again able to produce
A lion in the battlefield of treachery (Husain!) comparable to you, Husain.*
- 2nd girah (in Urdu) *Glory to him, who could not be deceived
Praise to him, who could not be lured by lust
Look how those, who were thirsty for his religion, took their food:
They could eat nothing that came on their way.*
- 2nd verse *A lion in the field of treachery (Husain!) comparable to you, Husain.*
- 4th verse *Every year begins with remembering you
Your life story is on everyone's tongue, Husain.*
- 5th verse *People endowed with mystical knowledge find illumination only from you.*

- 3rd *giraḥ* (in Urdu; the last two lines repeated twice) *That light which is called the king of (?)
It is called the light of God, the light of eyes.
When that light was dispersed, it became the universe
When it is drawn together, it is called Husain.*
- 5th verse *People endowed with mystical knowledge find illumination only from you
Light of the eyes of Murtaẓā, grandchild of the Messenger, o Husain.*
- 4th *giraḥ* (in Urdu) *Sharia was established in the conduct of Mustafa
The Paradise stood on the door of the Maiden³⁰
The messenger was charmed, when Husain climbed on his back
As Husain remained seated, the divine custom stood alert.*
- 5th verse *Grandchild of the Messenger, o Husain.*
- 6th verse *It was clearly a miracle of your merciful glance
Or how else could the destiny of Hurr³¹ have changed, Husain?*
- 7th verse *Discord in faith is the discord between a part and the whole
The tongue that utters 'O Muhammad' also utters 'O Husain'.

Muhammad! Husain!*
- 5th *giraḥ* (in Urdu) *Husain is the precious stone that illuminates religion
To tell the truth, Husain is the ladder leading to the divine throne.
Seating him on his shoulders, Mustafa used to say:
'If Hasan is the Kaaba, Husain is Medina.'*
- 7th verse *Discord in faith is the discord between a part and the whole
The tongue that utters 'O Muhammad' also utters 'O Husain'.*

Through the *giraḥs*, the qawwals are able to introduce divergent discourses on Husain into the performance. The third *giraḥ* portrays him as a condensed form of divine light, whereas the fourth and fifth *giraḥs* turn to domestic imagery where he is riding on the shoulders of his grandfather, the Prophet. Despite the seemingly disparate registers, all the verses are received favourably. This emphasizes the fact that the loose thematic connection between the verses of a ghazal can be pushed even further

30 *Batūl*, i.e. Fatima.

31 Hurr, lit. 'a free man'. A reference to a commander in Yazid's army, who defected to Husain's side on the battlefield of Karbala.

in a qawwali performance, where a single topic can be explored from divergent or contradictory points of view during one song.

When the qawwals reach the *maqta'*, almost all the listeners get up and approach the *mūr-i mahfil* with *nazrānah*. The verse is effective, because it mentions the affiliation of Kamil with Husain. However, the first line can be interpreted as a reference to the bond between a disciple and Kamil, as well. Furthermore, the second line introduces the favourite theme of a caring glance, which the qawwals further expand in two *girahs* (6th and 7th *girahs*).

8th verse *Our perfect affiliation will bloom one day*
 If you just bestow your caring glance, Husain.

6th *girah* (in Urdu) *If a human being wants [something], nothing happens.*
 If you want [something], what would not happen?

8th verse *Our perfect affiliation will bloom one day*
 If you just bestow your caring glance, Husain.

7th *girah* (in Urdu) *I devote myself to your door, because*
 One does not know which offering will do the trick.
 If you look mercifully, the work gets done
 Look alluringly, and the matters will be settled.

8th verse *If you just bestow your caring glance, Husain.*

1st verse *'O Husain' often rises [from my lips] like a cry. (Husain!)*

As the Warsi Brothers start packing their instruments, several listeners cry out 'One more!' However, it is Thursday and the qawwals have to leave for the Yousufain Dargah, where they are due to appear at midnight. After they have left, Chand Qawwal takes the stage. He begins with a *naghmah* and a brief *alāp* before singing a *rubā'ī*. The *rubā'ī* is the most widely known verse written by Kamil, and any Hyderabadī professing an interest in local Urdu poetry is able to quote it.³² Due to a general reference to *nisbat* ('relation, connection, affiliation'), the verse can be appended to practically any ghazal, whether devotional or romantic. An audience consisting of family members and followers of Kamil responds favourably and some listeners present *nazrānah* already during the *rubā'ī*.

Item 5: A *ghazal* in Urdu

³² The verse is a *maqta'* from a ghazal by Kamil. See Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 159.

naghmah

<alāp>

- 1st rubāʿī *Kamil, remember this, nay, write it down!*
*A relation with someone will never be without an effect.*³³
- 1st verse *He comes close to me but does not call me*
*Is it to be belittled that he comes to me in memories?*³⁴
- 2nd verse *Let his crowded assembly flourish forever*
His, who becomes a candle himself and makes me a moth.
- 3rd verse *When I look at the beauty of the beloved of God*³⁵
I witness the spectacles of his might.
- 4th verse *Who knows why people take pleasure*
By taking your name and driving me crazy.
- 5th verse *[My] life depends on the morsels of the Helper's door*
Will they, who intimidate me, snatch them from me?
- 6th verse *All my intoxication is due to his beautiful glance*
[I am a] sacrifice for the sake of him, who makes me drink from his eyes.
- 7th verse *He knows that I have no one else but him*
Feeling empathy for me, he hides me in his hem.
- 8th verse *What is my being? Everything is his existence, his manifestation*
How ignorant is he, who makes me step forward.
- 9th verse *I would go headlong [and] if I had wings, I would reach flying*
If someone just said that my master is calling me.
- 10th verse *Tell me, Kamil, who is the king of beauties who approaches?*

33 *Khālī*, lit. 'empty'.

34 Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 191–192. The qawwals sing all the ten verses, rearranging them slightly (verses 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 5, 8, 7, 9, 10).

35 As the 5th verse will reveal, here the beloved of God (*maḥbūb-i khudā*) is 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī, not Nizām al-Dīn.

When I am shown his face, I see the two worlds.

The qawwals do not embellish the text with adjunct items. Except for the statements on living with the morsels begged at the door of ‘Abd al-Qādir Jilānī (5th verse) and on depending solely on him (7th verse), the performance does not particularly move the audience. It is noteworthy that the *vujūdī* statement of the 8th verse elicits no response from the listeners. The second item Chand Qawwal performs is another ghazal by Kamil. It is not included in *Vāridāt*, but forms a part of qawwali repertoires. It is found as a slightly different version in *Surūd*.³⁶

Item 6: A ghazal in Urdu

- 1st verse *I do not find you, when I find you
Either I disappear myself or I am made to disappear.*
- 2nd verse *I take pride in being a human, because I am affiliated with you
As long as you are safe, I can put everything at stake.*
- 3rd verse *Having disavowed the next world, why should I waste time?
[Otherwise] he, whose own I am called, will himself feel ashamed.*
- 4th verse *The jinns may have wings, [but] leave me, desire for rising upwards (?)
Holding his hem, I can reach the destination.*
- 5th verse *Such ardour may be there in remembering someone
I am awake in my heart while my eyes are asleep.*
- 6th verse *When I become a mirror and place myself in front of him
I find a divine sparkle in being a human being.*
- 9th verse *Were squandered, Kamil...*

When the qawwals are about to proceed to the *maqta‘*, Qubool Badshah interrupts them and tells them to sing two more verses. In this assembly, a number of listeners are better acquainted with the poetry of Kamil than the qawwals. This becomes evident in several instances, when they correct the qawwals or instruct them to sing missing verses. At the *samā‘* assemblies of Khanqah-e-Kamil, the listeners often react strongly to the verses they have themselves told the qawwals to include in the

³⁶ See Meraj, *Surūd*, 255. The version in *Surūd* has seven verses, out of which five are common with Chand Qawwal’s version (verses 1, 3, 5, 6 and 9).

performance. In this case, Qubool Badshah walks to and fro in front of the qawwals, wailing, when they sing the 8th verse.

7th verse *The most exalted affiliation with him flourished to such an extent
That I can make anyone I want mad for you.*

8th verse *Nurturer of the people! Bestow me the gift of one prostration
Bowling down my head, I can make the entire world prostrate.*

9th verse *Kamil, all the valuables of life were squandered there
but – what a spectacle! – I find life in the same place.*

The next group to perform is lead by Maqbool Qawwal and Mehmood Qawwal. They begin with a short *naghmah* and an Urdu *rubā'ī* consisting of three verses. Although the last one of them suggests that they are written by Qubool Badshah, the metrical irregularity reveals that they constitute in fact a generic adjunct item into which the names of any past Sufi master and his present-day follower can be inserted. Since the qawwals are not disciples of Qubool Badshah, the verses furthermore illustrate how they perform assuming the point of view of the disciples in order to arouse the audience. After the *rubā'ī*, the qawwals sing a *manqabat* written by Kamil in praise 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī. They follow the order of the verses recorded in *Vāridāt*, but omit five of the fourteen verses that comprise the full poem. Typically to the *manqabats* of Kamil, the name of the saint serves as the *radīf*.³⁷

Item 7: A *manqabat* in Urdu

naghmah

<alāp>

1st *rubā'ī* *If one sees the beloved, he has everything
If the friend is his, he has everything.*

*May your overflowing grace remain until the resurrection
As long as this court remains, everything is there.*

*Qubool Badshah has nothing
But if he has Kamil, he has everything.*

1st verse *Seeing you has this effect, Eternal Helper
Gaze takes pride in gaze, Eternal Helper.*

³⁷ Cf. the 3rd and 4th *gīrahs* in Item 1 and the salient text of Item 2 in this chapter.

- 2nd verse *The wanderers will roam from door to door, Eternal Helper
But my eyes are fixed on you door, Eternal Helper.*
- 3rd verse *I am a slave of your door, I am to take from you
Having become yours, where should I go, Eternal Helper?*
- 4th verse *What kind of servanthood is this? What is this spectacle, only God knows!
The eyes of creation are turned towards you, Eternal Helper.*
- 5th verse *Saying 'Do not be afraid, my disciple' you removed my worries
I sacrifice my life to you, Eternal Helper.*
- 6th verse *Whether in trouble or free of adversity, I derive pleasure from the affiliation [with you]³⁸
This head remains at your door, Eternal Helper.*

Although the sixth verse refers to 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī, the disciples of Qubool Badshah interpret it in reference to their Sufi guide. They turn towards him and motion towards him whenever the qawwals reach the word *nisbat* ('affiliation').

- 7th verse *For the sake of perfect beauty, protect my honour!
Bestow me, too, one merciful glance, Eternal Helper.*
- 8th verse *I have spent my life repeating your name
I will also die in your name, Eternal Helper.*
- 9th verse *Do not forget your Kamil, who gives his life for you
He has been crazed for his entire life, Eternal Helper.*

After Maqbool and Mehmood Qawwal have finished, a rising young qawwal called Saghir Ali takes the floor. During the past few years, he has been closely associated with Khanqah-e-Kamil, and Qubool Badshah had invited him to sing in the 'urs of Ahmad Shah Gujarati in Aurangabad in 2009. His choice is a ghazal of Kamil, the verses of which he sings in the order recorded in *Vāridāt*, omitting two of the nine.³⁹ He introduces the text with a *rubā'ī*. The second leading vocalist repeats the second line of the *rubā'ī* inaccurately, while the third line differs from the rest in respect to the

38 In *Vāridāt*, the line reads *muṣibat ho kih rāḥat ho maze nisbat ke letā hūn*. The meaning, however, remains the same.

39 See Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 272.

poetic metre. However, the listeners do not interfere with the faltering performance, and the qawwals are able to proceed to the salient text uninterrupted.

Item 8: A ghazal in Urdu

naghmah

<alāp>

1st rubāʿī (in Urdu) *There a is small wish and my happiness depends on it:*

May my whole life be squandered in his name!

On my behalf; love for his form is everything

Only from that [comes] my life, only from that [arises] my worship.

1st verse *I act according to his will and only his will applies.*

1st girah (in Urdu) *Wherever I sat, I sat with God*

When did I sit separate from my friend?

Someone may call me foolish or mad

If he sits separate from his friend.

1st verse *I act according to his will and only his will applies.*

2nd girah (in Urdu; repeated twice) *I live free from anxiety in every respect*

What a thing is the affiliation with the hem of the friend!⁴⁰

1st verse *I act according to his will and only his will applies*

This life is being cast into the mould of his, and only his, contentment.

2nd verse *The breath will not fully leave [the body], neither will longing leave [me]*

I do not know since when the yearning for you has been nurtured on my lap.

3rd verse *Only an eye that drinks wine can perceive him*

How could I tell, to what extent the wine is overflowing from someone's eyes?

4th verse *For the sake of his merciful eyes, for the sake of this existence⁴¹ of his*

Taking shelter in the affiliation with him, every affair of mine works out.

40 This verse is the *maṭlaʿ* of a ghazal by Kamil. See Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 270.

41 *Damqadam*, lit. 'breath and step', i.e. 'the breath of life and ability to move'.

3rd *girah* (in Urdu) *How fortunate I am, too! Or is it my destiny?*

4th verse *For the sake of this existence of his!*

4th *girah* (in Urdu; repeated thrice) *Kamil, remember this, nay, write it down!
A relation with someone will never be without an effect.*

Also Saghir Ali uses Kamil's celebrated verse as an adjunct item in his performance (4th *girah*). Although it has already been heard during the *samā'* assembly, it is received with enthusiasm. The senior members of the *silsilah* indicate that the qawwals should keep repeating the *girah*, which they do for an exceptional three times before continuing with the salient text. Qubool Badshah instructs them to repeat the second line of the *girah* once more.

4th verse *For the sake of this existence of his!*

4th *girah* repeated *A relation with someone will never be without an effect.*

4th verse *Taking shelter in the affiliation with him, every affair of mine works out.*

5th verse *He is higher than the capacity of vision and higher than human thought and understanding
The closer I draw to him, the more he changes from the distance.*

In the beginning of the performance, the listeners did not correct the confused *rubā'ī*, since they probable were not acquainted with its accurate reading themselves. However, in the case of Kamil's words, even a small mistake is not allowed to pass without it being rectified. In the fifth verse, the qawwal is confused about the *izāfat* construction in the first line, and instead of singing *fahm-i bashar* ('understanding of a human being'), he sings *feham bashar* (the word *feham* has no meaning in Urdu). Qubool Badshah and senior listeners try to correct him three times. However, he does not catch the correct reading, and the exasperated listeners finally allow him to continue to the second line of the verse.

6th verse *May he who arrives be protected, since the one afflicted by grief found relief
Little by little, I am coming back to senses, the health is somewhat improving.*

7th verse *Kamil, where a wound was inflicted on the heart, a lamp was lit and a wish fulfilled
Come to my tomb and see: a candle is burning here!*

1st verse *I act according to his will and only his will applies.*

The *maqta'* of this ghazal is among the best-known verses of Kamil and it helps to redeem the qawwal who earlier had made a blunder with the poet's words. After a fairly long and generally well-received performance, he is asked to give way to Sajid Qawwal. By now, most of the guests of honour, as well as outside spectators, have left and only disciples and family members remain. Everyone is now able to fit on the raised, covered platform and sit close to the qawwals. This also offers Qubool Badshah's disciples a chance to draw closer to their Sufi guide, who has thus far been surrounded by the *sajjādanashīns* of different shrines.

The qawwals begin with a *naghmah-yi quddūsī* and two *rubā'īs* that establish a link between the Prophet and 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī. These verses make an easily recognizable reference to *vujūdī* metaphysics by using its technical vocabulary that covers words like *vujūd* ('existence'), *ta'ayyun* ('individuation') and *jalvah* ('manifestation', corresponding to Arabic *mazhar*). However, the theme of the verses is not *vaḥdat al-vujūd*, but glorification of 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī by declaring him a manifestation of Muhammad's existence. The metaphysical *rubā'īs* lead to a *manqabat* written by Kamil. In the *dīvān*, the *manqabat* includes nine verses, but the qawwals sing only five of them (verses 1, 2, 7, 4, 9), laying emphasis on the skilful intertwining of *girahs* into the salient text.

Item 9: A *manqabat* in Urdu

naghmah-yi quddūsī

<alāp>

1st *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) *He is the foremost among those who hold the rank of being beloved (by God)
Helper of the Mankind⁴² is a name for the existence of Muhammad.*

2nd *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) *When is the beauty of Mustafa in the limits of individuation?
That manifestation, indeed, is here, but it belongs to the Helper of the Mankind.*

1st verse *Since the day I have spent [my life] in the shade of your hem (Greatest Helper!)
Everyone (else) has been proud over his deeds, (but) I take pride in you.⁴³*

The second line, which contrasts the efforts of an individual with the faith in the intercession of 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī, is both an expression of the affection for the saint

42 *Ghaus al-Varā*, i.e. 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī.

43 Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 107.

and a criticism directed at the reformist movements that deny the possibility of intercession. The qawwals employ extensive *takrār* in singing it, since a few senior members of the *silsilah* stand up and start walking to and fro, wailing. Then Qubool Badshah instructs the qawwals to insert a *gīrah* (1st *gīrah*) which states that in spite of the lack of virtues in a devotee, his or her work is accomplished due to the mercy of ‘Abd al-Qādir Jilānī. Initially, Sajid Qawwal repeats the *gīrah* (written by Kamil) in parts after Qubool Badshah, without musical accompaniment. Sensing the potential of the poetic message, he returns to the *gīrah* out of his own initiative and integrates it more closely to the musical structure. He furthermore elaborates the original *gīrah* with two more verses from the same ghazal. When the elaborated *gīrah* leads back to the salient text, there is an uproar among the impressed listeners and *nazrānah* flows to Qubool Badshah. The second *gīrah* continues the same theme by contrasting the lack of virtues in a devotee with his affiliation with good people.

1st *gīrah* (in Urdu) *(I have) neither knowledge, learning, abstinence, chastity nor grace in (my) actions
Only because of your favour, things are accomplished.*

1st verse *I take pride in you.*

1st *gīrah* elaborated *(I have) neither knowledge, learning, abstinence, chastity nor grace in (my) actions
Only because of your favour, things are accomplished.*

*An indigent head is (bowed) on a threshold
Where even the degrees of fate change.*

*You are the honour of all the beauties of the world
Whose lamp burns in front of you?⁴⁴*

1st verse *I take pride in you.*

2nd *gīrah* (in Urdu) *Do not look at my form, do not attack my sins
I am not virtuous [myself], but I am affiliated with the virtuous.*

1st verse *I take pride in you.*

2nd verse *In the morning and in the evening, in every condition, my litany is ‘Greatest
Helper!’⁴⁵*

44 These three verses belong to a ghazal of Kamil. See Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 259.

45 In *Vāridāt*, the Arabic *yā ghaus al-a‘zam* is used instead of the Persian *yā ghaus-i a‘zam*.

The second verse of the salient text is cut by an insertion of a *girah* (3rd *girah*) that celebrates the Sufi affiliation with ‘Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī. The simple statement ‘I am a Qadiri’ stirs the audience and leads to *takrār*. Interestingly, the first line of the *girah* is usually read ‘I am a Qadiri thanks to the Mighty Lord’ (*main qādirī hūn shukr hai rabb-i qadīr kā*). The version at hand is not as poetically solid as the more common version, because it lacks the echoing words *qādirī* (‘Qadiri’) and *qadīr* (‘mighty’). The pronoun *yih* (‘this’) also is an expletive added *metris causa*, and it renders the line somewhat clumsier. However, the present reading enables the listeners to refer their Sufi affiliation to a living master instead of the transcendent God. This association is made explicit by the qawwals’ insertion of the name Qubool Badshah as a filler in *takrār kā ḥalqah*.

3rd *girah* (in Urdu) *I am a Qadiri, thanks to my master. (O Qubool Badshah!)
The hem of the Master of Masters is in my hand.*

2nd verse *In the morning and in the evening, in every condition, my litany is ‘Greatest Helper!’
I keep calling out to him, who can endure my boldness⁴⁶ (over himself).*

4th *girah* (in Urdu) *From us, this...*

When Sajid Qawwal is about to initiate a new *girah* verse, Qubool Badshah instructs him to sing another verse of the *manqabat*. The leading qawwal repeats it with difficulty, making mistakes. Without realizing that it is another verse of the *manqabat*, he returns to the previous verse and initiates a long *girah* of four verses. The word *nāz* (‘pride, coquetry’) in the second verse of the *manqabat* inspires a *girah* that concentrates on the theme of love, but culminates with a line stating that the beloved is not dead. Instead, he can make even the dead alive. This could be interpreted as a reference to the breath of the beloved that is like the breath of Jesus. However, it also associates with a miracle of ‘Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī, who is believed to have raised a dead person. The need to emphasize that the saints (and the Prophet) are alive is a new theme in ghazals and results from the need to address the attacks of Muslim reformists. After the *girah*, the qawwal realizes that the verse he earlier interpreted as a *girah* (5th *girah*) belongs to the salient text. This time, he reads the verse (3rd verse) accurately and also integrates it to the melody of the salient text.

5th *girah* (in Urdu) *The bounties of the love of divine might, something in exchange for support
When no one gives [his] assurance, I keep calling for you.*

2nd verse *Who can endure my boldness (over himself).*

46 In *Vāridāt*, the verb is in singular (*sahtā hai*) in congruence with the following pronoun (*us ko*).

- 6th girah (in Urdu) *Only he who turns his own heart into a firm Kaaba
Will find the full enjoyment of the manifestations of that beauty.*
- If love is true, then such days will also arrive
When he will himself takes pride in those who take pride in him.*
- When he plucks the lute of breathing while passing by
All the components of my being start to sing his song.*
- Whoever dies for him, annihilated, will get thousands of favours from him
Do not think he is dead – he makes the dead alive!*
- 2nd verse *I keep calling out to him, who can endure my boldness (over himself).*
- 3rd verse *There is some haughtiness in the bond of love, some betrayals of support
When no one gives [his] assurance, I keep calling for you.*
- 4th verse *Goblets glitter in the eyes of our cupbearer, they say
Wine drinkers keep drawing away negative influences from these eyes by their [own] eyes.⁴⁷*
- 7th girah (in Urdu) *May the eyes of the cupbearer be safe! Let my enemies yearn!
Wine houses have been made twofold in order to fill up my [cup].*
- 4th verse *Wine drinkers keep drawing away negative influences from these eyes by their [own] eyes.*
- 5th verse *Kamil, what is the connection of the beauties of the world with the Beloved of God?
They are just adorning themselves whereas he keeps beautifying everyone.*

In the *maqta'*, the phrase 'what is the connection ... with the beloved of God' stirs the audience and once more merits *takrār* before closing the performance. The qawwals are then given the newly published *Souvenir* and asked to sing a ghazal printed therein. Although there is usually no need to sing *rubā'īs* before fulfilling a request from the *mīr-i mahfil*, the qawwals begin by establishing the theme of pain in love and the necessity to endure it in order to eventually enjoy the heart-soothing union (1st to 3rd *rubā'īs*). If the qawwals were unacquainted with the text, singing *rubā'īs* would also give them time to select a suitable tune for the text. However, it seems that in this case they already know the ghazal, although it was printed for the first time in *Souvenir*.

47 Literally, the line translates 'Wine drinkers keep removing propitiatory offerings of these eyes with eyes'. This refers to the practice of circling an offering, such as a coin, over a person's head in order to draw negative influences away from him or her.

The ghazal itself concentrates on the union rather than on separation. The first verse and the mention of the merciful glance therein make Qubool Badshah jump up from his seat, overcome by a mystical state. He approaches the qawwals and then again turns away while crying uncontrollably.

Item 10: A ghazal in Urdu

<alāp>

1st rubā'ī (in Urdu) *The beauty of my faith stems from grief
I fulfilled the rights of love.*

2nd rubā'ī (in Urdu) *Where would I find you now? Where should I go searching?
You hid your face; your countenance must be familiar.*

3rd rubā'ī (in Urdu) *The heart that does not remember you is not alive
Who is not ruined in your path, is an infidel.*

*He has set to searching for you – you, whom I find not
Who does not even remember the whereabouts of the Truth.*

*Grief for the friend! The edifice of life stands from your breath
If you are safe, my dust will not be ruined.*

1st verse *Because of your glance, the heart gets peace and tranquility
Because of your mercy, there is spring in my garden.⁴⁸*

1st girah (in Urdu; repeated twice) *This grandeur, this majesty were not in my power
This name and fame of mine are bestowed by the affiliation with you.*

1st verse *Because of you glance, the heart gets peace and tranquility
Because of your mercy, there is spring in my garden.*

2nd verse *Where have I arrived? Whose place is this?
From the side, the heart cried out: 'This is the street of the friend!' (See!)*

3rd verse *I lived, clinging on promises, but the breath left [the body]
Eyes have opened and I am waiting for you.*

48 See *Souvenir* 2010: 51.

- 4th verse *Ascetic, why would my prayer not be accepted?
The image of the friend remains in front of me every moment.*
- 5th verse *In the day of judgement, everyone holds his record of deeds
Look! In my hand, there is the hem of the friend.*
- 6th verse *If the world were to turn away from me, so be it
I am contended, the gaze of the friend is directed towards me.*

As the ghazal was published for the first time in *Souvenir*, one would expect the qawwals to follow the printed text closely. However, they sing the first line of the sixth verse in a manner that differs from it. The text reads *mujh se zamāna mukhālīf to gham nahīn* ('Even if the world was opposed to me, there is no grief'). The general idea remains the same, although in the variant found in *Souvenir*, the world actively opposes the lover, whereas in the qawwals' version, it just turns away. The variation is in any case significant, since it indicates that the ghazal has been sung even before its publication in print. It also demonstrates that an item may have become established in qawwali repertoires before being printed or otherwise published. The seventh verse of the qawwals' performance is also an addition that is not found in the printed text.

After the intensive beginning of the number, the listeners have grown less animate. The qawwals try to stir them with two *giraḥs* (2nd and 3rd *giraḥ*) that discuss the power of affiliation. However, the audience largely remains unaffected and the performance comes to an end.

- 2nd *giraḥ* (in Urdu) *If the affiliation is safe, why cry?
Never despair of his door!
It is my firm belief that taking his name
The dust will turn into gold, if I just pick it up.*

6th verse *I am contended.*

- 3rd *giraḥ* (in Urdu) *Kamil, can someone make me get up from his door?
Now [that] I have arrived when he has called me, I sit [where] he has seated me?⁴⁹*

6th verse *I am contended.*

- 7th verse *Whose heart has love for his guide, has love for the Prophet*

49 This is the *maqta'* of a ghazal by Kamil. See Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 113.

The mercy of the Sustainer descends upon him.

8th verse *Ask about the pleasures of prostration from the heart of Kamil*
There is him, the needy head and the feet of the friend.

The next performer is the son of Mohammed Qawwal. He sings with his father, but also leads a group of his own. He was present during the first two items and has now returned to the venue after singing at the Yousufain Dargah in the meantime. His assigned duty is to sing the ritual items in the end of the occasion, but prior to that he contributes by singing one more ghazal of Kamil.

After a *naghmah*, *alāp* and a generic *rubā'ī* (1st *rubā'ī*) that evokes the power of affiliation, he touches upon the confusion resulting from the search for the beloved (2nd *rubā'ī*). The second *rubā'ī* leads to Kamil's ghazal *Ap ko pātā nahīn* ('I do not find you'). However, he is pointed out that this ghazal has already been sung (Item 6), and he opts for another immensely popular ghazal by Kamil. Like *Ap ko pātā nahīn*, *Hamārī dunyā badal-ke rakh dī* ('He left my world changed') is not found in *Vāridāt*, yet it is a stock item in the repertoires of qawwals hailing from the Deccan. It would have a tremendous potential in a *samā'* assembly like this, but the young age and inexperience of the qawwal prevent him from capitalizing on it. The performance stirs the audience and elicits a flow of *nazrānah* to Qubool Badshah. The qawwals never dwell on *takrār*, although the listeners' response would clearly call for it.

Item 11: A ghazal in Urdu

naghmah

<*alāp*>

1st *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) *Who sees me, takes your name*
I am silent, but my affiliation will not keep quiet.

2nd *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) *Is this someone else, I do not know*
[But] the gaze of the friend is never uninformed.

1st verse *I do not find you, when...*

1st verse *He left my world changed, meeting of the eyes became the excuse*
There, the glance met with someone, here, the heart became a target.

2nd verse *You, who laugh at sinners, do not mock everyone like that*
You never know whose part it is to be protected by God's mercy.⁵⁰

- 3rd verse *Life is in loving you. In it, there is some of the joys of worship
I enjoy myself greatly.⁵¹ (Praise to God!) there is my head [and] your threshold.*
- 4th verse *Only one, your being the master, remains the standard of measuring my worship
The relish of prostration is as high as the threshold.*
- 5th verse *When he looked [at me], I came alive. When he turned his gaze away, I died.
Life is a peculiar spectacle: one moment reality, the other a fairytale.*
- 6th verse *The youth of the rose garden is sacrificed for your sake, each spring an offering to you
[Your] black hair are thick clouds, intoxicated eyes a tavern.*
- 7th verse *What sort of heart? What kind of life, sir? Here, the faith has been afflicted
Because beauty itself is a constant doomsday and, on top of that, [has] manners of an
infidel.*
- 8th verse *Only reason for the fame of Kamil's words is that they are connected to God
The deep colour of passionate love has spread on each verse of the ghazal.*

Before the singers proceed to the closing items, Qubool Badshah asks them to accompany another qawwal who has arrived from Aurangabad in order to participate in the *urs*. However, he is alone, without his group, and the son of Mohammed Qawwal is asked to sing with him. The qawwals begin with a brief *naghmah* and a long *rubā'ī* that dwells on the contradictions of the human condition. The *rubā'ī* is a part of a longer ghazal written by Kamil.

Item 12: A ghazal in Urdu

naghma

<*alāp*>

- 1st *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) *Unidimensional gaze cannot cross a certain border
Even if it finds him, it cannot really find him.*

50 Lit. 'one does not know in whose part comes the canopy of God's mercy.' Using a commonplace word like *shāmīyānah* ('canopy') when referring to God's mercy, instead of the more literary *sāyabān*, adds to the colloquial character of the verse.

51 This idiomatic expression *barē maze se guzar rahī hai*. lit. 'it [i.e. condition, *hālat*] is passing with great enjoyment,' answers questions like *Kyā hālat hai?* ('How are things?'). Qawwals' insertion *al-ḥamdu li'llāh* ('Praise to God!') is apt here, since the phrase is frequently appended to such answers. The verse is an excellent example of Kamil's skilful use of colloquial expressions in his poems.

*The palpitation of the heart cannot match the lightning
The latter makes everyone toss relentlessly, whereas the former cannot achieve it.*

*Thousands of beliefs are such that the human reason
Can understand them entirely, but not explain.*

*What else is the hour of death than changing the place?
Who has died for you, annihilated, cannot be annihilated by death.⁵²*

1st verse *This is the veil of desire, this is the face of mystery.*

1st *girah* (in *Do not remove my veil, let not the people see*
Urdu) *I will start a clamour so that your signs will be removed.*

1st verse *This is the veil of desire, this is the face of mystery*
You are in front of my eyes, this is my prayer.

The theme of the prayers directed to the beloved stirs the audience, and Qubool Badshah instructs the qawwals to insert the following *girah* (1st *girah*). The leading qawwal does not catch it accurately and is told to repeat it after making an attempt to return to the salient text.

2nd *girah* (in *He who keeps you in his sight while praying*
Urdu; re- *Has a high position among the worshippers of God.*
peated
twice)

1st verse *You are in front of me, this is my prayer.*

3rd *girah* (in *For once, o awaited <awaiting> reality, show yourself in the metaphorical garb*
Urdu) *Thousands of prostrations are throbbing in my indigent forehead.*

*When I once bowed my head in prostration,⁵³ a voice started to sound from the ground:
'Your heart veers towards the idols – what will you get in prayer?'⁵⁴*

1st verse *You are in front of me, this is my prayer.*

52 For the full ghazal, see Kamil, *Vāridāt*, 274–275.

53 The beginning of the second line is grammatically incorrect, although the listeners can probably catch the meaning. The correct version reads: *jo main sar-ba-sajdah hu'ā kabhī*.

54 This *girah* is taken from a ghazal by Iqbal included in *Bāng-i darā*. See Iqbal, *Bāng-i Darā*, 394–395.

2nd verse *The virtues of your grace were not [to be found] on my side
Life itself calls out: 'He is the nurturer of mankind!'*

4th girah (in Urdu) *Nothing in me was sincere
I found respect from your door.*

2nd verse *The virtues of your grace were not [to be found] on my side.*

After the insertion of the inaccurately read verses written by Iqbal (3rd girah) and an unsuccessful popular verse (4th girah), Qubool Badshah's family member suggests another girah (5th girah). The qawwal has difficulties in catching what he is told to sing and, finally, Qubool Badshah explains the verse to him. The verse belongs to a *man-qabat* written by Kamil in praise of 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī. Although the text was printed in *Souvenir* for the first time,⁵⁵ this poem had also become a part of the qawwali repertoires and it seems that the orally transmitted variant is more prominent: even Qubool Badshah recites the variant below instead of the printed one whose second line reads *magar kāmīl muṣībat hai khvud apnī tangdāmānī*. Although the meaning remains the same – *hamārī* ('our/my') equals *khvud apnī* ('my own') – the variant transmitted by the qawwals is more simple and colloquial than the printed one.

5th girah (in Urdu) *By God, his favour is perfect, his mercy is perfect
And the narrowness of my hem is a perfect calamity.*

2nd verse *The virtues of his grace were not [to be found] on my side
Life itself calls out: 'He is the nurturer of mankind!'*

Khvāja Bandanavāz! Khvāja Gesūdarāz!

3rd verse *What do the people of the world know about who manifests himself in me?
Where am I? (My beloved Aḥmad! My beloved Kamil! My master Aḥmad! My beloved
Helper!) Only you are. Essentially, this is the secret.*

The third verse emphasizes the dependance of the lover on the beloved or a devotee on a saintly personage. The qawwals insert the names of Aḥmad Shāh Gujarātī and Kamil as fillers, while Qubool Badshah tells them to evoke the name of 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī (*Ghaus*) as well. *Takrār kā ḥalqah* that uses the names of the masters of the *silsila* as fillers directs the interpretation of the verse significantly. Without the fillers, it is a *vujūdī* statement that declares that also the poetic subject is a manifestation of the

⁵⁵ See *Souvenir* 2010: 49.

beloved. In conjunction with the fillers, however, the verse negates the existence of the Sufi disciple while only the saint remains. The entire interpretive framework of the verse changes from *vahdat al-vujūd* to the concept of *fanā fi'l-shaikh* and the meta-physical approach is substituted with a devotional one.

After the possibilities of the *takrār* have been exhausted, Qubool Badshah instructs the qawwals to insert a verse from a ghazal that has been performed earlier (Item 5). The *gīrah* (6th *gīrah*) redirects the interpretation of the third verse of the salient text back towards the *vujūdī* metaphysics. Thus, *takrār kā ḥalqah* and the *gīrah* provide the listeners two different ways of conceptualizing the meaning of a single verse. The return to the *vujūdī* framework arouses a mystical state in a few senior members of the audience, who stand up and move in a way that resembles the whirling dance of the Mevlevis. A few listeners hold each others hands and form a circle around them in order to protect them from colliding with other people or the pillars supporting the roof. When their mystical state abates, they are lead to the *mīr-i maḥfil*. He embraces them, and they press the side of their heads against his heart.

6th *gīrah* (in Urdu) *What is my being? Everything is his existence, his manifestation
How ignorant is he, who makes me step forward.*

3rd verse *What do the people of the world know about who manifests himself in me?
Where am I? Only you are. Essentially, this is the secret.*

4th verse *I am a sacrifice to his mercy and thus made independent of everyone
The friend is known to me, this is the secret of a servant.⁵⁶*

5th verse *Wherever you stepped, there I bent my head
For someone enslaved in love, this is the perfect prayer.*

1st verse *This is the veil of desire.*

When the ghazal is concluded, it is later than three o'clock in the morning and Qubool Badshah decides to close the assembly. The son of Mohammed Qawwal is assigned to lead *Rang* and *Qaul*. It is noteworthy that neither *Rang* nor *Qaul* is as elaborate in Hyderabad as in north India. In the present case, the song text of the *Rang* is abridged and an elaborate list of saints in chronological order is raised into the focus. The list begins with 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī and continues with the early Chishti masters.

⁵⁶ This verse is sometimes attributed to Muḥammad Taqī 'Azīz, the third successor of Shāh Niyāz Aḥmad, who used the pen name Rāz. The impression that the word *rāz* denotes more than its literal meaning 'secret, mystery' is further enforced by the presence of the word *be-niyāz* in the first line. It echoes Shāh Niyāz Aḥmad's popular appellation Shāh Niyāz Beniyāz.

In Hyderabad, the list varies according to the venue of the *samā'* assembly. While references to the best-known saints of the city, Yūsuf al-Dīn, Sharīf al-Dīn and their master Kalīm Allāh are common in most Hyderabad *samā'* assemblies, the mention of the masters of the Shuttari *silsilah* are specific to this context.⁵⁷

Item 13: Rang

<alāp>

1st *rubā'ī* (in Hindi) *The colour of the Prophet was thrown into the air, and there was colour in the hand of the Master*

Whose veil he dyes, that dyeing is his good fortune.

Rang *Today there is colour, o mother, there is colour, hey! (Oh, there is colour today!)
I found my master, Muḥyī al-Dīn Auliyā'.*

1st *girah* *Muḥyī al-Dīn Auliyā' Mu'īn al-Dīn Auliyā'
Mu'īn al-Dīn Auliyā' Quṭb al-Dīn Auliyā'
Quṭb al-Dīn Auliyā' Farīd al-Dīn Auliyā'
Farīd al-Dīn Auliyā' Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā'
Niẓām al-Dīn Auliyā' Naṣīr al-Dīn Auliyā'
Naṣīr al-Dīn Auliyā' Bandanavāz Auliyā'
Bandanavāz Auliyā' Shāh-i Aḥmad Auliyā'
Shāh-i Aḥmad Auliyā' Kalīm Allāh Auliyā'
Kalīm Allāh Auliyā' Yūsuf Sharīf Auliyā'
Yūsuf Sharīf Auliyā' Ghulām-i Ghāus Auliyā'
Ghulām-i Ghāus Auliyā' Shāh-i Kāmīl Auliyā'*

Rang *When you look, he is with me, o mother, there is colour, hey!
I have seen no other colour like this, master
I have wandered looking from country to country
My heart cherishes only your colour.*

The *Qaul* is similarly straightforward and includes only two simple *girahs* in Urdu. The tune employed by the qawwals differs significantly from the tune used by most qawwals.

Item 14: Qaul in Arabic

⁵⁷ For a *Rang* that lists the saints from the point of view of Lahore, see Nusrat, *Traditional Sufi Qawwalis* IV, track 3.

Qaul and tarānah Whose master I am, his master is Ali.

dar dil dar dil dar dānī
ham tum tanā nānā nā tanānānā re
yalālī yalālī yalā lālālī
yalā lālā yalā lālā yalā lālālī

Master, Master Ali!

1st *gīrah* (in Urdu) *I will remember the Father of Dust in the grave*
Whatever is asked, I will silence [those questions]
Angels! My sins may be grievous,⁵⁸ but
If Ali is the object of wishes, I will settle the entire bill.

Qaul *Master, Master Ali!*

2nd *gīrah* (in Urdu) *Who is garbed in intense passion, becomes a Sufi*
Who burns in love, becomes a wandering mendicant
The Prophet is the one who called Ali a friend
Each and everyone who says Ali, is called a friend [of God].

Qaul and tarānah *Master, Master Ali!*

dar dil dar dil dar dānī
ham tum tanā nānā nā tanānānā re
yalālī yalālī yalā lālālī
yalā lālā yalā lālā yalā lālālī

After the ritual items, Qubool Badshah closes the occasion with a *fātiḥah* and a short, formal *du‘ā* in Arabic. Although it was by then 3:30 AM, everyone who was present was offered something to eat. While many of the guests who had not stayed until the end had been fed on the roof of Qubool Badshah’s house, he himself as well as his close family and disciples had been waiting until now. When I returned to the *khānqāh* the next day to attend a poets’ gathering (*mushā‘irah*), I was told that Qubool Badshah had remained awake until the daybreak and listened to *na‘tkhvāns* in the mosque.

The ‘*urs* ended in the morning on the 16th of January with a seminar organized in the *khānqāh*. The speakers, among them scholars and heads of local shrines, gave short presentations on the contribution of Sufis to Islam and the culture of the Deccan. Although the themes overlapped with those discussed during *Jalsah-yi Faiẓān-i Auliyā’*,

58 *Siyāh*. lit. ‘black.’

the approach was less polemical and attuned to an audience that already had a Sufi background.

On the whole, the five-day *ʿurs* celebrations were organized on a grand scale. While the recitation of the Koran and *naʿt* poetry, *ṣandalmālī* of the tombs, *samāʿ* and the *mushāʿirah* are regular components of the festivities in Khanqah-e-Kamil, they were all especially elaborate and lengthy during the centenary *ʿurs*. The two occasions for speeches were a special addition. The programmes were also advertised in advance; invitations were delivered by hand to the special guests and posters pasted around the old city and Nampally, where most of the potential participants reside.

The *samāʿ* held at Khanqah-e-Kamil was in many respects typical to the Hyderabad Sufi scene. Like many other Sufi *silsilahs* in the city, also the Shattaris of Dabeerpura list a poet among their forebears. His fame as a poet, together with the fact that his *divān* offers ample material from which the qawwals are able to select, led to a situation where the bulk of song texts consisted of his verses. This applied to both the main items and adjunct items. In addition to the ritual items in the beginning and the end of *samāʿ*, only one poem, the Persian *naʿt* by Shams-i Tabrezī (or Rūmī), was written by someone other than Kamil. The senior members of the *silsilah* are jealously guarding the poetic tradition of their predecessor. They are closely acquainted with his poetic oeuvre and correct the qawwals immediately, if they commit some blunder when singing his texts. In contrast to most *samāʿ* assemblies I have observed, the listeners in Khanqah-e-Kamil assumed a very active role in shaping the performance by suggesting even suitable *gīrah* verses to the qawwals. In this way they also taught the performers how to combine poetic texts in a manner that is successful in this particular context.

Another conspicuous characteristic of the song texts employed by the qawwals was the proliferation of devotional themes. Many of the items were *manqabats* and other devotional poems. However, even in romantic ghazals, the devotional passages most affected the audience. Observing the qawwals' employment of *takrār* is revealing. Most of the copiously repeated passages discussed the affiliation (*nisbat*) either with one's Sufi guide or a saint like ʿAbd al-Qādir Jilānī. The recurring poetic themes that aroused the audience were the merciful glance, the door or threshold of a saint, intercession and the absolute dependance on the saintly personage. This resonates with the prevalent religious atmosphere that emphasizes the love for the Prophet and the saints, as well as their intercessory powers.

It is noteworthy that expressing mystical states either by walking agitatedly, engaging in movements resembling whirling dance, or by crying and wailing aloud was in Khanqah-e-Kamil considerably more uninhibited than in any of the *samāʿ* assemblies discussed earlier. In her study of Sufi healing practices in Hyderabad, Flueckiger notes that dancing was a regular phenomenon in *samāʿ* assemblies she observed. She contrasts this observation with the more restricted behaviour Qureshi had encountered

during her fieldwork. Flueckiger suggests that the variation is a result of the difference between the socioeconomic backgrounds of her lower- to middle-class audience, on the one hand, and Qureshi's elite participation, on the other. She further suggests that the contrast might stem from the difference between the domestic context she observed and the more formal context of Qureshi's fieldwork.⁵⁹ However, the above chapters suggest that the reason behind different approaches might lie first and foremost in cultural differences between North and South India, the Hindustan and the Deccan. The expression of mystical states is much more uninhibited in the Deccan even among the elite audiences – at Khanqah-e-Kamil, for instance, the listeners belonged to the learned Muslim elite of the city – whereas in the north, even the listeners hailing from the lower strata of society keep their behaviour in check. Irrespective of the differences in the outward behaviour, the centrality of poetry as the focus of absorbed listening and the participants' experiences is a theme that permeates all the *samā'* assemblies discussed in this chapter. The above field observations, together with the analysis of the textual sources discussed in Part I of this study now make it possible to explore the linkage between poetry, music and the dynamics of *samā'* as a Sufi practice.

59 Flueckiger 2006: 214.

7 CONFLUENCE OF POETRY, MUSIC AND SUFI PRACTICE

After discussing qawwali performances and poetic communication in the ritual context of a Sufi shrine as well as in four very different musical assemblies, it is time to examine the amalgamation of poetic expression, music and the dynamics of Sufi practice.

Thematic sequencing of poetry

What is notable in the above musical assemblies is that outside the ritual context, *samā'* seems to lack a clearly defined structure. This is in contrast with the view Regula Qureshi presents in her *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan*. She formulates a standard performance format that begins with ritual prayers for the dead, Koranic passages, the saintly lineage and intercessory prayer. This is then followed by qawwali that begins with songs of obligatory ritual use. These are followed by songs of customary ritual use and freely chosen songs. The sequencing of the latter proceeds from praising God, the Prophet and saints to discussing love and mystical states. She also acknowledges that the obligatory ritual songs may be performed in the end of the occasion. In her model, another *fātiḥah* concludes the occasion.⁸⁵² Instead of being a descriptive model of any given qawwali performance, Qureshi's format is essentially based on *samā'* in the ritual context and it attempts to incorporate the variably used components of different *samā'* assemblies into a single paradigm. In reality, however, an individual *samā'* assembly rarely includes all of these components.

In the *samā'* assemblies analysed in the previous chapters, the recitation of *fātiḥah* that would include all the elements mentioned above immediately preceded qawwali only at the rituals of the Nizamuddin shrine and at the Chilla. At Khwaja Hall, *samā'* began with a short recitation of the Koran (*tilāvat*), at Anis Miyan's home, straight with qawwali and at Khanqah-e-Kamil, with the reception of the guests of honour. All the occasions were closed with a *du'ā* read by the *mīr-i mahfil*. In all of the cases it included some Koranic passages, but did not necessarily comprise a full *fātiḥah*.

When it comes to qawwali itself, there seems to be no explicit logic behind sequencing the items. The ritual songs were always sung in their appropriate places, except in Khwaja Hall, where they were omitted. Otherwise, the qawwals kept alternating between devotional poems of praise and ghazals discussing passionate love or *vujūdi* metaphysics. This is all the more striking, since the thematic sequencing evoked

⁸⁵² See Qureshi 2006: 116. Irfan Zuberi has recently presented his own version of a standard qawwali occasion based on Qureshi's model. However, his version is highly inaccurate in, for example, claiming that *Rang* begins the obligatory ritual part. For some reason, he also contests that the songs of praise are followed by *nisbatī kalām* ('affiliation poetry'), although this term specifically denotes these very songs of praise. He thus seems to ignore the poetry on passionate love and metaphysical themes altogether. See Zuberi 2012: 138.

in Qureshi's model is, indeed, a commonly recognized characteristic of *samā'* assemblies. Robert Rozehnal's study of the followers of Zauqī Shāh in Pakistan and Malaysia documents *samā'* assemblies that are construed so as to replicate different states and stations in the wayfarer's path. He specifically notes the emphasis on thematic sequencing in this context.⁸⁵³ Also *Majlis-i uns*, the essay appended to *Naghmāt-i samā'*, strongly advises the qawwals to appropriately sequence the items they sing.⁸⁵⁴

The qawwals should thus, in theory, open the performance with a poem praising God (*ḥamd*) that is followed by poems in praise of the Prophet Muhammad (*na't*) and his family and saints (*manqabat*). *Manqabats* normally extol the virtues of Ali and the saints of the Chishti brotherhood, but especially in Hyderabad and other locations, where the Qadiri influence is strong and most Sufi sheikhs are at least secondarily affiliated with the brotherhood, the praise of 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī has a prominent role.

As Qureshi notes in a recent essay, the devotional poems should be followed by ghazals and *gīts*. They usually deal with various mystical themes without an explicit reference to any particular saint. Among the most common themes, according to Qureshi, are love (*'ishq*), ecstatic states (*rindānah*, lit. 'profligate'; these poems often revolve around wine, inebriation and infidelity), separation (*fīrāq*) and union (*viṣāl*).⁸⁵⁵ In *Surūd*, the non-devotional poetry is further divided into two categories, *'ilm* ('knowledge') and *vaḥdat al-vujūd* ('oneness of existence'). The former includes a wide range of texts that deal with the paradoxes of human life in an often pessimistic tone and suggest the search of God as an antidote.

The dividing lines between different categories of poems are by no means clear, since the praise of the beloved in ghazals can be interpreted as the praise of God or the Sufi guide. Mohammed Ahmed's opening item (Item 1) at Khwaja Hall was a romantic ghazal, but recurring references to the threshold of the beloved and his merciful glance added a devotional flavour to it. In the same assembly (Item 5), the disciples of Khwaja Hasan Sani interpreted the phrase *bādshāh-i ḥusn* ('the king of beauty'), appearing in a ghazal of Amīr *Khusrāu*, as a reference to their Sufi guide. A number of ghazals by Kamil, again, featured passages addressing one's Sufi guide or 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī inserted in between the romantic and metaphysical verses.

In general, however, the poems of praise stand apart from texts that are not explicitly religious. In the light of my observations, the thematic sequencing rarely emerges as an important principle in structuring a *samā'* assembly. When the qawwals are not bound by the ritual context, they usually ignore it and select the items they sing depending on what they think might lead to a positive audience response. In practice, each poem constitutes an independent whole, whose effect does not depend on the items preceding or following it. Even in cases where the items seem to follow a fixed,

⁸⁵³ Rozehnal 2007a: 219–222.

⁸⁵⁴ Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmāt*, 466; Fārūqī, *Naghmāt*, 253.

⁸⁵⁵ Qureshi 2012: 111.

ritualized order, it may in reality be a result of negotiation undertaken on that particular occasion instead of a universally followed pattern, as was the case at Anis Miyan's home.

This being the situation, the thematic sequencing emerges essentially as a means to conceptualize and organize the vast qawwali repertoires either in poetic anthologies or in the memory of the qawwals, while it is rarely transported to the actual performance context. The resulting randomness does not indicate falling short of the ideal standards prescribed for the practice. Instead, it offers the qawwals a vital means for intensifying the experiences of the listeners who might not always respond favourably to a predetermined sequence of items. For a Sufi master acting as the *mīr-i mahfil*, such liberty of choice allows for a more effective pedagogic tool for guiding his disciples. Such approach effectively works against turning *samā'* into a purely ritualized occasion and guarantees more space for a variety of experiences.

Power of an individual verse

Shifting the focus of analysis from the thematic sequence to an individual item, however, necessitates further refinement. By now, it is amply clear that the qawwals' attitude to poetic texts found in *dīvāns* or transmitted only orally is remarkably liberal when it comes to adapting them to the performance. As the discussion in the preceding chapters shows, they regularly omit verses from ghazals or lines from *gīts*. In the case of the former, the individual verses – apart from the *maṭla'* and *maqta'* – can be furthermore reshuffled into new sequences. As a consequence, an individual verse of a ghazal or an individual line of a *gīt* becomes the fundamental unit of a qawwali performance. The qawwals' efforts revolve around them and they strive to bring out their various meanings. Occasionally, as happened at the Chilla (Item 4), a single verse of a ghazal can constitute a full item. In the following, I will concentrate on the poetics of ghazal, yet I hope the discussion will also throw some light on the use of *gīts* in *samā'*.

Focusing on individual verses ultimately stems from the literary conventions of the ghazal. In ghazals, each verse constitutes an independent semantic unit, perfect in itself, and tied to other verses by the metre and rhyme. Frances Pritchett has compellingly argued for concentrating on individual verses in the literary analysis of ghazal poetry. The opposite view has been put forward by Paul E. Losensky. Criticizing the conceptualization of the so called 'Indian style' in his *Welcoming Fighānī: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal*, he questions the use of isolated verses as a basis of literary analysis on the grounds that this makes the focus fall solely on rhetoric devices in the verses 'while their communicative and aesthetic ends in the context of the work as a whole are given little consideration.'⁸⁵⁶ However, Losensky's view is essentially applicable in the literary context, where the readers have the entire poetic text in front of them and they are able to deeply study the interlinkage between

⁸⁵⁶ Losensky 1998: 4.

the verses. In a performance context, where the original sequence of verses is habitually broken, insistence on studying full poems would be of little use. Furthermore, even when the verses of a ghazal are interlinked by a common mood or theme, the qawwals often break this unity by emphasizing seemingly dissonant themes through the use of adjunct items. This happened at Khanqah-e-Kamil, when the Warsi Brothers sang Kamil's poem in praise of Husain (Item 4). When they reached the verse

*People endowed with mystical knowledge find illumination only from you
Light of the eyes of Murtaẓā, grandchild of the Messenger, o Husain.*

they picked up two themes from the verse and separately elaborated them. First, they described Husain's metaphysical position that enables him to illuminate the people endowed with mystical knowledge:

*That light which is called the king of (?)
It is called the light of God, the light of eyes.
When that light was dispersed, it became the universe
When it is drawn together, it is called Husain.*

Then they evoked domestic images in describing the tender relationship between Husain and his grandfather, the Prophet:

*Sharia was established in the conduct of Mustafa
The Paradise stood on the door of the Maiden
The Messenger was charmed, when Husain climbed on his back
As Husain remained seated, the divine custom stood alert.*

In Kamil's verse, the former, lofty theme overshadows the latter, which appears only in Husain's epithet 'the grandchild of the Messenger'. However, during the performance, the qawwals gave equal prominence to both themes, thus introducing more gentle overtones into the encomium.

For these reasons, the following analysis focuses on individual verses. Although rhetorical devices are given their due attention, the discussion also reveals communicative, aesthetic and, one might add, religious ends. However, they are not necessarily the ones intended by the authors and they often arise from the interaction of the performers and the listeners.

While de-emphasizing the unity of a ghazal, the textual-performative techniques employed by the qawwals simultaneously accentuate the emphasis on an individual verse. The semantic units repeated during *takrār* are meaningful in the context of the verse of which they form a part, not in relation to the entire poem. *Girah* verses, again, highlight some meaning of a verse or a part of it, as was the case above. The following example shows how bowing the head down on the feet of the beloved, mentioned in the salient text, is further discussed in four *girah* verses, each of which addresses the topic from a slightly different angle (Anis Miyan's, Item 5).

Let my head remain bowed to the feet of the beloved for the entire life.

1st *gīrah* *In your eyes, there is a beautiful reflection
That is why my prostration is prolonged.*

2nd *gīrah* *I feel pity over the worship of the people
Who could not bow down their hearts together with the forehead.*

3rd *gīrah* *Whenever my fate took its revenge on me
Each time the memories of you held [my] hand.*

4th *gīrah* *Bowing one's forehead on the threshold is not worship
Rather look, there is nothing lacking in my love.*

The first *gīrah* indicates that the lover sees the eyes of the beloved when he prostrates, whereas the second *gīrah* expresses pity for those who bow only their foreheads. The context makes it clear that such prostration is not what is intended in the salient text. The third *gīrah*, which emphasizes the consolation derived from the memory of the beloved moves away from the central theme of the passage, whereas the fourth one returns to it by echoing the words of the second *gīrah*, when it states that one should not concentrate on the physical act of bowing down, but see the person's love instead. Each new shade of meaning adds weight to the line they are exploring and shows it in a new light.

As an individual verse is the basic unit of ghazal poetry and qawwali performance, its cohesion acquires great importance. This internal tautness of a verse is called *rabṭ* ('connection'), and it has been repeatedly highlighted as one the vital qualities of a good ghazal in the literary discussions. According to Pritchett it 'is a protean quality and can involve semantic, phonetic, rhythmic, allusive and even visual self-reflectiveness.'⁸⁵⁷ The insistence on a verse's independence leads to according immense importance on each word and avoiding futile expletives. Especially in Urdu, the profuse use of words like *to* and *hī* characterizes texts of less accomplished poets, who find them convenient means to fit their message into the desired metre without radically distorting the meaning of the verse. In the more professionally written poems, the expression is condensed to the extreme and each word is significant for crafting the meaning of the verse. As a result, the import of individual words as well as their mutual connections acquire immense force. When a verse is performed, the most meaningful individual words may in themselves stir the audience to such an extent that the qawwals pick them up for *takrār*. In contemporary *samā'* assemblies, the phrase repeated in *takrār* is frequently the name of a saintly personage, but it may also be some other cherished word like *karam* ('mercy'), *naẓar* ('glance') or *nisbat* ('affiliation').

⁸⁵⁷ Pritchett 2004: 86.

Most commonly, the *rabṭ* of a verse arises from the differing functions of the two lines of a verse. The first line makes a claim (*da'vā*), while the second answers it (*javāb-i da'vā*). The answer may be an illustration (*tamsīl*), a supporting statement (*dalīl*) or an unexpected cause behind the commonplace statement made in the first line (*ḥusn-i ta'līl*).⁸⁵⁸ Below, the second line answers the rhetoric question of the first line (Anis Miyan's, Item 4):

The matter is huge and the mouth is small, but why should I lie?

My perception tells me that wherever I am, you are there too.

After hearing the first line that promises to reveal a secret or a great truth, the listener is left wondering what the verse is about to say. Only the second line reveals that the beloved, in this case the Prophet, is wherever the lover is. The second line also makes it clear that this is not a theoretical, philosophical statement, but something the lover perceives and feels.

In the following verse, the first line initiates the rhetoric device called *laff o nashr*, 'folding and unfolding'.⁸⁵⁹ This signifies presenting a list of objects in the first line and explaining them in the second. Since such rhetorical devices are a common stock of ghazal poetics, audiences instinctively start to anticipate an explanation when hearing the following line by Kamil (Khanqah-e-Kamil, Item 9):

(I have) neither knowledge, learning, abstinence, chastity nor grace in (my) actions

In the framework of Kamil's poems, the dependence of the lover on the beloved is frequently interpreted in reference to the Prophet or Sufi saints, and the second line explains that even though the lover-devotee has none of the religious perfections, his acts are still successful because of the beloved's kindness:

Only because of your favour, things are accomplished.

As was noted above, the qawwals make the most of the *rabṭ* by routinely singing the two lines of a verse separately in order to increase their mutual tension. The first line is sung in the upper register and can be repeated several times or interlaced with *gīrah* verses before revealing the second line that resolves the tension thus created. At the level of music, the relief is realized by moving from the upper pitch towards the lower. Thus the effect of a verse that on paper lies in perfect balance, immediately visible to the reader's eyes and consolidated by its compressed internal structure, is increased in a qawwali performance by breaking it into parts and increasing the tension both musically and textually before offering the listeners the musical relief that climaxes the semantic meaning. Although the listeners of qawwali are usually familiar with the majority of the song texts, holding back the resolving statement while fomenting the excitement with music contributes significantly towards rendering the verses fresh and exiting in each performance occasion.

⁸⁵⁸ Pritchett 2004: 88.

⁸⁵⁹ For a discussion of various rhetoric devices used in Persian poetry, see Schimmel 2004: 37–53.

In addition to the different roles of the verse's two halves, each line is in most verses characterized by the coincidence of a semantic break with the metrical mid-point marked by the cesura (*taqtī*). This is especially conspicuous in the ghazals favoured by the qawwals. In their repertoires even the shortest lines regularly divide into two semantically meaningful units. Thus, a verse can readily be divided into four parts instead of two. Qawwals capitalize on this literary convention, since it increases the scope of alternating between the tension and relief when singing, especially if the resolving statement is delayed until the last quarter of the verse. In the following verse from an anonymous *naʿt* (Anis Miyan's, Item 4), the first line again sets the scene. It is significant that the first line of a verse is frequently sung in one go, since dividing it into two does not increase the contrast between tension and relief.

I am bad, but I do not call myself bad just like that

The second line, in contrast, was divided by Iftexhar Ahmed into two halves and he furthermore used the fillers *āqā* ('Lord!') and *nabī allāh* ('The Prophet of God!') to delay the solution. The passage develops the statement of the first verse by saying that there is a heart in the lover's chest:

There is a heart in my chest and (Lord! The Prophet of God!)

Yet the audience is left wondering about the import of the statement. After all, having a heart is nothing special. It is only the last line

you live in that heart.

that gives significance to this statement and also tells why the lover does not call himself bad although, by implication, he is just that: the beloved Prophet lives in his heart and sanctifies his being.

At times, the poets employ the self-reflectiveness of *rabṭ* to create circular verses. In the following verse of Kamil, the paradox leaves the mind ricocheting between the lines, unable to reach a logical conclusion. How can the lover not find the beloved, when he finds him?

I do not find you, when I find you

Either I disappear myself or I am made to disappear.

The explanation of the second line that he either disappears himself or is made to disappear does not offer a logically satisfactory explanation and the audience is left with the paradox that keeps changing its form depending on which statement of the verse is given precedence over the others.

Such verses are frequently used to address distinctly metaphysical questions. The elusive beloved of the ghazals corresponds to God, who is above the human understanding. However, the human lover can still draw closer to the divine beloved, yet, as Kamil points out (Khanqah-e-Kamil, Item 8), he keeps constantly changing when seen over the distance that separates him and the lover. The meaning of the verse keeps transforming as it proceeds from declaring the beloved higher (*ūnce*) than the human

abilities, to describing the increasing closeness (*qurbat*) and then ending with distances (*dūriyān*) again.

*He is higher than the capacity of vision and higher than human thought and understanding
The closer I draw to him, the more he changes from the distance.*

In addition to the respective functions of the two lines of a verse, *rabṭ* can also arise from the soundscape. When a poem is performed, this aspect acquires pronounced significance and it is the first thing a listener registers even if he or she does not know the language. The sound is immediate unlike the cognition of the meaning that follows it. Pritchett is one of the few scholars, who has emphasized the importance of the sound in analysing poetry. Among the qualities of a good ghazal, *ravānī* ('flowingness'), signifies the euphonious, harmonious soundscape that makes the poem pleasant to the ear. According to Pritchett, common means of creating *ravānī* include cherishing long vowels instead of short ones and avoiding consonant clusters.⁸⁶⁰ In addition, alliteration, assonance and internal rhyme are frequently used by poets. In the following verse (Anis Miyan's, Item 2), the long vowel *-ī* acts as an internal rhyme and dominates the end of each quarter of the verse in contrast to the initial, quicker sequences of short vowels. The few consonant clusters are softened by the inclusion of a nasal sound or a sibilant as the other member (*bānkī*, *ghamzah*, *mastī*).

nigāheñ miṭhī adā'eñ bānkī ba-ghamzah mastī ba-nāz shokhī
naẓāre jādūbhārī hai us kī na jā'ūñ maiñ kaise ab kahīñ māñ

Eyes are sweet, [but] the manner is crooked; intoxication in amorous glance, mischief in playfulness.

His glances are full of charm. How could I possibly not go now, mother?

Occasionally, the verses take recourse to the antithesis of *ravānī* as a sonic device in order to paint an arresting soundscape that accentuates the meaning of the words, as in the following verse of Niyāz (Khwaja Hall, Item 9):

rag o pai meñ āg bharak uṭhī phūñke hai paṛā sabhī tan badan
tū ne sāqiyā mai-yi ātishīn kā yih jāñ kaisā pilā diyā

*Every vein and nerve burst into a flame, the entire body is in fire
Cupbearer, what is this goblet of fiery wine that you made me drink?*

Here the first half of the first line sounds jerky because of the presence of the velar stops *k* and *g* as well as the retroflex *r*. The impression is further strengthened through the contrast with the rest of the verse, which is a typical example of *ravānī*. The sound of the beginning of the verse is reminiscent of the crackle of fire and thus paints a vivid soundscape of the semantic content that describes veins and nerves bursting into flames.

⁸⁶⁰ Pritchett 2004: 87.

Ravānī also arises from the poetic metres, which give rhythm to the ghazal and ultimately to the musical performance.⁸⁶¹ Pritchett has noted that in a good ghazal, the metre should be responsive to the words in a way that they seem to grow from it organically and it does not appear imposed on them.⁸⁶² The items in qawwali repertoires are generally characterized by consummate rhythm that is apparent as soon as one hears the poem sung. In order to achieve this effect, the qawwals seem to favour poems written in a limited selection of metres. However, the ones they select are extremely singable. The qawwals avoid the longest and most complex metres that would prove challenging when sung, favouring instead metres whose structure is symmetric and that often consist of repetitions of a single poetic foot. For example *hazaj musamman* (◡ --- ◡ --- ◡ --- ◡ ---) features regularly in qawwali performances.⁸⁶³

amīr-ī kishvar-ī faqr-e shah-ī iqlīm-i ‘irfān-e⁸⁶⁴
 khudāgū-e khudādān-e khudābīn-e khudāshān-e

Prince of the land of pious poverty, king of the clime mystical knowledge

He speaks about God, knows God, sees God and derives his authority from God.

In the verse written by Niyāz in praise of Ali (Chilla, Item 1; Anis Miyan’s, Item 1), the metre is immediately evident, especially in the second line which consists of four symmetrical phrases corresponding to the four feet of the poetic metre. The repetition of the words only increases the clear articulation of the metre.

The interconnectedness of sound and meaning is occasionally utilized by the qawwals to help a transition from one textual passage to the next. In a ghazal that serves as a salient text, this happens automatically, since the metre and rhyme facilitate easy transition from one verse to another while maintaining the cohesion of the performance. However, in the case of adjunct items, harmonized soundscapes increase the impression of coherence. In Khwaja Hall (Item 1), Mohammad Ahmed used the rhyme of the *rubā’ī* (-āz) to preface the salient text, whose rhyme is (-āz-i mā). The sonic continuity supports the continuity in the meaning that revolves around the lover bowing to the threshold of the beloved.

^{1st} *rubā’ī* ‘umr-e bar āstān-i to sūdām sar-i niyāz
 shāyad shavam ba-bazm-i viṣāl-i to sarfarāz

*For [a whole] lifetime, I have rubbed my indigent head against your threshold
 Perhaps I will be honoured by a soirée where I can meet you.*

cūn bandah rā az khvājah buvad cashm-i nekū-e
 mā bandah īm o khvājah tu’ī kār-i mā bi-sāz

⁸⁶¹ On metres in Persian poetry, see, e.g. Thiesen 1982.

⁸⁶² Pritchett 2004: 87.

⁸⁶³ For instances where this metre features in salient texts, see Chilla, Item 5; Khwaja Hall, Item 8; Anis Miyan’s, Item 4 and Khanqah-e-Kamil, Item 7.

⁸⁶⁴ I have marked the prosodic lengthening of the *izāfat* construction to the transliteration.

*When a slave is allowed a graceful glance from the master
– I am a slave and you are the master – see that my work gets done.*

1st verse ba-khāk-i dargah-i to jabīn-i niyāz-i mā
qurbān-i yak nigāh-i to ‘umr-i darāz-i mā

*My indigent forehead is in the dust of your threshold
My long life is a sacrifice for one glance of yours.*

The cohesion of soundscape is also a factor that contributes to the cohesion of long performances that involve abundant textual content. In such occasions, a sonorous and easily recognizable *radīf* acquires great importance. In many poems sung by the qawwals, the *radīf* is long. It allows only minor variation between the lines and furthermore limits the semantic content into a more narrowly defined range of meanings. In the following verse by ‘Ulvī, the *radīf ko’ī ho ho na ho na ho* occupies half of the line and the ending *-am* limits the choice of the *qāfiyah* to a few nouns and adverbs. While the verse in itself is plain, a musical rendition releases its immense potency (Anis Miyan’s, Item 12).

gar yār ho baham ko’ī ho ho nah ho nah ho
jab apnā ho şanam ko’ī ho ho nah ho nah ho

*If the friend is with one, it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or not
When the beloved is one’s own, it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or not.*

A similar *radīf jo ho so ho* appears in Niyāz’s ghazal (Khwaja Hall, Item 9):

‘ishq meñ tere koh-i gham sar pih liyā jo ho so ho
‘aish o nishāt-i zindagī choṛ diyā jo ho so ho

*In your love, I took a mountain of grief on my head, come what may
I forwent the luxury and enjoyment of life, come what may.*

Although long *radīfs* may not demonstrate literary creativity and poetic craft, they are well suited to performance. Such distinctive *radīfs* serve as punch lines where both the tune and different verses of a ghazal find a relief. As a consequence, such *radīfs* acquire much weight and have the potential of gradually revealing ever new sets of meanings to the listeners. This happened with Niyāz’s ghazal in Khwaja Hall, where the *mīr-i mahfil* shared with his disciples unexpected meanings that he had unearthed from the proverbial *jo ho so ho*.

Another type of a long *radīf* that does not strike one as particularly creative on paper, is the name of a saintly personage, as in a verse by Kamil extolling ‘Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī (Khanqah-e-Kamil, Item 2):

dil meñ hai dunyā-yi gham ābād yā pīrān-i pīr

kyā maze kī hai tumhārī yād yā pīrān-i pīr

The domain of grief is flourishing in the heart, Master of Masters

Oh, how I relish your memory, Master of Masters.

The repetition of the phrase *yā pīrān-i pīr* ('O Master of Masters') throughout the performance is bound to appeal to the religious sentiments of the Qadiri audience. The coalescence of musical and semantic relief in a saintly epithet renders it the fulcrum of the performance and the focus of the listeners' attention.

The use of predictable *radīfs* also facilitates introducing new poetry belonging to the varying repertoire of an individual qawwal to the listeners. While in the literary, textually transmitted context the novelty of poetry is a significant consideration, in performance this quality may impede the appreciation of the text. Although most verses are repeated at least a few times in a qawwali performance, grasping the poetic meaning is not always easy and the qawwals consequently favour singing texts which belong to the core repertoire and are already familiar to the audience. However, if they decide to introduce a new poetic text, the *radīf* smooths the way for its favourable reception. In the following, rarely heard Urdu verses (Anis Miyan's, Item 5), the *radīf ke ba'd* ('after') allows the listeners to guess the end of the verse even before it is sung and thus it familiarizes them with the text.

du'ā ko hāth bhī uṭhe nah the namāz ke ba'd
vuh mil ga'e mujhe 'arṣah-yi darāz ke ba'd

I had not even raised my hands into supplication after the prayer

When I found him after a long period of time.

hazār martabah dekhā hai rū ba-rū un ko
kabhī namāz se pahle kabhī namāz ke ba'd

Thousand times I have looked at him face to face

Sometimes before the prayer; sometimes after the prayer.

dayār-i gul meñ phire haiñ aur gulon se haiñ phaṭke
vahiñ bhī jī nah lagā terī bazm-i nāz ke ba'd

I have roamed the land of flowers and intermingled with roses

But I did not feel at home there after your banquet of amorous playfulness.

The qualities of *ravānī* and *rabṭ* intertwine the poetic form and meaning together, and both are intimately linked with qawwali performances that capitalize on these properties by alternating intensification and relief. A closer analysis of the meaning of the verses will throw further light on the role of poetry in *samā'*.

Articulating the meaning of a verse

In addition to the instantly perceivable sonic qualities and metric patterns, the immediate, intuitive effect of a ghazal is closely bound with the quality of *kaifiyyat* ('mood'). Discussing *kaifiyyat* sheds light on the manner in which a ghazal is intended to affect the audience since, according to Pritchett, it refers specifically to the quality of the response in the hearer or reader and thus turns the attention away from the text itself to its reception.⁸⁶⁵ *Kaifiyyat* does not arise essentially from the apparent meaning of a verse that can in any case be plain and even contradict some poetic conventions. The following verse appears simple, but it conveys a strong feeling of wistful bewilderment (Anis Miyan's, Item 5).

pās itnā kih tire sāns se ṭakrātī hai sāns
dūr itnā kih tujhe dhūṇḍh rahā hūñ tujhī meñ

[*You are*] so close, that a breath collides with a breath

[*But*] so far, that I keep searching for you in you.

The beloved is so close that his breathing merges with the breath of the lover. Despite this intimacy, the lover is forced to search for the beloved in the beloved himself. Despite its simplicity, the verse manages to convey a strong *kaifiyyat* that is increased by the succession of languidly dragging long syllables.

The verses that embody the poetic quality of *shorish* ('commotion, tumult') are often equally simple, but more dynamic. While *kaifiyyat* frequently arises from a melancholy mood, *shorish* expresses passion and energy of the lover.⁸⁶⁶ *Shorish* is easily combined with emphasized rhythm and vigorous singing that characterize qawwali music, and verses embodying this quality form a significant portion of the qawwali song texts. The boldness of *shorish* often manifests itself with the rejection of everything for the sake of the beloved (Anis Miyan's, Item 12):

Whether there is higher and lower world, I do not give a damn

O most perfect manifestation, it does not matter, if there is someone [else] or not.

The colloquial expression *pāposh se mirī* ('I do not give a damn,' lit. 'from my shoe') intensifies *shorish* in its coarseness, although its use would otherwise be highly unsuitable in ghazals.

Often the energy of *shorish* is associated with drunkenness and infidelity. The next anonymous verse is a harsh command to the preacher to remove his book and drink liquor (Khwaja Hall, Item 9).

This is not a school, preacher, pick up the book, pick it up!

This is a wine house, here you should enjoy the pleasures of liquor!

⁸⁶⁵ Pritchett 2004: 119.

⁸⁶⁶ Pritchett 2004: 116.

The combination of *kaifiyyat* and *shorish* in a single verse can also be exploited in increasing the contrast between the tension and relief during a performance. In the following verse belonging to a *tazmīn* written on a ghazal attributed to Rūmī (Anis Miyan's, Item 6), the first three lines comprise a gentle supplication that illustrates the longing typical to *kaifiyyat*. The last two lines, on the other hand, embody *shorish* when the lover boldly announces that he is ready to sacrifice his soul and heart for the sake of the beloved.

Lovely sweetheart of mine, be kind
According to what is possible, protect my honour
Beloved, come, just for a moment
I am yearning to make you my guest
Friend, I sacrifice my soul and heart [to you]. (Everything I have is a sacrifice!)

In the verse, the change of the poetic quality from *kaifiyyat* to *shorish* is accompanied with a shift of linguistic medium from Urdu to Persian. Thus, evoking different linguistic registers available to the qawwals can also be used to accentuate the change of the mood in the poem. Urdu lends itself more readily to expressing *kaifiyyat*, whereas Persian ghazals often feature powerful, ecstatic verses that are saturated with *shorish*. The qawwals further emphasize the *shorish* of the verse at hand by introducing the phrase '*Everything I have is a sacrifice!*' as a filler of *takrār kā ḥalqah* after the last line of the verse.

The remaining two qualities of a good ghazal are more closely connected to the meaning of the verse and together they cover the semantic dimension of poetry, a dimension that has conventionally been in the focus of scholarly analysis. The first one of these is called *ma'nī āfrīnī* ('meaning-creation'). *Ma'nī āfrīnī* means enriching and multiplying the meanings in a verse. A common means to achieve it is using the non-informative and non-falsifiable *inshā'īyyah* mode of speech⁸⁶⁷ instead of the informative and falsifiable *khabariyyah*. This endows the situation described in a verse with a variety of potential explanations.⁸⁶⁸ *Ma'nī āfrīnī* also lends the verses versatility that facilitates their integration into varying performance contexts, where myriad meanings can be ascribed to them depending on the occasion and the audience.

In addition to the *inshā'īyyah*, *ma'nī āfrīnī* can arise from the use of *kināyah* ('implication'):

I had not even raised my head from prostration
When I heard the voice: 'I am in front [of you].'

The lover is apparently praying, when the voice belonging to the beloved informs him that he is in front of him (Anis Miyan's, Item 5). Has the beloved appeared in front of the lover so that he would see him, if he just raised his head? Or is he a vision in his eyes? Is it the lover's prayer that has summoned the beloved, or has he appeared to

⁸⁶⁷ I.e., subjunctive mood, questions, exhortations etc. The option of refraining from explicitly stating the subject is also frequently taken.

⁸⁶⁸ Pritchett 2004: 107–108.

ruin the former's prayer by standing between him and God? The first line also suggests that the appearance of the beloved was anticipated, but he appeared earlier than expected. In short, such verses incite more questions than offer answers. However, in *samā'* this is not a disadvantage. Instead, it makes *samā'* an extremely versatile Sufi practice that can simultaneously cater for the needs of different participants. Even if the audience was mixed to the extreme, as it often is, and consisted of individuals with refined literary sensitivities as well as illiterate listeners, they are all likely to find some relevant message from such verses.

The various meanings arising from a single verse still presuppose instinctive, intuitive response. The remaining essential quality, *mazmūn āfrīnī* ('theme-creation'), on the other hand, can potentially take the ghazal to a more cerebral level. Pritchett explains *mazmūn āfrīnī* to denote the metaphor-making process in which new metaphorical equations are created from existing ones.⁸⁶⁹ The ghazal poets' practice of creating new themes from stock poetic images has been the driving force of the literary development of the genre. Successful *mazmūn āfrīnī* is realized when the *mazmūn* is new and fresh but simultaneously based on a recognized antecedent. The process of theme-creation is regulated by the *iṣlāḥ* ('correcting') of a master and the argumentation on its validity is carried out in *mushā'irahs*, the poets' gatherings. It is important to emphasize that even if based on the author's subjective experience, the ghazals still need to conform to the poetical conventions pertaining to the established *mazmūns* in order to reach the audience.

On the whole, qawwali repertoires are characterized by coherent poetic images and the themes of individual verses are easily recognizable to listeners who are acquainted with the language. Although similar consistency characterizes poetic oeuvres of most of the established poets, it is in stark contrast with, for example, the poetic output of Rūmī. His ghazals are generally straightforward, but they cover an inconceivable array of poetic images and themes that seldom have an established antecedent. This contributes to his portrayal as a creative genius whose poems feel fresh and unrestrained by poetic mannerisms. However, the flip side of constantly inventing novel poetic themes runs the risk of making the verses arcane and indecipherable to the audiences. This is probably the main reason behind the qawwals' predilection for texts that employ commonly understood and appreciated poetic themes and images. None of the poems discussed in the preceding chapters employed *mazmūns* that would have escaped the grasp of the listeners.

As was noted earlier, complicated *mazmūn āfrīnī* was a central characteristic of *tāzagū'ī* poetry, where verses do refer to earlier poetic conventions, but are simultaneously so complex that understanding all their nuances requires considerable intellectual effort from the audience. Significantly, the texts of *tāzagū'ī* poets from Fighānī to Bedil rarely appear in the twentieth-century qawwali anthologies and, as far as I know,

⁸⁶⁹ Pritchett 2004: 93.

they are never sung by the qawwals. The reason behind the apparent avoidance of complicated *mazmūns* is probably the urge to eschew excessive intellectualism that would impede immediate grasping of the meaning of the verse. The qualities of *ravānī*, *rabṭ*, *kaifiyyat* and *shorish* serve this purpose better.

The occasional simplification of poetry by the qawwals suggests that straightforward *mazmūns* are better suited for musical performances than exceedingly complicated ones. It was noted above while discussing Kamil's ghazals in performance that individual verses can transform in the course of a relatively short period of time. In the case of Kamil's poems, the changes have thus far been minor ones that do not necessarily change the semantic meaning, but render the verses more akin to the spoken language and thus more accessible. Sometimes entire *mazmūns* are transformed, and in cases when two variant readings of a poem exist, the qawwals usually adopt the more simple one for the performance. The following verse found in the Naval Kishore edition of *Dīvān-i Niyāz* describes the love for Niẓām al-Dīn Auliya'. The verse does not name the beloved, but the rest of the ghazal identifies him, and the word *maḥbūb* ('beloved') immediately associates with the saint's popular appellations Maḥbūb-i Ilāhī ('The Divine Beloved') and Maḥbūb Pāk ('The Pure Beloved'). The appearance of three words derived from the same Arabic root (*taṣvīr*, *muṣavvir*, *ṣūrat*) in the second line constitutes the rhetorical device known as *ishtiqaq*.

zi-shauq-i 'ishq-i maḥbūb ān cunān gashtam tihī az khvud
kih taṣvīr-am muṣavvir dar kashad bar ṣūrat-i āh-e⁸⁷⁰

Yearning for the beloved has emptied me from myself

Were an artist to paint my picture, he would make it into the form of a sigh.

The verse revolves around the *mazmūn* of the lover's emaciation. He withers in his love to such an extent that finally only a sigh remains. The sighing, however, empties him from himself and, by implication, fills him with the beloved. This variant is never heard in contemporary *samā'* assemblies, as the qawwals, like Mohammad Ahmed (Chilla, Item 5), routinely opt for the more straightforward variant found in the Agra edition of *Dīvān-i Niyāz*:

zi-shauq-i 'ishq-i maḥbūb-i ilāhī ān cunān gashtam
kih taṣvīr-am muṣavvir dar kashad bar ṣūrat-i āh-e⁸⁷¹

The passion for the Divine Beloved has made me like this

Were an artist to paint my picture, he would make it into the form of a sigh.

The verse has been simplified and the reference to the beloved has been made explicit. The beloved (*maḥbūb*) that was only hinted at in the first version has transformed into the Divine Beloved (*maḥbūb-i ilāhī*), leaving no doubt about his identity. The entire

⁸⁷⁰ Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1876), 31.

⁸⁷¹ Niyāz, *Dīvān* (1929), 71. The verse is not found in the abridged versions of the poem included in the *Naghmat* anthologies, but it features in *Surūd*. See Nūr al-Ḥasan, *Naghmat* 356; Fārūqī, *Naghmat*, 187; Meraj, *Surūd*, 64–65.

mazmūn of becoming empty of oneself by sighing has been edited out and the *javāb-i da'vā* in the second line now simply demonstrates the state of the lover by an example (*tamsīl*). The Agra edition of *Dīvān-i Niyāz* was published under the supervision of the *sajjādanashīn* of Khanqah-e-Niyaziya, in 1929 and whenever there is a choice, it gives preference to the simpler and explicitly religious reading over more complex ones favoured in the Naval Kishore edition. These are also the readings followed by the contemporary qawwals.

Even as qawwals avoid evoking complicated *mazmūns* that have developed according to horizontal, historical lines, they capitalize on the vertical interconnectedness of poetic themes and images. For example, elaborate series of *gīrah* verses frequently pick up a *mazmūn* from the salient text and expand it by connecting related *mazmūns* with it, as in the case of Iftekhar's sequence of verses on prostration (*sajdah*) discussed above. In the case of the most common *mazmūns*, the associations with related *mazmūns* in the minds of the listeners acquainted with qawwali repertoires can be taken for granted. Iconic verses expand into nets of meanings even when they are not elaborated within *gīrahs*. The famous verse attributed to Amīr Khusrau (Chilla, Item 3) is a case in point:

I offer you a hundred crescent moons of 'id
The arch of your eyebrows is our crescent.

The *mazmūn* of a sacrifice on the day of 'id combines two interconnected images into a chain of meanings. The curvature of the eyebrows of the beloved is like a crescent moon for whose sake a hundred crescent moons deserve to be sacrificed. In addition, the curvature of the eyebrows is like a curving blade of a sword that is used to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal. The above verse does not explicitly refer to the more graphic side of the sacrifice, yet it is present in the background. In contrast, an Urdu verse by Bahādur Shāh Z̄afar omits the explicit reference to the eyebrows and instead emphasizes the curve of the sword:

O coquettish idol! At the moment of being killed, I experienced a joy like [in the day] of 'id
*When I saw the curvature of your sword in front of me, it appeared like a crescent moon.*⁸⁷²

Although each verse emphasizes a particular facet of the *mazmūn*, the web of poetic themes and images is so tightly knit that also the unstated aspect is evoked. In *samā'*, the well known *mazmūns* have the advantage of broadening the scope of interpretations potentially derived from the verses. This is a significant performance strategy, as well, since it facilitates enticing the maximum effect by singing the minimum amount of text. Such amalgamation of poetical and musical conventions facilitates a nuanced metaphorical discourse on divine realities that lies in the heart of the practice of *samā'*.

⁸⁷² The ghazal to which this verse belongs is part of Meraj Ahmed's repertoire, but he omits this verse from *Surūd*. See Meraj, *Surūd*, 222. For the full ghazal, see Z̄afar, *Kulliyāt*, 17.

Metaphorical discourse and imagination

Ultimately, the different ways of analysing poetry all strive to answer the question: how does poetry work and how does it affect the audience? The question is not always explicitly phrased, but it remains in the background of scholarly discussions on poetry. The researcher's decision concerning the portrayal of a poetic text also dictates the outcome of the analysis. If the premise is that poetry describes the author's subjective experiences, the biographical approach follows naturally. If, on the other hand, the poems are envisioned as a means to display or even promulgate religious ideas, it would be natural to analyse them as polemic or missionary addresses. Based on the use of poetic texts in *samā'* assemblies, I suggest that they are, in this particular context, a means to evoke experiences in the listeners and integrate these experiences to their religious practice. This is far from being a novel idea, yet there are no studies on Sufi poetry approaching the topic explicitly from this premise. As the discussion on the form and meaning of ghazals in the context of *samā'* and qawwali music indicates, the performers seem to consciously avoid evoking an overtly intellectual response through the texts they sing. Instead, their choice of texts calls for immediate, more intuitive perception. How, then, does the meaning of poetry take shape? What makes a ghazal such a convenient medium to discuss complicated topics like the relationship of God and a human being, or *vujūdi* metaphysics? In addition to the evocative soundscape and powerful moods, the song texts of qawwali rely on the power of the metaphor (*majāz*) and the perception of metaphors through imagination (*khayāl*).

The metaphorical language of poetry has sometimes been seen as the Sufis' way to avoid the censorship of their ideas. Dressing radical religious ideas in the garb of convoluted poetic images that only the adepts can interpret has been volunteered as the reason behind the Sufis' eagerness to utilize and develop the metaphors found in wine and love poetry. This may have applied in some specific circumstances, where Sufis lived in the outskirts of the society and open expression of their ideas could have risked persecution. However, during the period discussed in this study, the Sufis have been so prominent in their respective societies that they have hardly needed to veil their ideas in poetic metaphors. No author writing poetry or Sufi master patronizing its musical performance has in this study been an anti-establishment rebel objecting the religious orthodoxy. On the contrary, they have perceived themselves as representatives of normative Islam. The roles of an *ʿālim* and a Sufi sheikh have been largely overlapping in India since the Sultanate period and their partial separation began only during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Although the poetry discussed in the above chapters utilizes metaphorical language, its intended meaning in the context of *samā'* is transparent. Erotic verses refer to the relationship between a human being and God or between a Sufi disciple and his guide. Metaphysical verses on the manifestation of God's self-disclosure in all phenomena unequivocally refer to *vujūdi*

concepts. The reason for using metaphorical language thus lies somewhere else, than in an attempt to curb the voices of critics.

Of course, metaphor is first and foremost a poetic convention in ghazals. Wine represents love, moth and candle represent the lover and the beloved, and a cypress the beloved's stature. It is simply the way the things are expressed. Athar Nafis's (d. 1980) contemporary verse, made famous by Farida Khanum, expresses the gist of the matter:

Love has turned its back to me. Should I describe its condition now?

No kindness is left, no fury is left. Should I compose a verse that is true?⁸⁷³

When love has grown cold and evokes no feelings, it can no more serve as material for poetry. Such love does not refer to anything else but itself and a truthful representation is doomed to be dull and devoid of charm. The ghazal is not meant to be realistic or to say things directly. Metaphoric language is part of its charm and an important constituent of its aesthetic effect. Nevertheless, in order to work as a poetic trope, the metaphor cannot be fully abstract, but it has to stem from something to which the audience can relate. The experience of the phenomenon used as a metaphor in a ghazal does not need to be personal, but a listener has to have a perception of it. For example, many Muslims are likely unacquainted with the actual effects of wine and the feeling of hangover that follows its consumption. Yet the ghazal poets can rely on them having some kind of idea of it, so they can continue evoking the *mazmūn* in their verses.

From the point of view of Sufi practice, this is also where the value of a metaphor lies. Metaphor that uses the human experiences as the starting point, has the ability to sublimate them in a manner captured in the Arabic Sufi adage 'Metaphor is a bridge to the reality' (*al-majāz qantarāh li'l-ḥaqīqah*).⁸⁷⁴ The saying does not refer solely to the metaphor as a poetic device but to the role of perceived, corporeal reality (*majāzī*) as a bridge to the invisible, divine reality (*ḥaqīqī*). Thus, metaphorical, human love (*'ishq-i majāzī*) can lead to real, divine love (*'ishq-i ḥaqīqī*). The idea of the metaphor as a bridge to the real leads to the conceptualization of these two realities as parts of the same continuum, not as opposites. This is also the reason why many Sufi masters have emphasized the significance of experiencing human love as a prerequisite preparation for divine love. It should be noted that contrary to what Nile Green suggests, metaphorical love does not denote platonic love, but also the physical dimensions of human love.⁸⁷⁵ This love is not metaphorical in the sense that the love would be enacted solely on a platonic level. Instead, the metaphorical nature of human love arises from its role as a reflection of divine love.

The metaphorical language of poetry is one means of moving from corporeal and human experience along the continuum towards spiritual and divine realities. Since

⁸⁷³ Transcribed from Farida Khanum, *In Concert IV*, track 1.

⁸⁷⁴ On a discussion of this concept in the poetry of Ghulām Farīd, see Shackle 2006.

⁸⁷⁵ See Green 2010: 307

the experiences of the audience are a prerequisite for a fully functioning metaphor, the universality of experiencing love makes it especially fruitful source of *mazmūns* and poetic images. Accordingly, the poetry performed by the qawwals repeatedly evokes passionate love. Some of the items, like Iftekhar's performance at Anir Miyan's house (Item 5) are ambiguous to the core in the sense that they offer no clues whatsoever as to the interpretation of the verses. Moreover, the metaphorical discourse of passionate love is so strong that it also pervades poetry that praises the Prophet and Sufi saints. The intermingling of devotional and erotic images is especially seamless in the ghazals of Kamil, where the saint is often the beloved of the poem. The following verse (Khanqah-e-Kamil, Item 7) describes the effect of the beloved's gaze in a conventional manner except that the *radīf* reveals the identity of the lover's object of adoration:

Seeing you has this effect, Eternal Helper

Gaze takes pride in gaze, Eternal Helper.

The use of ambiguous metaphorical language effectively blurs the interpretive framework of the ghazals. Without the mention of 'Abd al-Qādir Jilānī, for example, the verse could just as well be read as love poetry. In his discussion on mystical poetry in Persian, de Bruijn has noted that the vagueness of the lines distinguishing secular and mystical in poetry has caused 'serious problems for the interpretation.'⁸⁷⁶ What is problematic for the scholars struggling to interpret and categorize poetry, however, is for Sufis a vital means to render poetic verses a meaningful part of Sufi practice. The intermingling of human and divine, profane and sacred in poetry reflects the broader concept of these realities as parts of one continuum. The aim of *samā'* is to establish a movement from the former to the latter and this is exactly what ambiguous poetic expressions do. The ambivalence of poetic metaphors is further accentuated when they are combined with music which also is abstract and lacks clearly defined interpretation.

It is here that the context of a musical performance assumes a crucial role in transforming poetic metaphors and music into a potent practice. The discussion in Part I revealed the significance of *adab* that governs the organization of the occasion and the behaviour of the participants in this process. The field observations of contemporary *samā'* corroborate this and further indicate that even the physical environment bears relevance to the interpretation of poetic message. For example, during *samā'* at the meditation cell of Niẓām al-Dīn or in front of his tomb, the qawwals frequently referred to the hallowed environment while performing. Thus, a pronouncedly religious context of music and poetry has the potential to direct the listeners' experiences towards spiritual goals.

As was noted in Part I of this study, Chishti authors have been aware of the fact that a spiritual association is not always established. It is possible that a listener refers his or her experiences during the *samā'* to his or her love life, for example, instead of

⁸⁷⁶ De Bruijn 1997: 3

divine realities. However, the consequences of such a failure from the part of the listener are not necessarily dramatic. It does not necessarily lead to moral corruption and depravity. Although such toying with ambiguities pertaining to human and divine has offered a just cause for critics to condemn the practice, numerous Sufis, both Chishti Nizamis and others, have deemed the potential benefits of the practice far greater than its risks.

The preference for ambiguous metaphorical language that frequently employs paradoxical statements is intimately connected with the emphasis on *khayāl* ('imagination') among the Sufis subscribing to the *vujūdī* school. Interestingly, the association of the practice with *vujūdī* ideas seems to have grown stronger since the seventeenth century, when Aḥmad Sirhindī established the *shuhūdī* school and strongly spoke against *samāʿ*. During the eighteenth century, Kalīm Allāh and his followers emerged as the staunchest advocates of both the *vujūdī* school and the practice of *samāʿ* in India.

The significance of *khayāl* for understanding God has been elaborated by Ibn ʿArabī and his followers. *Khayāl* is a term that has ontological meaning as the intermediate realm between the spiritual and corporeal worlds. It is also the human soul (*nafs*) which connects his body (*jism*) with the spirit (*rūḥ*). In addition, it is a human faculty, often associated with the heart instead of the brain, that can combine mutual opposites into phenomena where they exist simultaneously. For example, it is the faculty that can comprehend God's simultaneous incomparability (*tanzīh*) and similarity (*tashbīh*). Laying emphasis on the former would totally detach God from the creation whereas focusing solely on the latter would, according to Ibn ʿArabī, lead to associating others with him (*shirk*). Thus, *khayāl* alone can provide a human being with a balanced outlook on the totality of God's self-disclosure (*tajallī*).⁸⁷⁷ It also facilitates the understanding that everything is God and not-God simultaneously.⁸⁷⁸

A metaphysical *vujūdī* approach that does not shun away from the divine paradoxes finds a fortuitous companion in ghazal poetics that consciously evoke ambiguities. According to Ibn ʿArabī, in addition to perceiving the existence of contradictory phenomena simultaneously, *khayāl* grasps them through an inner perception that results in a sensory experience without involving the physical sense organs.⁸⁷⁹ In the case of a ghazal, the poetic statements ideally appeal to the audience directly, without detouring through the brain, and evoke similar sensory experience. Paradoxical statements in particular force the audience to resort to their *khayāl* rather than reason (*ʿaql*) or logical thought. This is the approach of the qawwals, as well, who in the performance keep intensifying the effects of the text by constantly alternating between the contrasting statements of an individual verse and between the salient text and the

⁸⁷⁷ Chittick 1994: 72–73.

⁸⁷⁸ For a detailed discussion on various meanings of *khayāl*, see Chittick 1989: 112–124.

⁸⁷⁹ Chittick 1994: 70.

adjunct items. In the words of Amer Latif, the qawwals perform perplexity rather than use reason to resolve it.⁸⁸⁰

Like love poetry employing ambiguous metaphors, the ghazals on *vujūdī* themes invariably refrain from explaining their metaphysical statements. The following verse by Kamil (Khanqah-e-Kamil, Items 5 and 12) questions the individual existence of the lover:

*What is my being? Everything is his existence, his manifestation
How ignorant is he, who makes me step forward.*

The first line of the following verse (Khanqah-e-Kamil, Item 6) presents the lover as a mirror in front of the beloved, while the second line hints at the metaphysical dimension of the situation: instead of himself, the human lover sees a sparkle of the divine.

*When I become a mirror and place myself in front of him
I find a divine sparkle in being a human.*

Such verses are immediately identifiable as *vujūdī* statements by the listeners. However, they do not explain or justify their exclamations about the oneness of existence, for instance; for someone unacquainted with the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī and his followers, they remain opaque.

Ghazals on *vaḥdat al-vujūd* should always be discussed without losing sight of the genre’s characteristic literary conventions and the functions the author has assigned to them. Ghazals differ, for example, from theoretical prose treatises in which the author endeavours to explain the subject matter in an accessible manner and validate his claims by referring to discursive sources commonly shared by Muslims, that is, the Koran and the Prophetic traditions. This approach characterizes prose treatises even when the author claims to have acquired his knowledge as a result of direct witnessing. Ibn ‘Arabī, for example, claimed a visionary foundation for his knowledge, yet he strove to explain these visions on several thousands of pages using language and terminology that could be understood by his fellow-Muslims.

In the case of a ghazal, on the other hand, a Sufi author can dispense with this argumentative apparatus. Instead of attempting to justify his claims on scriptural basis, he can make a statement that merely hints at the metaphysical doctrines through selected technical terms like *vujūd* (‘existence’) or *ta‘ayyun* (‘individual existence, entification’). Like the metaphors that presuppose a prior experience, the audience has to be priorly acquainted with the *vujūdī* metaphysics in order to be able to catch the allusions of the poetic texts and relate them to the broader metaphysical framework. Otherwise, they do not fulfil their function in the practice of Sufism and remain non-mystical descriptions of phenomenal reality.

Instead of being coherent, theoretical expositions of Sufi metaphysics, ghazals show sudden glimpses of *vujūdī* ideas in powerful, surprising and even shocking im-

⁸⁸⁰ Latif 2007: 621

ages. These images have the potential to actualize the priorly learned theoretical knowledge and turn it into an experience that is incorporated to the being of the listener. An individual verse of a ghazal is like a lightning bolt that throws intensely bright light on one facet of a certain topic at a time. It can contain a universe of meanings that are explored in musical assemblies and when they are exhausted, another verse is sung in order to illuminate some other aspect of the same topic. This is lucidly illustrated in the performance of Niyāz's ghazal ending with the *radīf* *jo ho so ho* ('come what may'). Each verse of the ghazal together with the *rubā'ī* and *gīrah* verses represented a detour to the variegated dimensions of love. However, the conspicuous *radīf* pulled each of the verses towards the same statement like a magnet: the lover has to be prepared to encounter anything he comes across in love.

However, poetry performed in *samā'* does not merely serve the function of making the priorly learned theoretical knowledge alive. It also facilitates a theological and metaphysical discourse that would be out of place in expository prose or in the more didactic poetic genres. It facilitates an in-depth discussion on the contradictions pertaining to the nature of God in Islamic theology, in general, and in *vujūdi* thought, in particular. In ghazals, Sufi authors can enquire into these contradictions without being bothered by the outcome of their explorations. They are not obliged to reach conclusions, but can capitalize on the feelings of bewilderment and perplexity. The metaphorical discourse of passionate love furthermore allows probing the close relationship between a human being and God, or a Sufi disciple and his guide, by turning to romantic and even erotic images.

Samā' thus emerges as a space of intense Sufi practice, where the poetic and musical ambiguities are channeled for spiritual goals. It is also a space, where the authenticity of the text is not a primary concern, since its use is justified by the outcome. If a text is attributed to Amīr Khusrau and for this reason evokes stronger experience in the listeners than if it was acknowledged as a work of a Hyderabadī nawab, its function is fulfilled. This is in contrast with, for example, theological and legal discourses where decisions affecting the life of the larger Muslim community are taken. In such framework, the authenticity of the scripture is essential for reaching a decision that corresponds with the will of God. This also requires exerting logical thinking and reasoning in contrast to *samā'*, where the participants are required to surrender themselves to the divine inrushes that may or may not manifest themselves in music and poetry.

The reliance on ambiguous metaphors and *vujūdi* thematics characterizes especially formal *samā'* assemblies, where a Sufi master guides his disciples and where the qawwals' performance is essentially shaped in interaction with the listeners. However, the dynamics of the occasion change significantly, when the contact between the performers and the audience, on the one hand, and between the *mīr-i mahfil* and the listeners, on the other, diminishes. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, this happens also in the Nizamuddin shrine during programmes that cater to a broader audience.

The functions organized by Pir Ahmed Nizami at the Urs Mahal are a case in point. Here, the venue is organized like in a concert and the physical distance between the performers and the listeners is increased. The programmes present Sufism to the outside world and address non-Muslims and non-Sufi Muslims. They feature speeches that argue for the Islamic foundation of Sufism and the significance of Sufism as a part of Indian heritage. Correspondingly, the qawwals sing unambiguously religious poetry and items that are known outside the limited Sufi circles, such as Hindavi poems attributed to Amīr Khusrau. Although qawwali is at Urs Mahal performed in the shrine context, the mixed audience makes the occasions more akin to a concert than a *samā'* assembly.⁸⁸¹

When qawwali is fully detached from the context of *samā'*, its textual content also changes. I have demonstrated in two articles discussing recorded popular qawwali, how the poetic discourse becomes increasingly polemical and devotional. The lyricists and performers purge the poetic language and rid the poems of their ambivalence by explaining the metaphors or omitting them altogether. This effectively fetters the effect of this literary device and deprives the audience of the possibility of finding myriad connotations in the poetry. In *samā'* assemblies, the metaphor serves as a bridge between the visible and the spiritual realities and the human lover has a chance to meet the divine beloved. In popular qawwali poetry, the metaphor is no longer functional and the listeners remain what they are: Muslims aspiring to become better Muslims, destitute, lost and sinful, dependent on the transcendent creator or saintly intercession. Similarly, the transcendent God remains transcendent and the Prophet and saints remain remote ideals. In such situation, there is little scope for the human and divine to meet and interact. The poetry loses its mystical potential and becomes strictly religious Islamic poetry.⁸⁸²

⁸⁸¹ See Viitamäki *forthcoming a*. It is important to emphasize that in addition to the programmes at the Urs Mahal, Pir Ahmed Nizami organizes an intimate *samā'* assembly at Taq-i Buzurg as well.

⁸⁸² See Viitamäki 2011 and 2014.

CONCLUSION

Due to its complexity, *samāʿ* is a difficult subject for a study that aspires for a comprehensive approach. Like a paradoxical verse of a ghazal, *samāʿ* keeps transforming according to the vantage point of a researcher. A *samāʿ* assembly is meant to cater for spiritual goals, but it is also an occasion to enjoy refined music and poetry. As a Sufi practice, it is associated with experiences of pain and grief, but it is also a source of aesthetic enjoyment. Strict *adab* controls the occasion, but the listener should ideally be able to lose the control over him- or herself. While the prescribed object of *samāʿ* is a mystical state, it is simultaneously an occasion where professional qawwals make their living, and visible dealing with money constitutes a key element in the interaction between the listeners and the performers. Although each listener should ideally find his or her personal connotations in the experiences instigated by poetry and music, *samāʿ* is always a collective occasion where social bonds and hierarchies are enacted and strengthened. The legal status of the practice remains contested and its theoretical framework remains loosely defined. This is perhaps the reason why *samāʿ* cannot be learned from books. While manuals on different meditative techniques and prayers have proliferated since the days of Kalīm Allāh, there is no handbook of *samāʿ* available. Instead, its proper practice is learned in a live environment, under the guidance of a Sufi master.

In this study, I have attempted to approach *samāʿ* through a broad range of sources, both textual and ethnographic. Acknowledging the difficulties involved in discussing this particular Sufi practice, I have chosen to focus on poetry and poetic communication between the performers and listeners. This has facilitated analysing the aspect of *samāʿ* that touches all the participants, whether they be poets, performers or listeners.

The texts analysed in Part I of this study cover three very different periods of Indian history: the foundational phase of Indo-Persian culture during the Sultanate period; the late Mughal period, which followed the most legendary and opulent phase of this culture during the heyday of the Mughal dynasty; and, finally, the transition from the colonial period to the time of a formally secular nation-state during the twentieth century. In discussions pertaining to *samāʿ*, certain themes have persisted throughout these periods and, moreover, the example of the Sultanate and late Mughal Sufis is still being evoked by contemporary practitioners.

When Sufi brotherhoods were firmly established in the religious landscape of India during the thirteenth century, Nizām al-Dīn Auliyaʿ emerged as a key figure in the development of *samāʿ*. This is significant considering that he wrote no books to articulate his ideas. Instead, it was his personal example, which was recorded by his disciples in *malḥūzāt* and *tazkirahs* and disseminated throughout the Indian Subcontinent by

his *khalīfahs*, that immortalized his approach to *samāʿ*. In addition to superbly fulfilling the expectations of a medieval Sufi master, his career brought together a number of factors that significantly shaped the future development of *samāʿ* in India. He was sensitive to the effects of music and poetry and managed to attract poets and musicians to his circle. Some of them, like Amīr *Khusrau* and Amīr *Ḥasan*, became his close disciples. Because of this, Nizām al-Dīn emerged as a patron of poetic and musical arts that combined in *samāʿ*. His patronage was not essentially financial, but it led to the professionalization of *samāʿ* and introduced aesthetics as a key concern of this Sufi practice in the Indian context.

Nizām al-Dīn also established the model for staunch advocacy of the practice of *samāʿ*. Again, his paradigmatic example is not based on his own writings, but on his actions. The only time he attended the court of the sultan during his sixty-year-long career as a Sufi sheikh took place when his practice of *samāʿ* was challenged by the critics. His triumph became one of the historical key moments retold by the subsequent generations of Chishti Nizamīs. The incident also inspired the writing of legal treatises in defence of the practice by his *khalīfah* *Fakhr al-Dīn Zarrādī*. His *Risalat uṣūl al-samāʿ* retained its relevance for the brotherhood and was republished in the late-nineteenth century when *samāʿ* was denounced, perhaps more vehemently than ever before, by the Muslim reformists of Deoband.

It was also during the same period that *samāʿ* acquired a specific function in the broader framework of Sufi practices. The conceptual distinction between *samāʿ* and other Sufi practices begins to emerge in *Siyar al-auliyaʿ*, where Amīr *Khvurd* links the former with the discourse of passionate love. Instead of discussing *samāʿ* together with techniques that aim at gradually purifying the heart through determined, quotidian practice, he links it with the overall goal of the Sufi path and portrays it as a space where a human lover can enact and realize his or her relationship with the divine beloved. The association of *samāʿ* with passionate love also led to focusing on love poetry during *samāʿ*. Poetry, especially when sung, was for Nizām al-Dīn and his followers a means to broaden the scope of language beyond its conventional boundaries so that it almost touched the reality that could not be expressed in words. In this function, it served the purpose of scaling the continuum of love from human to divine during *samāʿ*.

It is significant that Nizām al-Dīn was essentially interested in the practical side of *samāʿ*, not in its theory. The few theoretical passages stand in stark contrast with the numerous descriptions of *samāʿ* assemblies and the discussions on how to organize such an occasion so that it would best serve the purpose of being a meditative and ecstatic practice. In the Sultanate texts, the most important means to achieve this goal was *adab*. Nizām al-Dīn and his followers were of the opinion that the permissibility of *samāʿ*, as well as its effect on the listeners depended essentially on their motivations. However, they were difficult (if not impossible) to monitor, and so the *adab* that listen-

ers were expected to rigorously follow emerged as the Sufi master's primary tool to guide his disciples. On the one hand, *adab* sought to emphasize the religious character of *samā'* by insisting on ritual purity, refraining from talking, and sitting in rows, thereby associating it with ritual prayer. It also sought to limit the physical movements of listeners and thus facilitate listening that was undisturbed by outside distractions. When behaviours occurring during the mystical states moreover contradicted *adab* and manifested themselves as, for example, howling, leaping, crawling and tearing one's clothes, such restrictive rules also served as a touchstone of the authenticity of these states. If a listener strove to adhere to *adab* before succumbing to a mystical state, this state was likely genuine and his behaviour acceptable.

The approach to *samā'* arising from Nizām al-Dīn's paradigmatic example was further discussed and redefined by his late-Mughal followers Kalīm Allāh Shāhjahānābādī, Nizām al-Dīn Aurangābādī and Maulānā Fakhr al-Dīn Dihlavī. They continued to advocate *samā'* in an environment in which the Naqshbandi Mujaddidi opposition was becoming increasingly vehement. However, they also chose not to integrate the practice to the detailed, systematic scheme of meditative and contemplative techniques. This being the case, it would have been easy to de-emphasize the controversial practice in favour of universally accepted meditative techniques like *zīkr* and *murāqabah*. However, the late Mughal Chishtis kept cultivating the practice and they conveyed it to the new generations of Sufi disciples as a valuable element of the Chishti Nizami devotional regime.

The conceptual distinction between *samā'* and the rest of Sufi practices also crystallized during this period. Especially Kalīm Allāh, the most prolific author among the three masters, was influential in this respect. He explored various methods of *zīkr* and *murāqabah* in *Kashkūl*, wherein a mention of *samā'* appears only in the very end of the book. However, it is not a mere afterthought. Instead it links *samā'* to the overall goal of the Sufi practice, which for Kalīm Allāh is the bewilderment (*taḥayyur*, *ḥairat*) arising from the encounter with the immense beauty of the divine beloved. Kalīm Allāh thus follows *Siyar al-auliyā'*, but further adds a distinctly metaphysical dimension to *samā'*. The practice is not merely associated with passionate love, but also with the metaphysics of *vaḥdat al-vujūd* according to which the witnessing of the totality of God's self-disclosure inevitably leads to bewilderment.

The late Mughal Chishti Nizamis differed from their Sultanate predecessors in their specification of the most conducive approach to listening to *samā'*. While the latter had not clearly pronounced whether one should ideally stay in one's senses or lose them, the former tilted the balance in favour of a more sober approach. While they acknowledged the occurrence of states during which consciousness and understanding were lost, they frequently ascribed them to fledgeling Sufi disciples or to *majzūbs*, who are in the texts seen swooning after exhibiting unconventional and violent behaviours. Sufi masters, on the other hand, are no more shown crying and dancing like their Sul-

tanate predecessors. Their spiritual capacity manifests itself as a fully internalized state, and instead of dwelling in their personal experiences during *samāʿ*, they concentrate their efforts on guiding their disciples. Several passages in the late Mughal Sufi texts make retaining one's consciousness a prerequisite for better integration of different experiences arising during a *samāʿ* assembly into one's spiritual wayfaring.

Another facet of *samāʿ* that appears in the late Mughal sources is the broadening attendance. The Sultanate texts hint at the popular appeal of Niẓām al-Dīn's musical assemblies, but their focus is on Niẓām al-Dīn and his closest disciples. During the late Mughal period, the crowds literally forced their way into the Sufis' private gatherings. The Sufi masters themselves were reluctant to involve all and sundry, because it forced them to circumscribe the listeners' behaviour that might appear bizarre or frightening to the outsiders. Simultaneously, they acknowledged the significance of broad attendance for spreading their brotherhood and their interpretation of normative Islam. Consequently, they also encouraged the participation of everyone, both men and women, during the *ʿurs* festivities.

While one reason behind the popular interest in *samāʿ* was no doubt the voyeuristic desire to witness the Sufis' odd behaviour, refined music and poetry were not insignificant. Even though the written works of the three Chishti Nizami masters express a remarkably positive attitude towards music in general, they are taciturn when it comes to discussing the musical element of *samāʿ*. On the contrary, Dargāh Qulī Khān's travelogue *Muraqqaʿ-i Dihlī* and Khvājah Muḥammad Bulāq's hagiography *Shavāhid-i niẓāmī* portray the musical soirées organized in *dargāhs* and *khānqāhs* as significant components of the cultural life of Delhi. Especially the Nizamuddin shrine emerges in them as a centre of the celebrated qawwals' performances. The texts also highlight certain developments that characterize contemporary qawwali music. For example, the eighteenth-century qawwals performed as groups and were associated with song forms like *qaul*, *tarānah* and *badhāvah*, which still feature in the qawwali repertoires. They were also portrayed as the heirs of Amīr Khusrāu's musical and poetic legacy, and there are indications that their repertoires were growing apart from the textually transmitted poetical tradition. While contemporary qawwals are universally associated with Amīr Khusrāu, the connection does not yet appear in the Sultanate texts.

Even though both Sultanate and late Mughal Sufis had encountered opposition to *samāʿ*, the institution had flourished and remained part of the refined, high culture. In the late-nineteenth century, the reformist *ʿulamāʿ*'s efforts to launch virulent attacks against the practice and those who participated in it bore fruit; *samāʿ* and the music associated with it became increasingly perceived as something vulgar and deplorable in the eyes of their prominently middle-class followers.

However, the Sufis, many of whom were themselves reformists in the sense that they sought to define their interpretation of normative Islam by scriptural reasoning,

attempted to counter such criticism. In addition to writing numerous legal pamphlets, this entailed evoking the example of the past Sufi masters. This line of argumentation was especially relevant in the Indian context, where most reformists were Sufis and thus could not outright ignore their predecessors. Thus, those who denounced *samāʿ* emphasized the Sufis' warnings concerning the dire consequences of engaging in the practice with wrong motivations. Others, like Khwaja Hasan Nizami, focused on statements advocating the practice. He not only evoked the court case of Nizām al-Dīn in his hagiographical *Nizāmī bansurī*, but also incorporated passages that had thus far circulated only orally into the written tradition. The text also features, possibly for the first time in Indian Sufi literature, a first-person account of a mystical experience caused by *samāʿ*. It is significant that it is only in a work that combines hagiography and history with the narrative technique of a historical novel that such a description appears. Nizami's elaboration of Nizām al-Dīn's paradigmatic example attempts to demonstrate how absurd it is to denounce a practice that yields such powerful experiences and valuable results.

While the texts analysed in Part I of this study contain invaluable information about the dynamics of *samāʿ*, they say very little about poetry. The verses recorded in the context of *samāʿ* reveal that the poetry sung during these occasions discussed passionate love or *vujūdī* themes and was not didactic or devotional. All the quoted verses are Persian *rubāʿīs* or verses excerpted from ghazals, but the texts also mention the role of Hindi poetry. However, in order to study poetry in depth, one has to focus on twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Analysing qawwali repertoires is as challenging as analysing the practice of *samāʿ*. The repertoires are extremely fluid and accommodative. It is only in the ritual context that singing certain items is obligatory. Otherwise, the singers are able and even obliged to decide what they sing in each individual gathering. The poems available for qawwals to choose from cover texts written by both Sufis and non-Sufis in Persian, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi. The oldest texts are from the twelfth century, while new ones are constantly introduced. The perpetual transformation of the repertoires is evident from the fact that virtually none of the poems mentioned in the texts that are discussed in Part I of this study is sung by contemporary qawwals.

It is difficult to classify this vast range of texts in a meaningful way. For this reason, I suggested merely dividing them into core and varying parts of the repertoire. This makes understanding the role of individual poems in a given *samāʿ* assembly possible and facilitates an analysis of their reception. In this classification, the core repertoire comprises the classics and obligatory ritual items that any qawwal desiring to perform in a prominent shrine or to a connoisseur audience needs to know. The core repertoire is well-known among the listeners and songs belonging to it are, generally, well received. The varying repertoire covers the items that are sung in a particular shrine or *khānqāh* or in connection with particular rituals or celebrations. In addition, the sig-

nature songs of respective qawwals often belong to this class, although they can also be special versions of widely-known classics.

In order to piece together a more detailed picture about the general characteristics of qawwali repertoires, I analysed three twentieth-century poetic anthologies that were published for both the performers and listeners participating in *samāʿ*. When such collections are analysed together with recordings and contemporary performance practices, they offer interesting information about the developments of the repertoires and the reception of the works of any given poet. In this study, I focused on the works of two prominent authors, Jāmī and Amīr Khusrau.

Analysis of Jāmī's poems reveals that since the publication of Nūr al-Ḥasan's *Naghmāt-i samāʿ* in 1935, the selection of his poetry included in the qawwali repertoires has increasingly grown apart from the literary tradition. On the whole, the poems appearing in the qawwali anthologies and performances rarely replicate in full the literary version. Although, they usually bear a resemblance with it. In the case of Jāmī, however, the link between the qawwali repertoires and literary tradition has become tenuous. This development has gone hand in hand with the newly defined role allocated to Jāmī. He is no more an author of impassioned ghazals on love and *vijūdi* themes, but a *naʿt* poet par excellence who is best known for his praise of the Prophet.

The contrast between the orally transmitted qawwali repertoires and the literary tradition is even greater in the case of Amīr Khusrau. His poems are frequently associated with legendary accounts describing his interaction with his Sufi guide. Often these legendary accounts are associated with poems that are not part of the established literary tradition, but appear to have been attributed to him later. Most of Khusrau's Persian poems in the qawwali repertoires are not found in his *dīvāns*, and the first Hindi poems attributed to him appear in textual sources only in the eighteenth century. The Hindi repertoire is also being constantly elaborated through the qawwals' reattribution of poems to him. This is at least partly an attempt to answer to the increased demand for such texts. Although Persian skills have all but disappeared even among the South Asian Sufis, Khusrau's legendary fame has remained intact. In order to nonetheless provide patrons with texts they can understand, qawwals have started to emphasize and embellish his Hindi repertoire. A similar approach characterizes their attitude to the poems of Jāmī: the focus on *naʿt* poetry reflects the increased significance of the Prophet in the devotional life of South Asian Sufis and is an attempt to counteract the reformists' claim that he was merely a passive channel of God's revelation, who had no intercessory powers or a special ontological position as the first created being.

However, a study of poetry in *samāʿ* is bound to remain suggestive if it is solely based on literary anthologies, because each poem is distinctly, uniquely shaped during a performance through the interaction between the listeners and performers. The ethnographic section of this study discussed poetry and poetic communication in the

context of the ‘*urs*’ rituals at the Nizamuddin shrine and in four very different *samā’* assemblies organized in Delhi and Hyderabad. In the ritual context, the qawwals had to follow the prescribed order of songs, and they concentrated their efforts on boosting the already charged, jubilant atmosphere. However, in the other contexts they needed to carefully adapt their performances to the needs of the *mīr-i mahfil* and other listeners. It was also in these occasions that the listeners took a more active role in shaping the qawwals’ performances.

At the Chilla, the historical site of Niẓām al-Dīn’s *jamā’atkhānah*, the qawwals evoked the sacred history of the Chishti Nizami brotherhood by singing Persian and Hindi songs closely connected with the saint. They also emphasized the paradigmatic master-disciple relationship between Niẓām al-Dīn and Amīr *Kh*usrau in order to offer the contemporary Sufi disciples a chance to strengthen their bond with their guide, Khwaja Hasan Sani. It is also significant that Khwaja Hasan Sani’s position as a recognized connoisseur of poetry and music encouraged the qawwals to aspire for novelty in their performances. They tried to realize this goal either by singing rarely-heard poems or by adhering more closely to the conventions of classical music.

In the evening of the same day, the followers of the brotherhood gathered for *samā’* in Khwaja Hall. The occasion was more accommodating, and a greater number of qawwali groups performed. *Samā’* at Khwaja Hall was an excellent example of the unevenness that often characterizes long *samā’* assemblies. Virtuoso performances of celebrated qawwals like Mohammed Ahmed Warsi and Majid Warsi were followed by singing of amateur performers. However, even the former paled in comparison with the appearance of Shaheed Barelwi at the very end of the assembly. He sung a fairly well known Urdu ghazal by Niyāz, but his performance met with tremendous success and made the occasion uniquely special. Khwaja Hasan Sani, the *mīr-i mahfil*, shared with his disciples the meanings he had unearthed from the poem and thus trained them to deeply listen to the poetic text and place their expectations of the qawwals’ performances high. The subsequent history of Niyāz’s ghazal in Khwaja Hasan Sani’s *samā’* assemblies further illustrated the Sufi guide’s efforts to safeguard *samā’* from ossification. Having heard about the success of Shaheed Barelwi’s performance, other qawwals began to sing the poem in his *samā’* assemblies. However, after a couple of years, when the performances had lost their freshness, he stopped the qawwals from singing the poem like he had previously done in the case of other, once successful items.

At Anis Miyan’s home, *samā’* was organized outside the *dargāh* or *khānqāh* environment. Although the organizers made a conscious effort to replicate the ideal standard performances of the Nizamuddin shrine, the occasion resembled more a private musical concert or *mushā’irah* than a *samā’* assembly. As a consequence, the qawwals were also able to emphasize their status as artists. Iftekhhar Ahmed demonstrated his virtuosity with the song texts by showcasing his amazing ability to forge new combina-

tions of salient texts and adjunct items. He was so successful in enchanting the audience that even his abridgement of the iconic *Qaul* went unnoticed. When it was Ghulam Hasnain's turn to sing after him, he found it very difficult to affect the listeners after Iftekhār's performance. The latter part of the occasion shows how a *samā'* assembly can occasionally turn into a mere formality if the qawwals fail to engage the listeners' attention.

Samā' assumed a markedly different form at Khanqah-e-Kamil in Hyderabad. Being in no way attached to the Nizamuddin shrine or the Chishti Nizami brotherhood, the occasion featured a distinct selection of poetry. The obligatory ritual items *Qaul* and *Rang* were sung in their proper places, but otherwise the qawwals concentrated on the poetry of Kamil. Kamil has a legendary fame as a poet among his followers. Moreover, several senior listeners had a personal recollection of him, which turned the occasion into a celebration of his poetic and spiritual legacy. The majority of salient texts were written by Kamil, but the qawwals also wooed their listeners by employing excerpts from his poems as adjunct items. Furthermore, the listeners suggested to them suitable verses and, occasionally, corrected their reading of Kamil's poems.

Despite the divergent environments and the selection of poetry that varied accordingly, certain aspects concerning the textual content remained the same throughout the performances. Concentrating on these aspects facilitates a context-sensitive reading of poetry that takes the performance into consideration. A prominent characteristic of all the *samā'* assemblies studied above is the centrality of the poetic message and the richness and variegation of the textual content. The text overshadowed the music, and on several occasions, lengthy musical improvisations actually ruined the charged atmosphere created by poetry. In the case of Shaheed Barelwi's performance at Khwaja Hall, the *mīr-i mahfil* asked the qawwals to refrain from musical elaborations. Whenever the qawwals introduced new verses of the ghazal to the performance, he asked them to first repeat them without the instrumental accompaniment so that the listeners could fully grasp their meaning.

The qawwals' efforts to communicate the poetic message to the audience and the audience's efforts to understand it are also conspicuous. Regular repetition of poetic lines aside, devising refined combinations of verses relies precisely on the listeners' ability to catch the resulting meaning. Prefacing a salient text with a *rubā'ī* has little value if the listeners fail to appreciate the interconnectedness of the two. The same applies to the use of *girah* verses. Grasping the nuances introduced by the *girah* verses presumes the ability to reflect their meaning against the salient text into which they are inserted. Even *takrār* that can at its simplest resemble *zīkr*-like repetition of a saint's name can at best facilitate delving into the text and lead to unearthing entirely new and unpredicted meanings from the poetic images. In addition to these three basic techniques, the qawwals can take recourse to singing *tazmīns* that frequently preface Persian verses with commonly understood Urdu or Hindi lines, or alternate

between singing the Persian text and its Urdu translation. Such alternation between the different linguistic registers furthermore broadens the qawwals' scope to introduce varying, even contradictory poetic images and metaphors into a single performance.

The understanding of poetry in *samā'*, however, is not meant to be an intellectual exercise. When the ways the qawwals sing poetry in *samā'* assemblies are analysed in relation to the qualities of a good ghazal outlined by Frances Pritchett, it becomes evident that the performers emphasize the qualities that aim at evoking an immediate reaction in the audience. They prefer poetry that has an easily distinguishable soundscape by singing texts that feature symmetric metres whose rhythmic structure is clearly articulated. They emphasize the euphonic soundscape and capitalize on the sonic effects by employing them as a means to enunciate the semantic meaning, add cohesion to long performances whose textual content would otherwise remain disconnected, and smooth the transitions between different textual units.

In *samā'*, the qawwals build up the meaning of the poems step by step. The final fourth of the verse of a ghazal that reveals the full import of the poetic statement is frequently delayed so as to fully engage the listeners with the text. The same applies to the last line of quatrains that are employed as *rubā'īs* or *gīrah* verses. The qawwals intertwine this semantic suspense with music by employing the upper tonal register before returning to the lower register in the concluding statement of the text. The constant alternation between musical and textual suspense and relief aims at intensifying the existent feelings of the listeners and inducing the sudden, immediate and potentially overpowering effect that characterizes the practice of *samā'*.

The emphasis on the sudden, immediate effect has also led to favouring accessible poetic themes (*mazmūn*) during *samā'*. The cerebral *mazmūns* cultivated by the *tāzagū'ī* poets are conspicuously absent. Instead, the qawwals favour straightforward verses featuring *kaifīyyat* and *shorish* that aim at producing powerful moods of melancholy and energetic vigour, respectively. In addition, they employ verses whose meaning is purposely manifold and susceptible to myriads of interpretations that vary from one *samā'* assembly and one listener to another. The emphasis on accessible *mazmūns*, however, does not necessarily entail simplifying the poetic message. The qawwals frequently capitalize on the interconnectedness of poetic images. Focusing on well-known *mazmūns* has the advantage of evoking an entire range of associated *mazmūns* without needing to explicitly state them.

The *mazmūns* evoked in the poems engage the listeners with two themes that penetrate both the dynamics of *samā'* as described in the textual sources and the content of poems performed by the qawwals: passionate love and bewilderment.

Metaphorical language revolving around the poetic imagery related to passionate love characterizes most of the texts performed in *samā'* assemblies. It also defines the majority of devotional poems, in which the Prophet or a Sufi saint frequently assumes the role of the beloved. Bewilderment, on the other hand, arises from the paradoxical

use of language. As the verses escape reason and leave the mind ricocheting between logically contradictory statements, they provide a tangible flavour of the bewilderment that lies in the heart of the *vujūdi* worldview.

The paradoxes and ambiguities that define *samāʿ* and the poetry performed during *samāʿ* assemblies are a main factor that makes the practice so effective and versatile. Because of this versatility, the Chishti Nizami masters have recognized the usefulness of the practice for both newcomers and advanced practitioners. The listeners' experiences of the poetic metaphors and music initially arise from the metaphorical, corporeal level. However, the entire organization of a *samāʿ* assembly – the *adab*, the hallowed physical environment, the presence of a Sufi guide and the background of the listeners' religious observance – aims at creating an environment where these experiences can be incorporated into their spiritual practice.

Even when the poetry performed by qawwals is regulated by the literary conventions and is thus predictable, it becomes alive during *samāʿ*. The qawwals break the balance of the written poetic text and turn it into a dynamic tool for creating powerful sensations. In *samāʿ*, poetry does not teach or preach, but builds on the listeners' pre-existing experiences, feelings and knowledge. While these are a prerequisite for poetry to function as a tool for religious practice, the qawwals' performances simultaneously aim at breaking the habitual patterns of thinking and introducing a new, immediate way of perceiving the subject matter of the poetic statements. Poetry performed in *samāʿ* facilitates a religious discourse that does not rely on reason, argumentation and logical conclusions unlike expository prose or didactic poetry. Instead, it thrives on poetic associations that acquire their specific, ideally spiritual meaning only in relation to the listener's worldview.

By focusing on the poetic communication between the performers and audience instead of the authors, I have emphasized the role of poetry as a means to create experiences, not just to describe them. Even if a ghazal or *gīt* was based on the author's genuine mystical experience, it is ultimately his ability to creatively use poetic language in the limits of literary conventions that turns his texts effective and renders them suitable for performance in *samāʿ*. Because of this, the question of whether a poem is mystical or profane, written by a Sufi or a professional poet, is irrelevant. It is more fruitful to focus on the dynamics of the poetic language, performance strategies and the characteristics of the performance context in an attempt to define what it is in the poetic text that entices the particular response in the audience.

In this study, I have analysed the use of poetry in *samāʿ* by concentrating on its application in the actual performance context. However, the results of this analysis can potentially be applied to the literary texts as well. Is it possible to see similar use of poetic conventions, similar ways to discuss passionate love and metaphysical questions in the works of authors who operated in an environment where *samāʿ* was the primary venue of communicating their texts to the audiences and who possibly wrote their

texts keeping the musical performance in mind? While I intend to undertake this project in the future, I hope that this study proves useful for scholars who study Sufi practice and poetry in performance, as well as for those who simply profess interest in qawwali music and Sufi poetry.

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APPENDIX: TRANSLITERATED TEXTS OF THE POEMS DISCUSSED IN CHAPTERS
6.3 TO 6.6

Chapter 6.3 Sacred history and lived present: *samā'* at the meditation cell of Nizām
al-Dīn

Item 1: *Qaul* (in Arabic)

Qaul and *tarānah* man kuntu maulā fa-‘aliyyun maulā

dar dil dar dil dar dānī
ham tum tanā nānā nā tanānānā re
yalālī yalālī yalā lālālī
yalā lālā yalā lālā yalā lālālī

man kuntu maulā fa-‘aliyyun maulā

1st *girah* (in Persian) bāshad īmān-i musalmān muṣḥaf-i rū-yi ‘alī
sajdagāh-i mā’sṭ miḥrāb-i kham-i abrū-yi ‘alī

Qaul man kuntu maulā fa-‘aliyyun maulā

2nd *girah* (in Persian) ḥaidari-y-am qalandar am mast am
bandah-yi murtaẓā ‘alī hastam
peshvā-yi tamām-i rindān am
kih sag-i kū-yi sher-i yazdān am

Qaul man kuntu maulā fa-‘aliyyun maulā

3rd *girah* (in Persian) zahe ‘izz o jalāl-e bū turāb-e fakḥr-i insān-e
‘alī-yi murtaẓā mushkilkushā-e sher-i yazdān-e

valī-yi haqq vaṣī-yi muṣṭafā daryā-yi faizān-e
imām-i do jahān-e qiblah-yi dīn-e o imān-e

amīr-i kishvar-i faqr-e shah-i iqlīm-i ‘irfān-e
khudāgū-e khudādān-e khudābīn-e khudāshān-e

payambar bar sar-i minbar nishast o khvānad maulā-y-ash
kih tā maulā’i-y-ash rā bāshad andar khalq burhān-e

niyāz andar qiyāmat be-sar o sāmān nah khvāhī shud
kih az ḥubb o tavallā-yi ‘alī dāri to sāmān-e

Qaul man kuntu maulā fa-‘aliyyun maulā

4th *girah* (in Urdu; the last verse repeated twice) yā shāh-i najaf sher-i khudā sāqī-yi kauṣar khaibar-shikan o safdar o ghāzī-yi dilāvar

sab ḥāl merā āp pih roshan hai sarāsar
māyūs hūn majbūr hūn ghabrā’ūn nah kyoñ-kar

is vaqt madad kijiye yih vaqt-i madad hai
yā shāh-i najaf tum ko muḥammad kī qasam hai

Qaul man kuntu maulā fa-‘aliyyun maulā

5th *girah* (in Persian; the last verse repeated twice) tā šūrāt-i paivand-i jahān būd ‘alī būd
tā naqsh-i zamīn būd zamān būd ‘alī būd

shāh-e kih vaṣī būd valī būd ‘alī būd
sulṭān-i sakhā o karam o jūd ‘alī būd

ān shāh-i sarfarāz kih andar shab-i mi‘rāj
bā aḥmad-i mukhtār yak-e būd ‘alī būd

Qaul man kuntu maulā fa-‘aliyyun maulā

6th *girah* (in Persian) to sulṭān-i ṣāhib sarīr āmadī...

5th *girah* repeated tā šūrāt-i paivand-i jahān būd ‘alī būd
tā naqsh-i zamīn būd zamān būd ‘alī būd

5th *girah* elaborated **yak-e būd ‘alī būd**

‘alī hast ‘alī būd

‘alī hast ‘alī hast ‘alī būd ‘alī būd

‘alī hast ‘alī būd ‘alī hast ‘alī būd

ān shāh-i sarfarāz kih andar shab-i mi‘rāj
bā aḥmad-i mukhtār yak-e būd ‘alī būd

Qaul and tarānah man kuntu maulā fa-‘aliyyun maulā
dar dil dar dil dar dānī

ham tum tanā nānā nā tanānānā re
yalālī yalālī yalā lālālī
yalā lālā yalā lālā yalā lālālī

man kuntu maulā

Item 2: *Rang* (in Hindi)

Rang āj rang hai (calo rī) e mān rang hai rī
mere maḥbūb ke ghar rang hai rī
sajnā milāvarā (mere maḥbūb milāvarā) anad badhāvarā (more ghar)
is āngan meñ (dekho)

mohe pīr pāyo
nijām al-dīn auliyā' nijām al-dīn auliyā' (mere khvājah)
mohe pīr pāyo (āhe āhe āhe vāh)

1st *gīrah* (in Urdu; repeated twice) kaun hai mere sivā ṣāḥib-i taqdir aisā
mil gayā mujh ko muqaddar se merā pīr aisā

Rang **mohe pīr pāyo** (āhe āhe āhe vāh)

2nd *gīrah* (in Urdu) shaidā fidā fareftah dīvānah sheftah
sab apne apne pīr ke main apne pīr kā

Rang **mohe pīr pāyo** (āhe āhe āhe vāh)
nijām al-dīn auliyā' nijām al-dīn auliyā' (mere khvājah)
nijām al-dīn auliyā' jag ujiyāro
jag ujiyāro jagat ujiyāro
nijām al-dīn auliyā' nijām al-dīn auliyā' nijām al-dīn auliyā' nijām al-dīn auliyā'
main to aiso rang aur (maḥbūb-i ilāhī) nahīn dekhī nijām al-dīn

3rd *gīrah* (in Hindi) kach jagmag jagmag hovat hai
vuh jo oṛhī cunariyā sovat hai
ganj-i shakkar ke bhes meñ
maḥbūb pyārā sovat hai

Rang main to aiso rang aur (maḥbūb-i ilāhī)

4th *gīrah* (in Hindi) khusrau rain suhāg kī jo jāgī pī ke sang
tan morā man pihū kā so donoñ ek hī rang

Rang main to aiso rang aur (maḥbūb-i ilāhī) nahīn dekhī nijām al-dīn
main torā rang man bhāyo

Item 3: A *mubārak* in Persian

- 1st verse ʿīd-gāh-i mā ḡharībān kū-yi to
inbisāṭ-i ʿīd didan rū-yi to
- 2nd verse ṣad hilāl-i ʿīd qurbān-at kunam
e hilāl-i mā kham-i abrū-yi to
- 3rd verse yā nizām al-dīn maḥbūb-i ilāh
jumlah maḥbūbān fidā bar rū-yi to
- 4th verse muflisān īm āmadah dar kū-yi to
shaiʿan liʿllāh az jamāl-i rū-yi to
- 5th verse dast bu-kshā jānib-i zanbīl-i mā
āfrīn bar dast o bar bāzū-yi to
- 6th verse man cih dānam kaʿbah o butkhānah rā
sajdah mī sāzam ba-sū-yi rū-yi to
- 7th verse cand mī pursī kih khusrau rā kih kusht
ghamzah-yi to cashm-i to abrū-yi to

Item 4: An individual *shiʿr*

bi-nāl pesh-i dar-ash khusravā kih ān sulṭān
shinakhtast kih īn nālah-yi gadā-yi man ast

Item 5: A *manqabat* in Persian

- 1st verse dilā dast-i ṭalab bu-kshā ba-dargāh-i shahanshāh-e
nizām al-dīn vaʿl-millat alaih raḥmatuʿllāh-e
- 2nd verse amīr-i ʿālamārā-e zahīr-i dīn o dunyā-e
shahanshāh-e ʿalijāh-e nabīshān-e ḥaqqāgāh-e
- 3rd verse durr-i daryā-yi tajrīd-e gul-i bustān-i tafrīd-e
ba-shakl o ṣurat-i insān numāyān zāt-i allāh-e
- 4th verse zi-shauq-i ʿishq-i maḥbūb-i ilāhī ān-cunān gashtam

kih taşvīr-am muşavvir dar kashad bar şūrat-i āh-e

5th verse cih gham dārī niyāz az raftan-i tanhā az īn ‘ālam
kih sulṭān al-masha’ikh yār-i jān-i tu’sṭ o ham-rāh-e

Item 6: A ghazal in Persian

<alāp>

1st verse jān zi-tan burdī o dar jān ī hanūz
dardhā dādī o darmān ī hanūz

2nd verse mulk-i dil kardī kharāb az tegh-i nāz
<ākār tān>
v’andar īn vīrānah sulṭān ī hanūz

3rd verse **har do ‘ālam qīmat-i khvud guftah ī**
nirkh bālā kun ki arzānī hanūz

4th verse pīrī o shāhidparastī nā-khvush ast
khusravā tā kai pareshān ī hanūz

Item 7: A manqabat in Persian

1st *rubā’ī* ba-girdāb-i balā uftādah kashti
za’ifān-i shikastah rā dih to pushti
ba-ḥaqq-i khvājah-yi ‘uṣmān-i hārūn
madad kun yā mu’īn al-dīn cishti

1st verse khvājah-yi khvājagān mu’īn al-dīn
fakhr-i kaun o makān mu’īn al-dīn

2nd verse sirr-i ḥaqq rā bayān mu’īn al-dīn
be-nishān rā nishān mu’īn al-dīn

3rd verse mazḥar o <-i> jalvagāh-i nūr-i qīdam
āftāb-i jahān mu’īn al-dīn

4th verse khvājah-yi lā-makān o quds maqām
āsmānāstān mu’īn al-dīn

5th verse **qurb-i ḥaqq e niyāz agar khvāhī**
sāz vird-i zabān mu’īn al-dīn
<ākār tān>

1st verse khvājah-yi khvājagān mu‘īn al-dīn

Chapter 6.4 Guiding Sufi disciples through music and poetry: *samā‘* at Khwaja Hall

Item 1: A *qit‘ah* in Persian

naghmah-yi quddūsī

<alāp>

1st *rubā‘ī* (in ‘umr-e bar āstān-i to sūdam sar-i niyāz
Persian) shāyad shavam ba-bazm-i viṣāl-i to sarfarāz

cūn bandah rā az khvājah buvad cashm-i nekū-e
mā bandah īm o khvājah tu’ī kār-i mā bi-sāz

1st verse ba-khāk-i dargah-i to jabīn-i niyāz-i mā
qurbān-i yak nigāh-i to ‘umr-i darāz-i mā

1st *gīrah* (in terī ek nigāh kī bāt hai
Urdu) merī zindagī kā savāl hai

1st verse qurbān-i yak nigāh-i to ‘umr-i darāz-i mā

2nd *gīrah* (in roshan az ‘aks-i jamāl-ash ‘ālam-i imkān-i mā
Persian) yak nigāh-i nāz-i jānān qīmat-i īmān-i mā

1st verse qurbān-i yak nigāh-i to ‘umr-i darāz-i mā

2nd verse mā kih kunīm rū ba-shifākhānah-yi masīḥ
la’l-i shakkarfarosh-i to bas cārasāz-i mā

3rd verse dar kunj-i zūlmat-am guzarad ṭal‘at-at gāh-e
e āftāb-i ‘ālam-i zarrānavāz-i mā

1st verse qurbān-i yak nigāh-i to

Item 2: A *gīt* in Hindi

1st *rubā‘ī* (in tā zi-maikhānah o mai nām o nishān khvāhad būd
Persian) sar-i mā khāk-i rāh-i pīr-i mughān khvāhad būd

bar zamīn-e kih nishān-i kaf-i pā-yi to khvāhad būd
sālḥā sajdah-yi ṣāḥib-i naẓarān khvāhad būd

Gīt **meharvā** ras būndan barse (morī gu'iyā)
khvājagān ke darbāran meñ
āj dekho ghan ghan ke hai
meharvā ras būndan barse (morī gu'iyā)
khvājah 'uṣmān aur khvājah mu'īn al-dīn
quṭb al-dīn aur ganj-i shakkar maḥbūb-i ilāhī
bābā ganj-i shakkar maḥbūb-i ilāhī
<*ākār tān*>
āj amīr-i shu'arā' nijām al-dīn ke lāl ke dvāre

Item 3: A *gīt* in Hindi

Gīt ganj shakkar ke lāl nijām al-dīn cisht nagar meñ phāg racayo
khvājah mu'īn al-dīn aur quṭb al-dīn prem ke rang kī rainī caṛhāyo
pīr nijām al-dīn catur khilārī bayyāñ pakar morā ghūnghṭā uṭhāyo
sīs mukuṭ hāthan pickārī rang ḍaṛo aur madhvā pilayo
apne rangīle ke bedam vārī jin mohe lāl gulāl banāyo

Item 4: A ghazal in Urdu

1st *rubā'ī* (in ik dīn vuh mil ga'e the sar-i rahguzar kahīñ
Urdu) phir dil ne baiṭhne nah diyā 'umr bhar kahīñ

2nd *rubā'ī* (in azal meñ jo ṣadā main ne sunī thī kaif o mastī meñ
Urdu) vuhī āvāz ab tak sun rahā hūñ sāz-i hastī meñ

tumhāre hī karam se merī hastī ho ga'ī hastī

1st verse kis se pūcheñ ham ne kahāñ vuh cihrah-yi roshan dekhā hai
maḥfil maḥfil...

1st *rubā'ī* ik dīn vuh mil ga'e the sar-i rahguzar kahīñ
phir dil ne baiṭhne na diyā 'umr bhar kahīñ

1st verse kis se pūcheñ ham ne kahāñ...

Item 5: A ghazal in Persian

naghma

<*alāp*>

1st *rubā'ī* (in e sarv-i nāzanīn...e sarv-i nāz raunaq-i bustān-i man tu'ī
Persian) <*ākār tān*>

2nd *rubā'ī* (in qaṣr-i jannat cih kunam kūcah-yi yār-e dāram

Persian)	tars-i dozakh cih kunam rū-yi nigār-e dāram hamcū majnūn ba-tamannā-yi viṣāl-i lailā roz o shab cashm sū-yi nāqasavār-e dāram
1 st verse	az ḥusn-i maliḥ-i khvud shor-e ba-jahān kardī har zakhmī-yi bismil rā maṣrūf-i fughān kardī
2 nd verse	madhosh ba-yak sāghar e pīr-i mughān kardī dil burdī o jān burdī betāb o tavān kardī
3 rd verse	be-jurm o khaṭā qatl-am az nāz-i butān kardī khvud tegh zadī bar man nām-i digarān kardī
4 th verse	īn jāmi-yi be-cārah dar ‘ishq-i to āvārah āvārah-yi qurb-at rā dar khāk nihān kardī

Item 6: A ghazal in Persian

1 st verse	har shab man am futādah ba-gird-i sarā-yi to har roz āh o nālah kunam az barā-yi to
2 nd verse	jānā ba-īn shikastadil-e be-vafā ma-shau ‘umr-e guzasht tā shudam āshnā-yi to
3 rd verse	roz-e ki zarrah zarrah shavad ustukhvān-i man bāshad hanūz dar dil-i rez-am havā-yi to
4 th verse	bar ḥāl-i zār-i man naẓar-e kun zi-rāh-i luṭf to bādshāh-i ḥusn ī o khusrau gadā-yi to
1 st <i>gīrah</i> (in Persian; repeated twice)	bandah jāmi pīr shud hamcūn ghulāmān bar dar-at raḥm kun e shāh-i khūbān bar gadā-yi zār-i khvesh
4 th verse	bar ḥāl-i zār-i man naẓar-e kun zi-rāh-i luṭf to bādshāh-i ḥusn ī o khusrau gadā-yi to < <i>ākār tān</i> >

Item 7: A ghazal in Urdu

	< <i>alāp</i> >
1 st <i>rubāʿī</i> (in Urdu)	tirā dast-i jūd darāz hai tirā har ghulām ayāz hai mujhe jis ke luṭf pih nāz hai vuh tū hī to bandanavāz hai

- 1st verse kaunsā ghar hai kih e jān nahīn kāshānah tirā
 aur jilaukhānah tirā
 maikadah terā hai ka‘bah tirā butkhānah tirā
 sab hai jānānā tirā
- 2nd verse tū kisi shakl meñ ho main tirā shaidā‘ī hūn
 tirā saudā‘ī hūn
 tū agar sham‘ hai e dost to main parvānah tirā
 ya‘nī dīvānah tirā
- 3rd verse **tere darvāze pih ḥāzīr hai tire dar ke faqīr**
 e amīroñ ke amīr
mujh pih bhī ho kabhī (mere jānā, jān-i jānā) **alṭāf-i karīmānah tirā**
 luṭf-i shāhānah tirā
- 4th verse mujh ko bhī jān ko‘ī pīr-i kharābāt mile
 terī khairāt mile
 tā qayāmat (e mere jānā, jān-i jānā) yūnhī jāri rahe maikhānah tirā
 ya‘nī paimānah tirā
- 5th verse ṣadqah maikhāne kā sāqī mujhe be-hoshī de
khvudfarāmoshī de
 yūn to sab kahte hai bedam tujhe mastānah tirā
 ya‘nī dīvānah tirā

Item 8: A *manqabat* in Urdu

naghmah

<alāp>

- 1st *rubā‘ī* (in Urdu) kis ko ham apnā kaheñ pīr hamārā tū hai
 ham ghariboñ kā agar hai to sahārā tū hai
 ham to mar-kar bhī na choṛeñge tirā dāman-i pāk
 dīn o dunyā merā agar hai to sahārā tū hai
- 2nd *rubā‘ī* (in Urdu) mere makhdūm ṣābir ke ko‘ī luṭfeñ ko kyā jāne
 ‘alī jāne khudā jāne muḥammad muṣṭafā jāne
- 1st verse main dīvānah hūn shaidā hūn ‘alā’ al-dīn ṣābir kā
 vuh maulā hai main bandah hūn ‘alā’ al-dīn ṣābir kā
- 2nd verse jo cāhe faiz-i rūḥānī kare is dar kī darbānī
 ravān hai faiz kā daryā ‘alā’ al-dīn ṣābir kā
- 3rd verse mai-yi vaḥdat ke matvālo sharāb-i ṣābirī pī lo

khulā hai āj maikhānah ‘alā’ al-dīn ṣābir kā

- 5th verse carhi’e ṣābirī rainī dar-i ḥāfiẓ pih e yāro
rangā lo rang sar tā pā ‘alā’ al-dīn ṣābir kā
- 6th verse yih ḥasrat bandah-yi ḥāfiẓ vuh ḥāfiẓ maẓhar-i ṣābir
kih nūr hai yih nūr-i yaktā ‘alā’ al-dīn ṣābir kā
- 1st verse maiñ dīvānah hūn shaidā hūn ‘alā’ al-dīn ṣābir kā

Item 9: A ghazal in Urdu

<alāp>

- 1st *rubā’ī* (in Urdu) apnā ḡham de-ke mirī rūḥ ko masrūr banā
dil ke har zaḡhm ko ristā hu’ā nāsūr banā
merī hastī kisī qābil to banā de e dost
shams tabrez banā sarmad maṣūr banā
- 1st verse ‘ishq meñ tere koh-i ḡham sar pih liyā jo ho so ho (koh-i ḡham)
‘aish o nishāṭ-i zindagī choṛ diyā jo ho so ho
- 2nd verse mujh se marīẓ ko ṭabīb hāth mat apnā tū lagā
- 1st *gīrah* (in Urdu) <ākār tān>
hai dil-navāz...
- 2nd verse mujh se marīẓ ko ṭabīb hāth mat apnā tū lagā
is ko khudā pih choṛ de **bahr-i khudā jo ho so ho**
- Elaboration of the 2nd verse **jo ho so ho**
bahr-i khudā jo ho so ho
jo ho so ho
- 3rd verse hijr kī jab muṣibateñ arz kī us ke rū ba-rū
nāz o adā (adā adā se, nāz o adā) **se muskurā kahne lagā jo ho so ho**
jo ho so ho
- 4th verse ‘aql ke madrase se uṭh ‘ishq ke maikade meñ ā
jām-i fanā o be-khvudī ab to piyā jo ho so ho

1st verse 'ishq meñ tere koh-i gham sar pih liyā jo ho so ho (koh-i gham)
'aish o nishāt-i zindagī choṛ diyā jo ho so ho

jo ho so ho

1st verse sar pih liyā jo ho so ho (koh-i gham)

1st verse 'ishq meñ tere koh-i gham sar pih liyā jo ho so ho
'aish o nishāt-i zindagī choṛ diyā jo ho so ho

2nd verse mujh se marīz ko ṭabīb hāth mat apnā tū lagā
is ko khudā pih choṛ de bahr-i khudā jo ho so ho

jo ho so ho

4th verse 'aql ke madrase se uṭh 'ishq ke maikade me ā
jām-i fanā o be-khvudī ab to piyā jo ho so ho

3rd verse hijr kī jab muṣībateñ arz kī us ke rū ba-rū
nāz o adā se muskurā kahne lagā jo ho so ho

jo ho so ho

4th verse 'aql ke madrase se uṭh 'ishq ke maikade meñ ā

2nd *gīrah* (in jabhī jā-ke maktab-i 'ishq meñ sabak-i maqām-i fanā liyā
Urdu; jo likhā parhā thā niyāz ne use sāf dil se bhulā diyā
repeated
twice)

4th verse 'aql ke madrase se uṭh **'ishq ke maikade meñ ā**

3rd *gīrah* (in yih madrasah nahīn vā'iz uṭhā kitāb uṭhā
Urdu) yih maikadah hai yahāñ lazzat-i sharāb uṭhā

4th verse **'ishq ke maikade meñ ā**

4th *gīrah* (in ulṭī hī cāl calte haiñ dīvānagān-i 'ishq
Urdu; āñkhoñ ko band karte haiñ dīdār ke liye
repeated
twice)

4th verse **'ishq ke maikade meñ ā**

5th *gīrah* (in unheñ to nāz ke parde meñ kaun dekhegā

Urdu)	unhīn ke shakl ko har shai meñ dekhtā hūn main
4 th verse	‘ishq ke maikade meñ ā
6 th <i>girah</i> (in Urdu)	rag o pai meñ āg bharak uṭhī phūnke hai paṛā sabhī tan badan tū ne sāqiyā mai-yi ātishīn kā yih jān kaisā pilā diyā
4 th verse	‘aql ke madrase se uṭh ‘ishq ke maikade meñ ā jām-i fanā o be- <u>kh</u> vudī ab to piyā jo ho so ho
5 th verse	lāg kī āg lagte hī puñba namaṭ yih jal gayā <u>ra</u> kh-t-i vujūd o jān o tan kuch nah bacā jo ho so ho
6 th verse	pūcho nah mujh <u>kh</u> arāb se yāro ṣalāḥkār tum apne to ab nahīn rahe hosh ba-jā jo ho so ho
7 th verse	hastī ke is sarāb meñ rāt kī rāt bas rahe subḥ-i ‘adam hu’ī namūd pānūn uṭhā jo ho so ho
8 th verse	dunyā ke nek o bad se kām ham ko niyāz kuch nahīn āp se jo guzar gayā phir use kyā jo ho so ho jo ho so ho
1 st verse	‘ishq meñ tere koh-i <u>gh</u> am sar pih liyā jo ho so ho ‘aish o nishāṭ-i zindagī choṛ diyā jo ho so ho
8 th verse	dunyā ke nek o bad se kām ham ko niyāz kuch nahīn āp se jo guzar gayā phir use kyā jo ho so ho

Chapter 6.5 A *samā’* assembly at the home of Anis Ashrafi in Old Delhi

Item 1: *Qaul* in Arabic

naghmah-yi quddūsī

<alāp>

1 st <i>rubā’ī</i> (in Urdu)	kabhī dīvār hiltī hai kabhī dar kāñp jātā hai ‘alī kā nām sun-ke ab bhī <u>kh</u> aibar kāñp jātā hai
2 nd <i>rubā’ī</i> (in Persian)	nivishtah bar dar-i firdaus dar dīvān-i qazā nabī rasūl valī’ahd ḥaidar-i karrār

3 rd <i>rubāʿī</i> (in Persian)	ba-dushmanān-am az īn ḥāfiẓā tavallā kun nishāṭ-i <u>kh</u> vesh ṭalab kun bā jān hast jihād
<i>Qaul</i>	man kuntu maulā
1 st <i>girah</i> (in Urdu)	mazḥar-i raḥmat-i kibriyā ban ga'e tangdastī meñ dast-i <u>kh</u> udā ban ga'e ʿumr mushkil meñ sārī guzārī magar sārī dunyā ke mushkilkushā ban ga'e
<i>Qaul</i>	maulā ʿalī maulā
2 nd <i>girah</i> (in Hindi)	ʿalī jī vir ho balvān ho dhartīpitā tum ho kaṭhinhāre jagat ke ishvar ke sūrmā tum ho anokhī tumrī lilā hai nahīn maʿlūm kyā tum ho kahīn parmātmā tum ho kahīn dharmātmā tum ho
<i>Qaul</i>	maulā ʿalī maulā
3 rd <i>girah</i> (in Urdu; repeated twice)	dahr ne jab <u>gh</u> am-i lādavā de diyā ḥaqq ne maulā ʿalī kā patā de diyā mushkileñ <u>kh</u> vud hī pīchā cukāne lagīn par ʿalī kā unheñ vāṣṭa de diyā
<i>Qaul</i>	maulā ʿalī maulā
4 th <i>girah</i> (in Urdu)	zāhn o dil meñ ho jis ke saccāʿī us kā har lafẓ tīr hotā hai vuh jahān meñ <u>gh</u> arīb kaise ho us kā maulā kā tīr hotā hai
<i>Qaul</i>	maulā ʿalī maulā
5 th <i>girah</i> (in Persian)	zahe ʿizz o jalāl-e bū turāb-e fakḥr-i insān-e ʿalī-yi murtaẓā mushkilkushā-e sher-i yazdān-e valī-yi haqq vaṣī-yi muṣṭafā daryā-yi faizān-e imām-i do jahān-e qiblah-yi dīn-e o imān-e niyāz andar qiyāmat be-sar o sāmān nah <u>kh</u> vāhī shud kih az ḥubb o tavallā-yi ʿalī dārī to sāmān-e
<i>Qaul</i>	maulā ʿalī maulā

- 6th *gīrah* (in Urdu) har ek bazm meñ ḍhūñḍhā caragh-i dil le-kar
qasam khudā kī ‘alī kā javāb mil nah sakā
- Qaul* maulā ‘alī maulā
- 7th *gīrah* (in Urdu) laḥd meñ tazkirah-yi bū turāb kar dūngā
har ek savāl ko main lājavāb kar dūngā
farishto ṭhahro na mujh se koī savāl karo
‘alī ko āne do sārā ḥisāb kar dūngā
- Qaul* maulā ‘alī maulā
- 8th *gīrah* (in Urdu) kyoñ satāte ho laḥd meñ mujh ko e munkir nakīr
main ḡhulām-i panjtan hūñ tum ne pahcānā nahīñ
- Qaul* maulā ‘alī maulā
- 9th *gīrah* (in Urdu and Persian) laḥd meñ mujh se farishtoñ ne jab savāl kiyā
batā tū apne nabī aur imān kā batlā
agarcih murdah thā lekin sambhal-ke baiṭh gayā
khudā ke ba‘d muḥammad kā nām le-ke kahā
‘alī imām-i man ast o man am ḡhulām-i ‘alī
hazār nām-i girāmī fidā ba-nām-i ‘alī
- Qaul* maulā ‘alī maulā
- 10th *gīrah* (in Urdu; repeated thrice) nabī rasūl-i khudā hai nabī kā kyā kahnā
nabī ke dharm meñ har ek fard lājavāb āyā
‘alī jab ā’e to islām kā nah lab bandhtā
ḥusain ā’e to islām ko shabāb āyā
- Qaul* maulā ‘alī maulā
- 11th *gīrah* (in Urdu) khudā ke sher kā rutbah baṛā nirālā hai
mere ‘alī ko rasūl-i khudā ne pālā hai
‘alī kī zāt-i girāmī to sab se ‘alā hai
‘alī kā sārē zamāne meñ vuhī bālā hai
- Qaul* maulā ‘alī maulā
- 12th *gīrah* (in Urdu) sajdah yih kaisā pesh-i khudā kar ga’e ḥusain
ummat kā sārā qarḷ adā kar ga’e ḥusain
sajdah nahīñ hai ab to yih sajde kī naql hai

sajdah to karbalā meñ adā kar ga'e ḥusain

Qaul maulā 'alī maulā

13th *gīrah* (in Urdu) rāḥat-i dil ke vāṣṭe khvurshīd
lab pih maulā kī guftgū rakhnā
un kā dīdār hone-vālā hai
abhī āñkhoñ ko bāvuzū rakhnā

Qaul maulā 'alī maulā

14th *gīrah* (in Urdu) 'alī ke qurbān har valī hai
jidhar bhī dekho 'alī 'alī hai

Qaul and tarānah maulā 'alī maulā
maulā 'alī 'alī 'alī maulā 'alī 'alī

ham tum tanā nānā nā tanānānā re
yalālī yalālī yalā lālālī
yalā lālā yalā lālā yalā lālālī

Item 2: *Rang* in Hindi

1st *rubā'ī* (in Hindi) rainī caḥī rasūl kī so rang maulā ke hāth
jin kā jholā rang gayo so vā ke dhan dhan bhāg

Rang āj rang hai rī māñ rang hai rī
mere maḥbūb ke ghar rang hai rī (calo calo rī sakhī rī)
maiñ ne pīr pāyo nijām al-dīn auliyā'
(nijām al-dīn ṣābir 'alā' al-dīn auliyā')

1st *gīrah* (in Hindi) bābā farīd ke dekho to ghāṭiyāñ
ek ṣūrat kī do hī mūratiyāñ

Rang khvājah nijām al-dīn ṣābir 'alā' al-dīn

2nd *gīrah* (in Urdu) kaun hai mere sivā ṣāḥib-i taqdir aisā
mil gayā mere muqaddar se merā pīr aisā

Rang khvājah nijām al-dīn ṣābir 'alā' al-dīn

3rd *gīrah* (in Hindi) aise rang de rang nā chūṭe
ḍūbī āñkhoñ se cāhe sārī 'umariyā

īd ke dhan main to macariyān
khājah nijām se lāgan najariyā

Rang jo tū māṅge rang kī rangā'ī (e Maulā ṣābir, ganj shakkar ke lāl, khvāja farīd ke lāl)
merā joban girvī rakh le rangīle (maḥbūb-i ilāhī)

4th *girah* (in Urdu) ek se baḥ-kar ek ḥasīn hai
tum jaisā to ko'ī nahīn hai

Rang merā joban girvī rakh le rangīle (maḥbūb-i ilāhī 'alī aḥmad ṣābir)

5th *girah* (in Urdu) do mast ānkheñ darāz kākul tanā hai abrū to tīr mizhdān
hazār ghamze har-ik adā meñ hazār fitne naẓar meñ pinhān
nigāheñ mīṭhī adā'eñ bānkī ba-ghamzah mastī ba-nāz shokhī
naẓāreñ jādūbharī hai us kī na jā'ūn main kaise ab kahīn mān

Rang merā joban girvī rakh le rangīle (maḥbūb-i ilāhī)

6th *girah* (in Hindi) jo tan lāge vuhī tan jāne
man kī batiyān kahū nah jāne
main jānūn morā bālam jāne

Rang merā joban girvī rakh le rangīle (maḥbūb-i ilāhī)
des ba-des meñ ḍhūñḍh phirī hūn
tora rang man bhāyo nijām al-dīn (maḥbūb-i ilāhī)

Item 3: A ghazal in Persian

1st verse ba-khūbī ham cū mah tābandah <tābindah> bāshī
ba-mulk-i dilbarī pā'indah bāshī

2nd verse mujhe ghamzoñ se tum ne mār ḍālā
(Urdu translation) du'ā merī yih hai zindah raho tum

2nd verse man-i darvesh rā kushtī ba-ghamzah
karam kardī ilāhī zindah bāshī

3rd verse zi-qaid-i do jahān āzād gashtam
agar to hamnashīn-i bandah bāshī

3rd verse rahūn āzād main donoñ jahān se
(Urdu) agar pahlū meñ rahshandah ho tum

translation)

- 3rd verse zi-qaid-i do jahān āzād gashtam
agar to hamnashīn-i bandah bāshī
- 4th verse jafā kam kun ki fardā roz-i maḥshar
- 4th verse na aisā ho ki qatl-i ‘āshiqān se
(Urdu ba-roz-i ḥashr sharmindah raho tum
translation)
- 4th verse jafā kam kun ki fardā roz-i maḥshar
ba-rū-yi ‘āshiqān sharmandah <sharmandah> bāshī
- 5th verse ba-rindī o ba-shokhī ham cūn khusrau
hazārān khānumān barkandah bashī
- 1st verse ba-khūbī hamcū mah

Item 4: A na‘t in Urdu

<alāp>

- 1st *rubā‘ī* (in Urdu) chūṭ jā’e agar daulat-i kaunain to kyā
yā rabb nah chūṭe hāth se dāmān-i muḥammad
- 1st verse do ‘ālam jagmagā’e jis ke dam se fī’l-yaqīn tum ho
sarāpā raḥmat-i ḥaqq (āqā) **raḥmatun li’l-‘ālamīn tum ho**
- 1st *gīrah* (in Urdu) roshan unhī ke nūr se din aur rāt hai
kahne ko vuh bashar hai magar aisī zāt hai
kāfir hai vuh jo kahte hai sarkār ab nahīn
qur’ān kah rahā hai muḥammad ḥayāt hai
- 1st verse **sarāpā raḥmat-i ḥaqq (āqā) raḥmatun li’l-‘ālamīn tum ho**
- 2nd verse burā hūn main magar khvud ko burā main yūn nahīn kahtā
mire sīne meñ dil hai (āqā, nabī allāh) **aur us dil meñ makīn tum ho**
- 3rd verse gunāhoñ kī sazā kyā hai kabhī socā nahīn main ne
magar main jāntā hūn (āqā, mere āqā) **kih shafī‘ al-muznibīn tum ho**
- 2nd *gīrah* (in Urdu) main to nah tum ko cāhūn kih ba’d-i khudā ho tum
maḥshar meñ mere pūchne-vāle tum hī to ho

- 3rd verse magar main jāntā hūn (āqā, mere āqā) ki shafī‘ al-muznibīn tum ho
- 3rd *girah* (in Urdu) jā’e nazār kahān dar-i khair al-varā ke ba’d
dhūnḍhe kise jahān ke ḥājatravā ke ba’d
takmil-i dīn ho cukī aur nī‘mateñ tamām
ko’ī nabī nah ā’egā ab muṣṭafā ke ba’d
- 3rd verse magar main jāntā hūn (āqā, mere āqā) kih shafī‘ al-muznibīn tum ho
- 4th verse **baṛī hai bāt choṭā mūñh magar main jhūṭ kyoñ bolūñ
merā iḥsās kahtā hai jahān main hūn vahīñ tum ho**
- 4th *girah* (in Urdu) nahīñ hai kisī kī jo hai bāt un kī
khudā se hu’ī hai mulāqāt un kī
- main jhūṭhā kyā mujh se ta’rif hogī
baṛe mere āqā baṛī bāt un kī
- gadā to gadā hai gadā’oñ kā kyā hai
shahanshāh biṭhāte haiñ khairāt un kī
- 4th verse merā iḥsās kahtā hai **jahān main hūn vahīñ tum ho**
- 1st verse sarāpā raḥmat-i ḥaqq

Item 5: A ghazal in Urdu

<alāp>

- 1st *rubā’ī* (in Urdu) du‘ā ko hāth bhī uṭhe nah the namāz ke ba’d
vuh mil ga’e mujhe ‘arṣah-yi darāz ke ba’d
- hazār martabah dekhā hai rū ba-rū un ko
kabhī namāz se pahle kabhī namāz ke ba’d
- dayār-i gul meñ phire haiñ aur guloñ se haiñ phaṭke
vahīñ bhī jī nah lagā terī bazm-i nāz ke ba’d
- 2nd *rubā’ī* (in Urdu) sar abhī main ne uṭhāyā bhī nah thā sajde se
ek āvāz yih ā’ī kih muqābil hai ham
- 3rd *rubā’ī* (in Urdu) un ke hī qadmoñ kī āhaṭ rāt bhar ātī rahī
dil kī har dhaṛkan pih main samjhā kih vuh khvud ā ga’e
- 4th *rubā’ī* (in Urdu) jis qadr maḥv-i intīzār hūñ main

Urdu)	sar se pā tak <u>khayāl</u> -i yār hūn main
5 th <i>rubā'ī</i> (in Urdu)	pās itnā kih tire sāns se ṭakrātī hai sāns dūr itnā kih tujhe ḍhūṅḍh rahā hūn tujhī meñ
6 th <i>rubā'ī</i> (in Urdu)	terī talāsh meñ apne sivā kahān jā'ūn yih ek rāh milī har ek rāh ke ba'd
1 st verse	dil ke har (jānā mere jānā) goshe meñ tum ho 'āshiqī aisī to ho maiñ tirā (jānā mere jānā) ho-kar rahūn ab zindagī aisī to ho
1 st <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	mujh ko qubūl terā har ik <u>gham</u> <u>khvushi</u> se hai tu muskurāte kah de muḥabbat kisī se hai
1 st verse	maiñ tirā (jānā mere jānā) ho-kar rahūn ab zindagī aisī to ho
2 nd <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	tumhāre <u>gham</u> se jo furṣat kī ārzū rakhe <u>khudā</u> kare mujhe vuh zindagī naṣīb nah ho
1 st verse	maiñ tirā ho-kar rahūn ab zindagī aisī to ho
3 rd <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	kabhī dimāgh kabhī dil kabhī naẓar meñ raho yih sab tumhāre li'e hai kisī bhī ghar meñ raho
1 st verse	maiñ tirā (jān-i jānān) ho-kar rahūn ab zindagī aisī to ho
4 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	tere baghāir cain nah ā'e to kyā karūn har shai meñ tū hī tū naẓar ā'e to kyā karūn
1 st verse	maiñ tirā ho-kar rahūn ab zindagī aisī to ho
5 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	kare jo 'ishq kisī se to intihā kar de jo naql daulat phir de to jān fidā kar de
1 st verse	maiñ tirā (jānā mere jānā) ho-kar rahūn ab zindagī aisī to ho
6 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	tumhāre cihre se roshan hai merī tanhā'ī kahān caragh jalā hai kahān ujālā hai
1 st verse	maiñ tirā ho-kar rahūn ab zindagī aisī to ho
7 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	jab maiñ ne apne dil ko tire nām likh diyā

Urdu)	ulfaṭ meñ is kā jo bhī ho anjām likh diyā rusvā'iyāñ to hotī hai har kām-i 'ishq meñ apnoñ ne merā nām hī badnām likh diyā allāh ne uṭhā-ke qalam aur davāt ko sāre jahān kā ḥusn tire nām likh diyā
1 st verse	mai tirā ho-kar rahūñ ab zindagī aisī to ho
2 nd verse	zindagī bhar pā-yi jānān par hī sar jhuktā rahe
8 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	naẓar meñ āp kā 'aks-i jamīl hotā hai isī li'e merā sajdah ṭavīl hotā hai
2 nd verse	zindagī bhar pā-yi jānān par hī sar jhuktā rahe
9 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	mujhe to un kī 'ibādat pih raḥm ātā hai jabīn ke sāth jo sajde meñ dil jhukā nah sake
2 nd verse	zindagī bhar pā-yi jānān par hī sar jhuktā rahe
10 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	mire naṣīb ne jab mujh se intiqām liyā tahāñ tahāñ tirī yādoñ ne hāth thām liyā
2 nd verse	zindagī bhar pā-yi jānān par hī sar jhuktā rahe
11 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu; repeated twice)	jabīn ko dar pi jhukānā hī bandagī to nahīñ yih dekh merī muḥabbat meñ kuch kamī to nahīñ
2 nd verse	zindagī bhar pā-yi jānān par hī sar jhuktā rahe bandagī kā luṭf jab hai bandagī aisī to ho
3 rd verse	zindagī bhar hosh kā 'ālam nah ho mujh ko naṣīb
12 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	kabhī kabhī to vuh itnī rasā'ī detā hai maiñ soctā hūñ to us ko sunā'ī detā hai
3 rd verse	zindagī bhar (zindagī bhar) hosh kā 'ālam nah ho mujh ko naṣīb
13 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	denā hai to nigāh ko itnī rasā'ī de

Urdu)	main āīnah jo dekhūn mujhe tū dikhāī de kaisī ‘ajīb shart hai dīdār ke lī’e āñkheñ jo bandh ho terā jalvah dikhāī de
3 rd verse	zindagī bhar (zindagī bhar) hosh kā ‘ālam nah ho mujh ko naṣīb
14 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	kisī ki mast nigāhoñ se pī-ke bahkā hūñ <u>khīrad</u> kī rūḥ bhī shāmil mirī sharāb meñ hai
3 rd verse	zindagī bhar (zindagī bhar) hosh kā ‘ālam nah ho mujh ko naṣīb
15 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	mujhe sharāb pilāī gaī hai āñkhoñ se mirā nashah to baṛe muddatoñ se utregā
3 rd verse	zindagī bhar (zindagī bhar) hosh kā ‘ālam nah ho mujh ko naṣīb cashm-i mast-i (cashm-i mast-i) nāz se bādakashī aisī to ho
16 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	nāzar se ḥusn-i do ‘ālam girā dī āñkhoñ ne nah jāne kaunsā ‘ālam dikhā diyā tum ne
3 rd verse	cashm-i mast-i (cashm-i mast-i) nāz se bādakashī aisī to ho
17 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	yih ramz-i bandagī hai tujhe kuch shu‘ūr hai un ke nāzar ke sāmne honā ṣarūr hai sajdoñ ko mere sang-i dar-i yār cāhī’e varnah jibīn-i dil se ḥaram kitnī dūr hai kahte haiñ log kahne do kāfir mujhe shamīm main jīs ko cāhtā hūñ vuh ḥaqq kā hī nūr hai
3 rd verse	cashm-i mast-i (cashm-i mast-i)
18 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	qasam <u>khudā</u> kī in āñkhoñ meñ aisī mastī hai kih jo bhī dekh le bas dekhī’e <u>khumārah</u> hai
3 rd verse	cashm-i mast-i (cashm-i mast-i)
19 th <i>gīrah</i> (in Urdu)	hotā hai mere dil par jādū tirī āñkhoñ se ātī hai muḥabbat kī <u>khvushbū</u> tirī āñkhoñ se
3 rd verse	cashm-i mast-i (cashm-i mast-i) nāz se bādakashī aisī to ho

1st verse main tirā ho-kar rahūn ab zindagī aisī to ho

Item 6: A macaronic *tazmīn* in Urdu and Persian

1st verse dilbar-i jānān-i man kar de karam
jaise mumkin ho tu rakh merā bharam
bas ghaṛī bhar ke li'e ā jā ṣanam
ārzū dāram kih mihmān-at kunam
jān o dil (merā sab kuch qurbān) e dost qurbān-at kunam

2nd verse baṛh gaī jab ḥadd se merī be-kalī
is muṣibat ko phir un se 'arḥ kī
hañs ke farmāyā kih hai <khvānī?> abhī
gar yaqīn dānam kih bar man 'āshiqī
az jamāl-i khvesh ḥairān-at kunam

3rd verse e dil hai pur-dard jān hai be-qarār
garcih tū hai 'ishq meñ zār o nizār
apnī hastī us ṣanam par kar niṣār
gar to tark-i sar kunī mardānavār
ham cū ismā'īl qurbān-at kunam

4th verse aḥmadā kab tak rahegā kū ba-kū
kyā banā'e sāyah-yi <khāṣṣān?>-i ū
main fidā par dād le asrār-i ū
shams tabrezī ba-maulānā bi-gū
daftar-i asrār-i dīvān-at kunam

Item 7: A *na't* in Hindi

naghmah

<alāp>

1st *rubā'ī* (in ya rasūl allāh
Persian)
muḥammad gul ast o 'alī bū-yi gul
buvad fāṭimah andar ān barg-i gul
cū 'itr-ash bar āmad ḥusain o ḥasan
mu'attar shud az vai zamīn o zaman

1st verse jab hu'e paidā muḥammad muṣtafā god meñ le-kar ḥalimah ne kahā
bhāro ghī ke diye nā bha'ile āminah ke lalnā

1st *gīrah* (in tā'ī ḥalimah dūdh pilā-kar
Hindi) pyāre muḥammad bājū lād lā-kar

le jāti thī dorī <lāvar?>

- 1st verse **bhāro ghī ke diye nā bha'ile āminah ke lalnā**
- 2nd verse 'arsh pi āhākār macī hai dhartī gā'e malhār
āj muḥammad paidā bha'ile kahe jibrīl pukār
- 3rd verse ḥūreñ nāceñ chamā cham āj 'abd allāh ke ānganvā
ādam se 'īsā tak ā'e dene badhā'ī sāre
- 4th verse parh-ke durūd farishte ā'e ṭim ṭim karte tāre
mān kī god meñ aisan lāge jaise mudrī meñ nāganvā

Item 8: A *na'at* in Persian

- 1st verse nasīmā jānib-i baṭḥā guzar kun
zi-aḥvāl-am muḥammad rā khabar kun
- 2nd verse tu'ī sulṭān-i 'ālam yā muḥammad
zi-rū-yi luṭf sū-yi man naẓar kun
- 3rd verse bi-bar īn jān-i mushtāq-am dar ān jā
fidā-yi rauzah-yi khair al-bashar kun
- 4th verse musharraf garcih shud jāmi zi-luṭf-ash
khudāyā īn karam bār-i digar kun

Item 9: A *manqabat* in Urdu

- 1st *rubā'ī* khvājah 'uṣmān ke pyāre khvājah-yi hind al-valī
fāṭimah zahrā ke dilbar ho tumhīn jān-i 'alī
- Refrain tu baṛā gharibnavāz hai (yā mu'īn al-dīn) yā khvājah-yi hind al-valī
- 1st verse tū valī-yi hind hai barmalā tujhe kahte haiñ shah-i auliyā'
tire dar ke ham bhī faqīr hai de hameñ bhī ṣadqah ḥusain kā
- 2nd verse mujhe maulā 'alī kā ṣadqah do ab khālī hai dāman merā
mere khvājah sab pih karam karo tumheñ ghauṣ pāk kā vāṣṭah
- 3rd verse jise cāhā dar pih bulā liyā jise cāhā apnā banā liyā
yih baṛe karam ke hai faiṣle yih baṛe naṣīb kī bāt hai

4 th verse	mirā bigṛā bhāg saṅvār do tum gunāhkār navāz do tere hāth hai merī ābrū mirī zindagī kā savāl hai
5 th verse	hu'e tere faiz se auliyā' quṭb o farīd ṣābir piyā jo niṣām <u>kh</u> usrau valī bane mire <u>kh</u> vājah faiz hai āp kā
6 th verse	terī dīd ho merī 'id ho tirā nām ho mirā kām ho maiṅ bhī ās bāndhe rahūn sadā vuh sadā hī bandanavāz hai
7 th verse	kabhī maiṅ ne tujh se kahā nahīn tirī zāt hai mirā muddā' mujhe tū ne apnā banā liyā tere i'tibār kī bāt hai
Refrain	tu baṛā <u>gh</u> arībnavāz hai yā <u>kh</u> vājah-yi hind al-valī

Item 10: A *manqabat* in Hindi

1 st <i>rubā'ī</i> (in Hindi)	gorī sove sej par so mukh par ḍāro kes cal khusrau ghar apne so sāñjh bhaī cauṅ des
2 nd <i>rubā'ī</i> (in Urdu)	dar-i ṣābir mirī nazaron meṅ rashk-i riṣvān hai maiṅ bulbul us caman kā hūn mirā kaliyar gulistān hai
1 st verse	ma ^{kh} dūm 'alī aḥmad tirī kaliyār kī nagariyā āñkhoṅ meṅ basī hai (ṣābir) dukhiyan hūn dil se piyā lije khabariyā (mere ṣābir) jo terī banī hai
2 nd verse	jo dete tire āge diye dīp jalā'ūn dibyah to sunā'ūngā tujhe <u>kh</u> vush ho-ke caṛhā'ūn tire rauze pi cadariyā yih band basī hai
3 rd verse	sakhiyōṅ meṅ sukhī lākh hai ik maiṅ hī burī hūn tire dar pih paṛī hūn (yā ṣābir) pūcho to kabhī ḥāl yih dukhiyan kā saṅvariya jo terī banī hai (ṣābir)
4 th verse	e jān-i 'alī sāqī-yi kauṣar ke piyāre bābā (bābā farīd ke) ke dulāre (ṣābir) din sab un ke hāthoṅ meṅ se bhāro morī gagariyā jo terī banī hai (ṣābir)
1 st verse	ma ^{kh} dūm 'alī aḥmad tirī kaliyār kī nagariyā āñkhoṅ meṅ basī hai

Item 11: A ghazal in Urdu

- 1st verse ‘ishq meñ tere koh-i gham sar pih liyā jo ho so ho
‘aish o nishāt-i zindagī choṛ diyā jo ho so ho
- 2nd verse mujh se marīz ko ṭabīb hāth mat apnā tū lagā
us ko khudā pih choṛ de bahr-i khudā jo ho so ho
- 3rd verse ‘aql ke madrase se uṭh ‘ishq ke maikade meñ ā
jām-i fanā o be-khvudī ab to piyā jo ho so ho
- 4th verse lāg kī āg lagte hī puñba namaṭ yih jal gayā
rakht-i vujūd o jān o tan kuch nah bacā jo ho so ho
- 5th verse hijr kī sab muṣībateñ ‘arṣ kī us ke rū ba-rū
nāz o adā se muskurā kahne lagā jo ho so ho
- 1st verse ‘ishq me tere koh-i gham...
- 6th verse dunyā ke nek o bad se kām ham ko niyāz kuch nahīñ
āp se jo guzar gayā phir use kyā jo ho so ho
- 1st verse ‘ishq meñ tere koh-i gham sar pih liyā jo ho so ho

Item 12: A ghazal in Urdu

- 1st verse gar yār ho baham koī ho ho nah ho nah ho
jab apnā ho ṣanam koī ho ho nah ho nah ho
- 2nd verse ‘ālam tamām sārā jahān lākh gar nah ho
jab ho terī qasam koī ho ho nah ho nah ho
- 3rd verse khvesh o yagānah kyā hai jo maiñ bhī nah hūñ nah hūñ
kāfī hai terā dam koī ho ho nah ho nah ho
- 3rd verse
(corrected) khvesh o yagānah kyā hai jo maiñ bhī nah hūñ nah hūñ
tum ho terī qasam koī ho ho nah ho nah ho
- 4th verse ‘ulvī o sifli hoñ nah hoñ pāposh se mirī
e mazhar-i atam koī ho ho nah ho nah ho
- 5th verse jo tere be-niyāz kā shikvah koī kare
yih hai nayā sitam koī ho ho nah ho nah ho

Item 13: A *manqabat* in Urdu

- 1st verse e mazhar-i vaḥdat qiblah-yi dīn maulānā muḥammad fakhr al-dīn
‘uṣmānī-yi sīrat shān <shāh>-i mu‘īn maulānā muḥammad fakhr al-dīn
- 2nd verse jab āp kā hī main kahlāyā phir kis se kahūn maqṣad dil kā
juz āp ke merā ko’ī nahīn maulānā muḥammad fakhr al-dīn
- 3rd verse jab rūḥ ho merī tan se ravān aur hove vidā‘-i jism o jān
dar āp kā ho aur merī jabīn maulānā muḥammad fakhr al-dīn
- 4th verse hūn sag main ḥāfiẓ ke dar kā ‘iṣyān se ḥabīb ab kyā khaṭkā
le nām-i mubārak jald kahīn maulānā muḥammad fakhr al-dīn
- 1st verse e mazhar-i vaḥdat qiblah-yi dīn maulānā muḥammad fakhr al-dīn

Item 14: A *salām* in Persian

- 1st verse ṣabā ba-sū-yi madīnah rū kun az īn du‘āgo salām bar khvān
ba-gird-i shāh-i rusul bi-gird o ba-ṣad tazarru‘ payām bar khvān
- 2nd verse ba-soz-i man ṣūrat-i miṣālī namāz bi-guzār andar ān jā
ba-laḥn-i khvush sūrah-yi muḥammad tamām andar qayām bar khvān
- 3rd verse ba-bāb-i raḥmat gah-e guzar kun ba-bāb-i jibrīl gah jibīn sā
salām rabbī ‘alā ḥabībī gah-e ba-bāb al-salām bar khvān
- 4th verse bi-nih ba-candīn adabṭarazī sar-i irādat ba-khāk-i ān kū
ṣalāt-i vāfir ba-rūh-i pāk-i janāb khair al-anām bar khvān
- 1st *girah* (in Urdu) ṣabā madīne meñ muṣṭafā se ham be-kasoñ kā salām kahnā
agar vuh merā salām le leñ to vaṣl kā phir payām kahnā
- 2nd *girah* (in Urdu) jagah madīne meñ vuh ‘aṭā ho tumhāre rauze kā sāmnā ho
vahīn pih rahne kī ārzū hai vahīn kā mujh ko ghulām kahnā
- 3rd *girah* (in Urdu) fidā meñ tere niṣār tum par tire main ṣadqe tire main qurbān
jo kuch guzarti hai ham pih ḥālat ṣabā nabī se tamām kahnā
- 5th verse ba-laḥn-i dā‘ūd hamnavā shau ba-nālah-yi dard āshnā shau
ba-bazm-i paighambar īn ghazal rā zi-‘abd-i ‘ājiz nizām bar khvān
- 1st verse ṣabā ba-sū-yi madīnah rū kun az īn du‘āgo salām bar khvān

Chapter 6.6 The legacy of a contemporary Sufi poet at Khanqah-e-Kamil, Hyderabad

Item 1: A *salām* in Urdu

naghmah

<alāp>

- 1st *rubāʿī* (in Persian) ṣabā taḥīyyat-i shauq-am ba-ān janāb rasān
hadīṣ-i zarra-yi miskīn ba-āftāb rasān
dar ān muqām kih ārāmgāh-i aqdas-i ū'st
zamīn ba-bos o salām-i man-i kharāb rasān
- 1st verse ṣabā madīne meṅ muṣṭafā se ham bekason kā salām kahnā
nahīn hai ko'ī (kamlivāle muḥammad, mere pyāre muḥammad) **ba-juz tumhāre**
hamārā itnā payām kahnā
- 2nd verse main pāpiyādah hūn yā muḥammad sambhāl lije sambhāl lije
sivā **tumhāre** (āqā) **kise pukāre** tumhārā adnā ghulām kahnā
- 3rd verse jagah madīne meṅ vuh 'aṭā ho tumhāre rauze kā sāmnā ho
vahīn pih rahne kī ārzū hai vahīn kā mujh ko ghulām kahnā
- 4th verse niṣār tere fidā main tere main tere ṣadqe main tere qurbān
guzar rahī hai jo ham pih ḥālat ṣabā nabī se tamām kahnā
- 5th verse agar vuh pūcheṅ kih kaun hai vuh hamārī furqat meṅ hai jo nālān
adab se qadmoṅ pih sar jhukā-kar gharīb vājif salām kahnā

Item 2: A *mubārak* in Urdu

- 1st verse sāyah-yi aḥmad-i mukhṭār mubārak bāshad
- 1st *gīrah* (in Urdu; repeated twice) ūnce 'amal pih nāz mire dushmanoṅ ko ho
main sāth hī le-ke jā'ūngā nisbat rasūl kī
- 1st verse sāyah-yi aḥmad-i mukhṭār mubārak bāshad
nisbat-i ḥaidar-i karrār mubārak bāshad
- 2nd *gīrah* (in Persian) be-madad o yār man am ḥazrat-i ḥaidar madad-e
dast-i qudrat madad-e fātiḥ-i khaiḥbar madad-e
- 1st verse nisbat-i ḥaidar-i karrār mubārak bāshad
- 2nd verse mushkiloṅ kā ḥall merī tujh ko pukārā mushkil meṅ

ghaus-i a'zam hai (pīrān-i pīr) madadkār mubārak bāshad

3rd *girah* (in Urdu) dil meñ hai dunyā-yi gham ābād yā pīrān-i pīr
kyā maze kī hai tumhārī yād yā pīrān-i pīr

mere palle par agar sarkār hai to fikr kyā
āp hai to har cih bādā bād yā pīrān-i pīr

jis kī dunyā-yi muḥabbat āp se ābād hai
vuh kabhī hotā nahīn barbād yā pīrān-i pīr

3rd verse **ghaus-i a'zam hai (pīrān-i pīr) madadkār mubārak bāshad**

4th verse karam hai ḥaẓrat-i khvājah-yi jahān jalvafigan (yā gharībnavāz)

4th *girah* (the penultimate line repeated three times) kasmāpursī meñ gharīboñ ke sahāre khvājah
tere is ān ke ṣadqe mire pyāre khvājah

nākhudā tū hai to kyā ḍar hamēñ tūfān kā
lag hī jā'enge kisī taraḥ kanāre khvājah

dekh lo ek naẓar khvājah-yi 'uṣmān kī qasam
ham ne barsoñ tirī caught pih guzāre khvājah

rabṭ-i ulfaṭ kī qasam nisbat-i kāmīl kī qasam
tū hamāre ho hamāre ho hamāre khvājah

4th verse karam hai ḥaẓrat-i khvājah-yi jahān jalvafigan
dīd-vāloñ ko ho dīdār mubārak bāshad

5th verse tū salāmat rahe (o shāh-i ghaus) kūcah tirā ābād rahe
ham ko khāk-i dar-i jānānah mubārak bāshad

6th verse ā'īnakhānah banā...<*ākār tān*>
ā'īnakhānah banā ā'īne meñ ṣūrat bedam
lutf-i nazzārah-yi jānānah mubārak bāshad

Item 3: A *na'at* in Persian

naghmah-yi quddūsī

1st *rubā'ī* (in Persian) e khatm-i rusul ka'bah-yi maqṣūd tu'ī
dar ṣūrat-i har cih hast maujūd tu'ī
āyāt-i kamāl-i ḥaqq 'iyān ast ba-to
ān zāt ki dar pardah nihān būd tu'ī

- 1st verse yā rasūl allāh ḥabīb-i khāliq-i yaktā tu'ī
bar-guzīdah-yi zu'l-jalāl-i pāk-i be-hamtā tu'ī
- 2nd verse nāzanīn-i ḥazrat-i ḥaqq ṣadr-i bazm-i kā'ināt
- 1st *gīrah* (in Urdu; the last two lines repeated twice) vaḥdat-i zāt kī kamāliyyat ke sarāpā tum ho
ḥaqq kī āvāz ho allāh kā lahjah tum ho
ko'ī ṣānī hai tumhārā nah khudā kā hai shabih
jaise yaktā hai khudā vaise hī yaktā tum ho
- 2nd verse nāzanīn-i ḥazrat-i ḥaqq ṣadr-i bazm-i kā'ināt
nūr-i cashm-i anbiyā' (yā muḥammad) cashm o carāgh-i mā tu'ī
- 3rd verse yā rasūl allāh yā rasūl allāh

yā rasūl allāh **ba-sū-yi mā gharībān yak naẓar** (yak naẓar yak naẓar)
- 2nd *gīrah* (in Urdu) tumhāre luṭf kā mushtāq e sarkār main bhī hūn
tumhārī nargis-i bīmār kā bīmār main bhī hūn

har ik lācārah ke tab cārah jab duniyā meñ tum ṭhahre
tujhe bhī yād dilā denge kih ik lācār main bhī hūn

buroñ se bhī burā hūn main magar e raḥmat-i 'ālam
tumhāre nāmlevā ek ḍarāk o khār main bhī hūn
- 3rd verse **mā gharībān yak naẓar** (yak naẓar yak naẓar)
- 3rd *gīrah* (in Urdu and Persian) nah mu'nis hai nah ko'ī merā hai hamdam yā rasūl allāh
tumhārā āsrā hai jān-i 'ālam yā rasūl allāh
madad kā vaqt hai mere muqarrar yā rasūl allāh
zi-raḥmat kun naẓar bar ḥāl-i zār-am yā rasūl allāh
gharīb am benavā-y-am khāksār am yā rasūl allāh
- 3rd verse **mā gharībān yak naẓar** (yak naẓar yak naẓar)

yā rasūl allāh ba-sū-yi mā gharībān yak naẓar
benavā rā dastgīr o bandah o maulā tu'ī
- 4th verse dar shab-i mi'rāj būdah jibrā'īl andar rakāb
pānihādah bar sarīr-i gunbad-i khazrā <khizrā> tu'ī
- 5th verse shams-i tabrezi cih dānad na't-i to paighambarā

muṣṭafā o mujtabā o sayyid-i aʿlā tuʿī

4th *girah* (in Urdu) darbāroṅ meṅ darbār haiṅ darbār-i madīnah
sab se baṛe sarkār hai sarkār-i madīnah

5th verse muṣṭafā o mujtabā o sayyid-i aʿlā tuʿī

Item 4: A *manqabat* in Urdu

1st *rubāʿī* (in Persian) shāh ast ḥusain bādshāh hast ḥusain
dīn ast ḥusain dīnpanāh hast ḥusain
sar dād nah dād dast dar dast-i yazīd
ḥaqqā kih binā-yi lā ilāh hast ḥusain

1st verse **ek naʿrah-sā (yā ḥusain) nikal jāṭā hai akṣar yā ḥusain**
jab se kandaḥ ho gayā hai lauh-i dil par yā ḥusain

yā ḥusain yā ḥusain

2nd verse merā daʿvā hai kih duniyā phir nah paidā kar sakī
sher-i maidān-i daghā (yā ḥusain) tere barābar yā ḥusain

3rd verse ham bhī haiṅ vābastagān-i ḥaidar-i karrār se
kuch idhar bhī ṣadqah-yi darbār-i ḥaidar yā ḥusain

1st *girah* (in Urdu) cain duniyā meṅ mile rāḥat iʿtimād mil jāʿe
shiddat-i ʿishq mile gham kā sarīfah mil jāʿe
kāṣah-yi dil liye ḥāzīr haiṅ dar-i daulat par
yā ʿalī āp ke aulād kā ṣadqah mil jāʿe

3rd verse ham bhī haiṅ vābastagān-i ḥaidar-i karrār se
kuch idhar bhī ṣadqah-yi darbār-i ḥaidar yā ḥusain

2nd verse merā daʿvā hai kih duniyā phir nah paidā kar sakī
sher-i maidān-i daghā (yā ḥusain) tere barābar yā ḥusain

2nd *girah* (in Urdu) pāyā us pih jo koʿī fareb khā nah sakā
durūd us pih jo dām-i havas meṅ ā nah sakā
tanāvul dekhīʿe unhī ke dīn ke pyāsoṅ kā
kih jo bhī sāmne āyā vuh bas yih khā nah sakā

2nd verse sher-i maidān-i daghā (yā ḥusain) tere barābar yā ḥusain

4th verse ibtidā har sāl kī hai āp kī hī yād se

āp hī kā tazkīrah sab kī zabān par yā ḥusain

- 5th verse ahl-i ‘irfān āp hī se pā rahe haiñ roshnī
- 3rd *gīrah* (in Urdu; the last two lines repeated twice) vuh nūr jis ko shah-i <vashqatain?> kahte haiñ
usī ko nūr-i khudā nūr-i ‘ain kahte haiñ
bighar gayā to vuhī nūr kā’ināt banā
simāṭ gayā to usī ko ḥusain kahte haiñ
- 5th verse ahl-i ‘irfān āp hī se pā rahe haiñ roshnī
nūr-i cashm-i murtaẓā šibṭ-i payambar yā ḥusain
- 4th *gīrah* (in Urdu) ādāb-i muṣṭafā meñ sharī‘at kharī rahī
darvāzah-yi batūl meñ jannat kharī rahī
ṣadqe meñ the rasūl caṛhe pusht par ḥusain
baiṭhe rahe ḥusain yahīn ‘ādat kharī rahī
- 5th verse šibṭ-i payambar yā ḥusain
- 6th verse āp kī cashm-i ‘ināyat kā khulā i‘jāz thā
varnah hurr kā kyā badal saktā muqaddar yā ḥusain
- 7th verse tafriqah imān kā hai juzv o kull kā tafriqah
jis zabān par yā muḥammad us zabān par yā ḥusain

yā muḥammad yā ḥusain
- 5th *gīrah* (in Urdu) roshan hai jis se dīn vuh nagīnah ḥusain hai
sac pūchi’e to ‘arsh kā zīnah ḥusain hai
kar ke savār kāñṭhe pih kahte the muṣṭafā
ka‘bah agar ḥasan hai madīnah ḥusain hai
- 7th verse tafriqah imān kā hai juzv o kull kā tafriqah
jis zabān par yā muḥammad us zabān par yā ḥusain
- 8th verse nisbat-i kāmīl hamārī rang lā’egī ẓarūr
ho agar terī nigāh-i bandaparvar yā ḥusain
- 6th *gīrah* (in Urdu) insān cāhe to kuch nahīn hotā
āp cāhe to kyā nahīn hotā
- 8th verse nisbat-i kāmīl hamārī rang lā’egī ẓarūr
ho agar terī nigāh-i bandaparvar yā ḥusain

7 th <i>girah</i> (in Urdu)	tumhāre dar pih main kartā hūn is li'e ṣadqe nah jāne kaunse ṣadqe meñ kām ho jā'e tumhārī cashm-i karam ho to kām ho jā'e adā se dekh lo qiṣṣah tamām ho jā'e
8 th verse	ho agar terī nigāh-i bandaparvar yā ḥusain
1 st verse	ek na'rah-sā nikal jātā hai aksar yā ḥusain

Item 5: A *ghazal* in Urdu

naghmah

<alāp>

1 st <i>rubā'ī</i>	kāmil yih bāt yād rakho balkih likh rakho <u>khālī</u> kabhī nah jā'egī nisbat kisī ke sāth
1 st verse	pās āte haiñ mire aur nah bulāte haiñ mujhe yih bhī kyā kam hai ki vuh yād to āte hai mujhe
2 nd verse	dā'im ābād rahe yūñhī bhārī bazm un kī ban-ke <u>khvud</u> sham' jo parvānah banāte haiñ mujhe
3 rd verse	ḥusn-i maḥbūb-i <u>khudā</u> par jo naẓar kartā hūn us kī qudrat ke tamāshe naẓar āte haiñ mujhe
4 th verse	jāne kyā bāt hai kyon log maze lete haiñ nām le-kar tirā dīvānah banāte haiñ mujhe
5 th verse	zindagānī hai dar-i <u>ghaus</u> ke <u>ṭukroñ</u> pih mirī chīn kyā leñge vuh mujh se jo ḍarāte haiñ mujhe
6 th verse	ṣadqah-yi ḥusn-i naẓar hai mirī mastī sārī un ke qurbān jo ankhon se pilāte haiñ mujhe
7 th verse	jānte hai kih <u>nahīñ un ke sivā merā ko'ī</u> kuch samajh-kar hī vuh dāman meñ chupāte haiñ mujhe
8 th verse	merī kyā būd hai sab un kā vujūd un kā namūd kaise nādān haiñ jo samne lāte haiñ mujhe
9 th verse	sar ke bal jā'ūñ agar par hon to uṛ kar pahūñcūñ ko'ī kah de jo mire pīr bulāte haiñ mujhe

10th verse kahi'e kis khusrav-i khūbān kī hai āmad kāmīl
rūnumā'ī meñ do 'ālam nazār āte haiñ mujhe

Item 6: A ghazal in Urdu

- 1st verse āp ko pātā nahīñ jab āp ko pātā hūñ main
yā to kho jātā hūñ yā phir kho diyā jātā hūñ main
- 2nd verse yih ghurūr-i bandagī hai **tum se nisbat ke tufail**
tum salāmat ho to har bāzī lagā saktā hūñ main
- 3rd verse fikr-i uqbā kar-ke nā-ḥaqq vaqt kyon zā'ī' karūñ
un ko khvud hī lāj hogī jin kā kahlātā hūñ main
- 4th verse < jinn ko rahe par bhī mujh ko choṛ de zauq-i ṭulū' ? >
un kā dāman thām kar manzil samā saktā hūñ main
- 5th verse ek dhun aisī bhī hotī hai kisi kī yād meñ
jāgtā huñ dil se aur āñkhoñ se so jātā hūñ main
- 6th verse ā'īnah ban-kar muqābil us ke jab ātā hūñ main
bandagī meñ bhī khudā'ī kī jhalak pātā hūñ main
- 9th verse luṭ ga'ī kāmīl...
- 7th verse un se itnī baṛh ga'ī hai nisbat-i vālātarīn
jis ko cāhūñ terā dīvānah banā saktā hūñ main
- 8th verse ek sajde kī 'ināyat **kījī'e bandanavāz**
sar jhukā-kar sārī duniyā ko jhukā saktā hūñ main
- 9th verse luṭ ga'ī kāmīl jahān sārī maṭā'-i zindagī
kyā tamashā hai vahīñ se zindagī pātā hūñ main

Item 7: A manqabat in Urdu

naghmah

<alāp>

- 1st *rubā'ī* dīd-i dildār hai to sab kuch hai
apnā gar yār hai to sab kuch hai
- tā qiyāmat tumhārā faiz rahe
jab yih darbār hai to sab kuch hai

pās kuch bhī nahīn qubūl badshāh ke
apnā kāmīl hai to sab kuch hai

- 1st verse tumhārī dīd meñ hai yih aṣar yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī
naẓar par nāz kartī hai naẓar yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī
- 2nd verse **phirenge phirne-vāle dar ba-dar yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī**
tumhāre dar pih hai merī naẓar yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī
- 3rd verse tumhāre dar kā bandah hūn tumhīn se mujh ko lenā hai
tumhārā ho-ke main jā'ūn kidhar yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī
- 4th verse yih kaisī bandagī hai kyā tamashā hai khudā jāne
khudāī kī naẓar hai āp par yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī
- 5th verse **murīdī lā takhaf kah-kar** hamen be-fikr kar ḍālā
hamārī jān qurbān āp par yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī
- 6th verse **musibat ho kih hai rāḥat maze nisbat se letā hūn**
tumhāre dar pih rahta hai yih sar yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī
- 7th verse kamāl-i ḥusn kā ṣadqah hamārī lāj rakh lenā
idhar bhī ek 'ināyat kī naẓar yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī
- 8th verse tumhārā nām le-kar zindagī ham ne guzārī hai
mareñge bhī tumhāre nām par yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī
- 9th verse **nah bhūlo apne kāmīl ko kih tum par jān detā hai**
yih divānah rahā hai 'umr bhar yā ghaus-i ṣamdānī

Item 8: A ghazal in Urdu

naghmah

<alāp>

- 1st *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) yahī kuch ārzū hai aur isī meñ khvushī apnī
kih un ke nām pih luṭ jā'e sārī zindagī apnī
muḥabbat un kī ṣūrat kā hamāre ḥaqq meñ sab kuch hai
isī se zindagī apnī isī se bandagī apnī
- 1st verse unhīn kī marzī pih cal rahe haiñ unhīn kī marzī to cal rahī hai
- 1st *girah* (in Urdu) ham jahān baiṭhe bā khudā baiṭhe
yār se apne kab judā baiṭhe

ko'ī kānā kahe yā dīvānah
yār se apne jo 'alāhidah baiṭhe

- 1st verse unhīn kī marzī pih cal rahe haiñ unhīn kī marzī to cal rahī hai
- 2nd *gīrah* (in Urdu; repeated twice) be-fikr jī rahā hūn har ek i'tibār se nisbat bhī kaisī cīz hai dāmān-i yār se
- 1st verse unhīn kī marzī pih cal rahe haiñ unhīn kī marzī to cal rahī hai
yih zindagī to faqaṭ unhīn kī khvushī ke sāncoñ meñ ḍhal rahī hai
- 2nd verse nah dam hī pūrā nikal rahā hai nah ārzū hī nikal rahī hai
nah jāne kab se tirī tamannā hamārī godī meñ pal rahī hai
- 3rd verse use to maḥsūs kar sakegī faqaṭ ko'ī cashm-i bādakash hī
kisi kī āñkhoñ se kyā batā'ūn sharāb kitnī ubal rahī hai
- 4th verse **unhīn kī cashm-i karam kā ṣadqah unhīn ke yih damqadam kā ṣadqah**
unhīn se nisbat kī āṛ le-kar hamārī har bāt cal rahī hai
- 3rd *gīrah* (in Urdu) kitnā khvushqīsmat hūn main bhī yā muqaddar hai mirā
- 4th verse unhīn ke yih damqadam kā ṣadqah
- 4th *gīrah* (in Urdu; repeated thrice) kāmīl yih bāt yād rakho balkih likh rakho
khālī kabhī nah jā'egī nisbat kisī ke sāth
- 4th verse unhīn ke yih damqadam kā ṣadqah
- 4th *gīrah* repeated khālī kabhī nah jā'egī nisbat kisī ke sāth
- 4th verse unhīn se nisbat kī āṛ le-kar hamārī har bāt cal rahī hai
- 5th verse vuh i'tibār-i naẓar se ūnce vuh fikr o fahm-i bashar se ūnce
main jitnī qurbat baṛhā rahā hūn vuh dūriyon se badal rahī hai
- 6th verse rahe salāmat vuh ānevālā marīz-i gham ne liyā sambhālā
zarā zarā hosh ā rahā hai zarā ṭabī'at sambhal rahī hai

7th verse lagā jahān dil pih dagh kāmīl carāgh roshan murād ḥāṣīl
hamārī marqad pih ā-ke dekho yahī to ik sham‘ jal rahī hai

1st verse unḥīn kī marzī pih cal rahe haiṅ unḥīn kī marzī to cal rahī hai

Item 9: A *manqabat* in Urdu

naghmah-yi quddūsī

<alāp>

1st *rubā‘ī* (in Urdu) maḥbūbiyyat ke martabe kā iqtidām hai
ghauṣ al-varā vujūd-i muḥammad kā nām hai

2nd *rubā‘ī* (in Urdu) ta‘ayyūn kī ḥadoṅ meṅ kab jamāl-i muṣṭafā‘ī hai
vahī jalvah yahān bhī hai magar ghauṣ al-varā‘ī hai

1st verse sāye meṅ tumhāre (ghauṣ-i a‘zām) dāman ke jis din se guzārā karte haiṅ
sab apne ‘amal par nāzān hai **ham za‘m tumhārā karte haiṅ**

1st *gīrah* (in Urdu) nah ‘ilm o faḥl nah zuhd o varā‘ nah ḥusn-i ‘amal
faḥṭ tumhārī ‘ināyat pih kām caltā hai

1st verse ham za‘m tumhārā karte haiṅ

1st *gīrah* elaborated nah ‘ilm o faḥl nah zuhd o varā‘ nah ḥusn-i ‘amal
faḥṭ tumhārī ‘ināyat pih kām caltā hai

sar-i niyāz hai ik aise āstāne par
jahān navishtah-yi taqdīr bhī badaltā hai

jahān ke sāre ḥasīnoṅ kī ābrū tum ho
tumhāre sāmne kis kā carāgh caltā hai

1st verse ham za‘m tumhārā karte haiṅ

2nd *gīrah* (in Urdu) merī ṣūrat ko nah dekh mere gunāhoṅ pih nah jā
maiṅ to acchā nahīn acchoṅ se hai nisbat merī

1st verse ham za‘m tumhārā karte haiṅ

2nd verse hai apnā vazīfah ṣubḥ o masā **har hāl meṅ yā ghauṣ-i a‘zām**

3rd *gīrah* (in Urdu) **maiṅ qādirī hūn** shukr hai yih mere pīr kā (e qubūl badshāh)
dāman hai mere hāth meṅ pīrān-i pīr kā

- 2nd verse hai apnā vaṛīfah ṣubḥ o masā har hāl meñ yā ghaus-i a'zam
jo nāz hamārā sahte haiñ ham us ko pukārā karte haiñ
- 4th *gīrah* (in Urdu) ham se yih...
- 5th *gīrah* (in Urdu) qudrat kī muḥabbat ke faẓleñ kuch pushtpanāhī ke badle
jab ko'ī nahīñ bhartā hāmī ham tum ko pukārā karte haiñ
- 2nd verse jo nāz hamārā sahte haiñ
- 6th *gīrah* (in Urdu) vuhī us ḥusn ke jalvoñ kā pūrā luṭf pāte haiñ
jo apne dil ko khvud ek mustaqil ka'bah banāte haiñ
- muḥabbat ho agar saccī to aise din bhī āte haiñ
vuh apne nāzbardāroñ kā khvud hī nāz lāte haiñ
- vuh āte jāte jab sāz-i nafas ko cheṛ jāte haiñ
mere ajzā-yi hastī sab unhīñ ke gīt gāte haiñ
- jo un par mar miṭe un se hazāroñ faiz pāte haiñ
unheñ murdah nah samjho vuh to murdoñ ko jilāte haiñ
- 2nd verse jo nāz hamārā sahte haiñ ham us ko pukārā karte haiñ
- 3rd verse kuch rabṭ-i muḥabbat ke gharre kuch pushtpanāhī ke bharre
jab ko'ī nahīñ bhartā hāmī ham tum ko pukārā karte haiñ
- 4th verse ānkhoñ meñ hamāre sāqī ke kahte haiñ jhalakte paimāne
maikhor in āñkhon kā ṣadqah ānkhoñ se utārā karte haiñ
- 7th *gīrah* (in Urdu) āñkheñ sāqī kī salāmat mere dushman tarseñ
duhre maikhāne ki'e haiñ mere bharne ke li'e
- 4th verse maikhor in āñkhon kā ṣadqah ānkhoñ se utārā karte haiñ
- 5th verse duniyā ke ḥasīnoñ ko kāmīl maḥbūb-i khudā se kyā nisbat
vuh khvud ko sañvāre rahte haiñ yih sab ko sañvārā karte haiñ

Item 10: A ghazal in Urdu

<alāp>

- 1st *rubā'ī* (in Urdu) ḥusn gham se kih hai merī qismat kā
ḥaqq adā kar diyā muḥabbat kā

2nd *rubāʿī* (in Urdu) ab tumheñ kahāñ pāʿūñ ḍhūñḍhne kidhar jāʿūñ
mūñh chupā liyā tum ne ṣūrat āshnā hogā

3rd *rubāʿī* (in Urdu) dil vuh ābād nahīñ jis meñ tirī yād nahīñ
hai vuh kāfir jo terī rāh meñ barbād nahīñ

ḍhūñḍhne ko tire e mere nah milne-vāle
vuh calā hai jise ḥaqq kā bhī patā yād nahīñ

e ḡham-i yār tire dam se hai taʿmīr-i ḥayāt
tū salāmat hai to miṭṭī mirī barbād nahīñ

1st verse **terī naẓar se dil ko sukūn hai qarār hai**
tere karam se mere caman meñ bahār hai

1st *girah* (in Urdu; repeated twice) yih shāñ yih shauqat mirī auqāt nahīñ thī
yih nām o nishāñ-am tirī nisbat kī ʿaṭā hai

1st verse terī naẓar se dil ko sukūn hai qarār hai
tere karam se mere caman meñ bahār hai

2nd verse ham ā gaʿe kahāñ pih yih kis kā dayār hai
pahlū se dil pukārā **yahī kū-yi yār hai** (dekho)

3rd verse vaʿde pih jī rahe the magar dam nikal gayā
āñkheñ khulī huʿī hai tirā intizār hai

4th verse zāhid mirī namāz bhalā kyoñ nah ho qubūl
har lamḥah mere samne taṣvīr-i yār hai

5th verse maḥshar meñ sab ke pās to hai nāmah-yi ʿamal
yih dekho mere hāth meñ dāmāñ-i yār hai

6th verse mujh se agar zamānah bhī bargashtah ho to ho
maiñ muṭmaʿin hūñ merī ṭaraf cashm-i yār hai

2nd *girah* (in Urdu) hai nisbat salāmat to kāhe kā ronā
kabhī un ke dar se nā-māyūs honā
yih merā ʿaqīdah hai ki nām un kā le-kar
uṭhā lūñ jo miṭṭī to ban jāʿe sonā

6th verse maiñ muṭmaʿin hūñ

3 rd girah (in Urdu)	kyā koṭī uṭhā saktā hai hamēn ab in ke dar se e kāmīl ham un ke bulā'e ā'e haiñ ham un ke biṭhā'e baiṭhe haiñ
6 th verse	maiñ muṭma'in hūñ
7 th verse	jis dil meñ 'ishq-i pīr hai 'ishq-i rasūl hai us par nuzūl-i raḥmat-i parvardigār hai
8 th verse	kāmīl ke dil se pūchī'e sajdoñ kī lazzateñ vuh hai sar-i niyāz hai aur pā-yi yār hai

Item 11: A ghazal in Urdu

naghmah

<alāp>

1 st rubā'ī (in Urdu)	jo mujhe dekhtā hai nām terā letā hai maiñ to <u>khā</u> mōsh hūñ nisbat mirī <u>khā</u> mōsh nahīñ
2 nd rubā'ī (in Urdu)	yih aur hai ham ko <u>khā</u> bar nahīñ hotī nigāh-i yār kabhī be- <u>khā</u> bar nahīñ hotī
1 st verse	āp ko pātā nahīñ jab...
1 st verse	hamārī dunyā badal-ke rakh dī naẓar kā milnā hu'ā bahānah udhar nigāheñ milī kisī se idhar yih dil ban gayā nishānah <nashānah>
2 nd verse	gunāhkāron pih hañsne-vālo nah yūn kisī kī hañsī uṛā'o nah jāne ḥiṣṣe meñ jis ke ā'e <u>khudā</u> kī raḥmat kā shāmiyānah
3 rd verse	terī muḥabbat meñ zindagī hai isī meñ kuch luṭf-i bandagī hai baṛe maze se (al-ḥamdu li'llāh) guzar rahī hai hamārā sar terā āstānah
4 th verse	hamāre mi'yār-i bandagī meñ bas ik tirī <u>khvājagī</u> ṭikī hai mazāq-i sajdah bhī utnā ūncā buland hai jitnā āstānah
5 th verse	jab us ne dekhā to jī uṭhe ham naẓar phirā lī to mar ga'e ham 'ajab tamāshe kī zindagī hai abhī ḥaqīqat abhī fasānah
6 th verse	shabāb-i gulshan niṣār tum par fidā hai har ik bahār tum par siyāh gesū ghanī ghaṭā'eñ nashelī anḵheñ sharāb <u>khā</u> nah
7 th verse	kahāñ kā dil kaisī jān ṣāḥib yahāñ to imān pi ā banī hai

kih ḥusn khvud mustaqil qiyāmat phir us pih andāz-i kāfirānah

8th verse kalām-i kāmīl kī shuhratoñ kā sabab faqaṭ un se rabb ko nisbat
ghazal ke har shi'r par hai gahrā caṛhā hu'ā rang-i 'āshiqānah

Item 12: A ghazal in Urdu

naghmah

<alāp>

1st *rubā'i* (in Urdu) nigāh-i saṭḥbīn ek ḥadd se āge jā nahīn saktī
unheñ pā-kar bhī un ko fī'l-ḥaqīqat pā nahīn saktī

taṛap jo dil kī hai vuh barāq meñ bhī ā nahīn saktī
yih taṛpātī hai sab ko aur vuh taṛpā nahīn saktī

hazāroñ i'tibār aise haiñ jin ko 'aql-i insānī
samajh letī to hai sab kuch magar samjhā nahīn saktī

ajal kī bāt ek naql-i muqāmī ke sivā kyā hai
jo tum pih mar miṭā phir maut us ko miṭā nahīn saktī

1st verse pardah-yi shauq hai yahī ṣūrat-i rāz hai yahī

1st *gīrah* (in Urdu) pardah nah merā haṭā'o zamānah dekh nah le
maiñ shor meñ ā'ūñ tumhārī nishānī haṭeñ

1st verse pardah-yi shauq hai yahī ṣūrat-i rāz hai yahī
tum ho naẓar ke sāmne merī namāz hai yahī

2nd *gīrah* (in Urdu; repeated twice) baṛā maqām hai us kā khudāparastoñ meñ
jo tum ko rakh-ke naẓar meñ adā namāz kare

1st verse tum ho naẓar ke sāmne merī namāz hai yahī

3rd *gīrah* (in Urdu) kabhī e ḥaqīqat e muntaẓar <muntaẓir> naẓar ā libās-i majāz meñ
kih hazāroñ sajde taṛap rahe hai merī jabīn-i niyāz meñ

jo maiñ ne sar ko sajdah hu'ā kabhī to zamīn se āne lagī ṣadā
tirā dil to hai ṣanamāshnā tujhe kyā milegā namāz meñ

1st verse tum ho naẓar ke sāmne merī namāz hai yahī

2nd verse terī adā kī khūbiyān merī ṭaraf meñ thī nahīn

	zindagī <u>kh</u> vud pukārtī bandanavāz hai yahī
4 th <i>girah</i> (in Urdu)	hamārī kuch bhī nah thī ḥaqīqat tumhāre dar se milī hai ‘izzat
2 nd verse	terī adā kī <u>kh</u> ūbiyān merī ṭaraf meñ thī nahīn
5 th <i>girah</i> (in Urdu)	qasam allāh kī un kī ‘aṭā kāmīl karam kāmīl magar kāmīl muṣibat hai hamārī tangdāmānī
2 nd verse	un kī adā kī <u>kh</u> ūbiyān merī ṭaraf meñ thī nahīn zindagī <u>kh</u> vud pukārtī bandanavāz hai yahī <u>kh</u> vājah bandanavāz <u>kh</u> vājah gesudarāz
3 rd verse	ahl-i jahān ko kyā <u>kh</u> abar kaun hai mujh meñ jalvagar maiñ hūñ kahāñ (mere aḥmad piyā, mere kāmīl piyā, mere sheikh al-aḥmad, mere ghaṣ piyā) tum hī to ho aṣl meñ rāz hai yahī
6 th <i>girah</i> (in Urdu)	merī kyā būd hai sab un kā vujūd un kā namūd kaise nādān haiñ jo samne lāte haiñ mujhe
3 rd verse	ahl-i jahān ko kyā <u>kh</u> abar kaun hai mujh meñ jalvagar maiñ hūñ kahāñ tum hī to ho aṣl meñ rāz hai yahī
4 th verse	us ke karam pih maiñ niṣār hai kiyā sab se beniyāz yār hai mujh se āshkār bandah kā rāz hai yahī
5 th verse	ā’e jahān tere qadam kar liyā apne sar ko <u>kh</u> am bandah-yi ‘ishq ke li’e kāmīl namāz hai yahī
1 st verse	pardah-yi shauq hai yahī

Item 13: *Rang*

<alāp>

1 st <i>rubā’ī</i> (in Hindi)	rainī caḥhī rasūl kī so rang maulā ke hāth jis kī cūndar rang dīnho so rangān vā ke bhāg
<i>Rang</i>	āj rang hai rī māñ rang hai rī (āhe āj rang hai) mohe pīr pāyo muḥyī al-dīn auliyā’
1 st <i>girah</i>	muḥyī al-dīn auliyā’ mu’īn al-dīn auliyā’

mu‘īn al-dīn auliyā’ quṭb al-dīn auliyā’
 quṭb al-dīn auliyā’ farīd al-dīn auliyā’
 farīd al-dīn auliyā’ niẓām al-dīn auliyā’
 niẓām al-dīn auliyā’ naṣīr al-dīn auliyā’
 naṣīr al-dīn auliyā’ bandanavāz auliyā’
 bandanavāz auliyā’ shāh-i aḥmad auliyā’
 shāh-i aḥmad auliyā’ kalīm allāh auliyā’
 kalīm allāh auliyā’ yūsuf sharīf auliyā’
 yūsuf sharīf auliyā’ **ghulām-i ghaus auliyā’**
ghulām-i ghaus auliyā’ shāh-i kāmīl auliyā’

Rang jab dekho more sang hai rī mān rang hai rī
 main to aiso rang aur nahīn dekhī **khvājah**
 desh ba-desh meñ ḍhūñḍh phirī hūn
 torā rang man bhāyo

Item 14: *Qaul* in Arabic

Qaul and tarānah man kuntu maulā fa-‘aliyyun maulā

dar dil dar dil dar dānī
 ham tum tanā nānā nā tanānānā re
 yalālī yalālī yalā lālālī
 yalā lālā yalā lālā yalā lālālī

maulā ‘alī maulā

1st girah (in Urdu) laḥad meñ tazkirah-yi bū turāb kar dūngā
 savāl ko‘ī bhī ho lājavāb kar dūngā
 mere gunāh siyāh gar hai e farishto magar
 ‘alī murād hai to sāre ḥisāb kar dūngā

Qaul maulā ‘alī maulā

2nd girah (in Urdu) bane ṣūfi jazbāt meñ pahne-vāle
 qalandar bane ‘ishq meñ jalne-vāle
 nabī hai ‘alī ko valī kahne-vāle
 valī valī kahegā ‘alī kahne-vāle

Qaul and tarānah maulā ‘alī maulā

dar dil dar dil dar dānī
 ham tum tanā nānā nā tanānānā re
 yalālī yalālī yalā lālālī
 yalā lālā yalā lālā yalā lālālī