

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE AESTHETICS OF MOTION IN MUSICS  
FOR THE MEVLANA CELAL ED-DIN RUMI

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This dissertation investigates the concept of motion as a fundamental aesthetic element in the devotional music, dance, and rituals performed in honor of the celebrated thirteenth-century Persian mystic poet and saint, the Mevlana Celal ed-Din Muhammad Rumi. The main focus of the study is threefold. First, it investigates the prevalence of the notion of movement in Islamic music and culture, specifically within the Sufi communities of Turkey, in order to arrive at a broader understanding of the relationship between music, aesthetics, and worldview. Secondly, it explores how musical performance functions as a form of devotion or religious worship by focusing on the musical repertoires performed in honor of a single holy figure, the Mevlana Rumi. Finally, it provides an ethnographic account of contemporary developments in Sufi musical culture in Turkey and across the world by describing the recent activities of the Mevlana's devotees, which includes members of the Mevlevi Order of Islamic mystics as well as adherents of other Sufi brotherhoods and followers of so-called New Religions or New Age.

The primary research for this study involved two short one-month field trips to Turkey and India in 2002 and 2003, respectively, and a longer one year expedition to Turkey in 2004 and 2005, which also included shorter stays in Cyprus, Syria, and Egypt. Additionally, the dissertation draws directly from critical theories advanced in the fields of ethnomusicology, cultural anthropology, and ethnochoreology and focuses on the kinesthetic parameters of music, dance, trance, and ritual as well as on broader forms of socio-cultural movement including pilgrimage, cultural tourism, and globalization. These forms of movement are analyzed in four broad categories of music used in worship, including classical Mevlevi music, music of the *zikr* ceremony, popular musics, and non-Turkish musics.

THE AESTHETICS OF MOTION  
IN MUSICS FOR THE MEVLANA CELAL ED-DIN RUMI

by

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## **DEDICATION**

To

*The Mevlana Celel ed-Din Rumi,*

*His devotees,*

and

*All who helped me in this journey.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Like all similar projects, this dissertation comes as the last step of a long journey of discovery that has taken me to worlds I could never have imagined. Although some find the path of researching, writing, and editing to be so grueling that they sometimes lose their way, I have enjoyed nothing but happy trails thanks to the guidance of a great many kind souls. Whatever faults or discrepancies afflict this study, none is greater than my failure to properly acknowledge all those who have helped and encouraged me at every step. My deepest apologies and most sincere gratitude, therefore, to all those whose names do not appear in print here.

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Sizi çooooook seviyorum!

Çok teşekkür ederim!

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## ORTHOGRAPHY AND CONVENTIONS

In 1928 the parliament of the newly formed Republic of Turkey oversaw a series of sweeping reforms regarding the Turkish language. Turkish was systematically purged of foreign influence, especially of Arabic and Farsi vocabulary and grammar, and the Arabic script used during the Ottoman period was replaced with a modified Latin script and a phonetic orthography. Thus, modern Turkish is now written in a manner that is both more suiting to the nature of the language and more accessible to speakers of European languages. The modern Turkish alphabet contains twenty-nine letters, only six of which (ç, ğ, ı, ö, ş, ü) will seem unfamiliar to an English reader:

A a	“a” in art	L l	“l” in look
B b	“b” in book	M m	“m” in music
C c	“j” in judge	N n	“n” in noise
Ç ç	“ch” in check	O o	“o” in or
D d	“d” in dog	Ö ö	“u” in fur
E e	“e” in empty	P p	“p” in pilgrim
F f	“f” in foot	R r	“r” in red (slightly rolled)
G g	“g” in go	S s	“s” in song
Ğ ğ	not pronounced (lengthens preceding vowel)	Ş ş	“sh” in shake
H h	“h” in heavy	T t	“t” in top
İ ı	“e” in number	U u	“u” in rule
İ i	“i” in if or “ee” in eel	Ü ü	exaggerated “u” in nude
J j	“s” in Asia	V v	“v” in van
K k	“k” in kiss	Y y	“y” in yes
		Z z	“z” in zero

Despite the best efforts of the Turkish Language Society, however, many Arabic, Farsi, and even French words are in official use in modern Turkish. This is largely due to the fact that Central Asian Turkic languages, with their generally limited indigenous vocabularies, are used as primary sources. Consequently, Arabic and, to some extent,

Farsi remain important particularly with respect to religious terminology, which is central to this study. The Turkish solution to the dilemma of Arabic and Farsi orthography is to respell all vocabulary phonetically according to the Turkish alphabet. For the sake of consistency and owing to the great difficulty of transliterating the Arabic script, I have opted to employ Turkish over Arabic and Farsi spellings whenever possible. Thus, al-Qur'ān (Quran, etc.) is rendered as Koran, Jalāl-ad-Dīn (Djalal al-Din, Jelaluddin, etc.) as Celal ed-Din, and Mawlānā (Maulana, Mulana, etc.) as Mevlana.

The exceptions to this concern words that are in common usage in the English language and in instances when the Turkish version may cause confusion. Thus, the name of the Prophet Mohammad (Mohammed, etc.) is written Muhammad, rather than the Turkish Mehmet, and al-Qāhirah is written Cairo, rather than Kahire.

While much of the terminology foreign to the English appears in italic typescript, proper nouns and some musical terminology, particularly instrument names, remain in regular plain typescript. With respect to pluralization, I substitute the typical Turkish suffixation (-lar, -ler) with -s, as in *zīkr-s*.

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**CHAPTER ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION:**  
**FROM PLURALITY TO UNITY**

**Starting in the Middle**

February 24, 2005     Cairo

“Where are you going?” asks a turbaned man sitting on a box amid the bustle of honking horns, wailing vendors, and blasting radios. This time I do not even want to acknowledge him. “Why does everyone always think I’m lost,” I ask myself, annoyed. “What does he want? Baksheesh? Is he just curious and has nothing to do? Why can’t someone just wander around looking for the mosque listed in the guidebook without being questioned? İstanbul, Urfa, Aleppo, Aswan: all the same.” “Don’t look,” I tell myself. “He’s just going to ask you where you’re from now.” I look up anyway and see him propping himself up with his left hand, leaning to the right in my direction. His neck is tilted at a forty-five degree angle to the right, reminding me of the position I was forced into during my ney lessons in Konya. His right hand is slightly outstretched and he rotates his wrists and three fingers a few times, as if he is trying to twist off a bottle cap. This is not the first time I have encountered this posture in my travels, yet only now, halfway into my fieldwork, does it dawn on me how “Sufi” it is. I smile and ask him where the metro station is. He points me in the direction from which I had just come and guides me halfway to the octagonal metro sign darting up into the sky before wishing me a pleasant stay in Egypt.

## **Bearings, Directions, and a Roadmap: Introduction**

As the previous anecdote suggests, travel has significant cultural value in the Middle East. Despite being the cradle of ancient settled civilization, the lands between modern day Turkey and Egypt have always been inhabited and crisscrossed by peoples who hold mobility in high esteem. So important is physical movement that it takes on religious significance. Viewing settled society as “corrupting” and “immoral,” nomadic groups like the Bedouins and Roma maintain centuries-old itinerant traditions in the face of sedentarization.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, travel in the form of religious pilgrimage has been, since antiquity, a basic precept of devotional practice. In Islamic tradition, travel and spiritual devotion are interconnected as a matter of religious obligation. Pilgrimage (*hajj, ziyara*) to Mecca, Medina, and saints’ shrines is expected of all Muslims and is considered as central a pillar of faith as belief in the oneness of Allah.

Accordingly, a *musafir* (an Arabic term meaning both “traveler” and “pilgrim”), a *konuk* (Turkish for “guest”), or even a *yabancı* (Turkish for “foreigner” or “stranger”) is typically considered not unlike a gift from God, and it is incumbent upon the honor of a Muslim host to offer hospitality, generosity, and assistance.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, the refusal of food, drink, or aid is sometimes taken as an act of deep insult. Equally wounding are the feelings of annoyance or suspicion that some Western travelers to the region harbor toward overly inquisitive would-be guides. Such sentiments are generally unwarranted. In the Middle East, questions like “Where are you going?” and “Where you from?”

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<sup>1</sup> Lila Abu Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986): 8.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the proper treatment of a guest, see *ibid.*, 45-46.

function as salutations,<sup>3</sup> revealing the cultural primacy of mobility, and usually elicit conversations about previous journeys or the desire to visit distant lands and peoples, *inşallah* (“God willing”).

Travel is all the more essential in Sufism, the esoteric, mystical branch of Islam. Concepts of movement permeate Sufi thought and underpin many critical theological principles and devotional practices, ranging from the doctrine of unity to ascetic wandering. For the Sufis of the Mevlevi Order in particular, motion is well articulated through music, dance, and endless volumes of sacred poetry. For instance, their eponymous founder the Mevlana Rumi wrote in the thirteenth century:

Listen as this reed pipes its plaint  
Unfolds its tale of separations:  
Cut from my reedy bed,  
My crying ever since makes men and women weep  
...  
Once severed from the root,  
Thirst for union with the source endures  
...  
The reed, soother to all sundered lovers –  
Its piercing modes reveal our hidden pain;  
...  
The reed tells the tale of a blood-stained quest...<sup>4</sup>

This oft-quoted opening passage from the Mevlana’s *Mesnevi* encapsulates some of the more fundamental tenets of Mevlevi Sufism. Like the ney, the delicate reed flute severed from its concealed underground stem, humanity is diffuse, detached from its essential source, Allah. Mankind, the lover, is consequently on a journey seeking and yearning for unification with the One God, the Beloved. In Mevlevi religious belief, the journey is

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<sup>3</sup> The act of giving and receiving salutation is also a religious obligation predicated on mandates written in the Koran. See Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam, Being a Cyclopedic of the Doctrines, Rites, Ceremonies, and Customs, Together with the Technical and Theological Terms, of the Muhammadan Religion*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 1998): 563-64.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi, Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teaching and Poetry of Jalâl al-Din Rumi* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000): 362.

both physical and mental and requires the devotee to overcome selfishness and ego through mystical love (*aşk*). Mevlevi ritual practices therefore are designed to nurture that love and to direct individual worshipers from their plurality of existence to communal unity with Allah.

Although the thrust of this dissertation is threefold, it too has one principal goal: to provide a comprehensive account of Mevlevi and Mevlana-related musical practice. To this end, I expand the available literature on the subject by exploring first and foremost the concept of motion, in the broadest sense of the term, as a fundamental aesthetic of Mevlevi and other Sufi musical practice.<sup>5</sup> Kinesthetic elements of performance, normally considered “extra”-musical by Western-trained music scholars, on the contrary, constitute essential aspects of Mevlana-related music and this dissertation thus analyzes structured movement systems like performance gestures, ritual proceedings, and especially dance and trance activity as integral to sonic phenomena.

Literary scholars, on the other hand, while often alluding to the concept of motion in their citations and hermeneutic discussions of Sufi poetic verse, fall short of describing the ways in which the mystical texts are rendered through chant and song. Here as well as in instrumental music the aesthetic of motion also plays a critical role. This study, therefore, takes an expanded definition of movement that encompasses a host of musical features related to modal, rhythmic, and structural changes over time, including modulation as well as intensification of volume and tempo.

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<sup>5</sup> There is no single term in Arabic, Farsi, or Turkish that encompasses all the physical, mystical, and musical forms of movement found in Sufi theology and practice. I employ the term “motion” and like synonyms in this study for convenience, using literal meanings and metaphorical connotations as in indigenous convention when appropriate.

In this study, I extend the concept of motion further still to include various forms of social movement that are likewise pertinent to the musical tradition. Thus, in addition to analyzing specific musical and performance elements in terms of movement, I also place Mevlana-related music within the context of pilgrimage, tourism, and globalization. This broad approach to musical aesthetics, inspired by the ethnomusicological concern with the integration of sonic and social dimensions of performance, allows for a more thorough understanding of Mevlevi music than is found in existing written accounts.

The second broad area of focus in this dissertation is the study of how musical performance functions as a manifestation of religious or spiritual devotion. In the Sufi context, faith (*iman*) has many facets, but, as William Chittick summarizes, “from the earliest times Muslims who strove to gain nearness to God did so through activity, love, and knowledge.”<sup>6</sup> For Sufi followers, the three are subsumed within the ritual of *zikr* in which music plays an important role in inducing an ecstatic trance state (*coşkunluk*, *vecd*). Life is conceived of as a journey best described as “Human Love seeking admission into the Sanctuary of Divinity.”<sup>7</sup> Through *zikr* the *dervish* (“mendicant traveler”) undergoes self-annihilation (*fana*) and achieves sublimation (*baka*) in the love of the One God.

Ritual musical performances like *zikr* are pregnant with figurative and symbolic meaning and indeed much of Sufi life is predicated on esoteric knowledge. Allusions to movement, for instance, are metaphorical of the quest for mystical love. In this dissertation, I focus especially on decoding the symbols of motion in Mevlevi musical performance for the purposes of demonstrating how music functions as act of devotion,

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<sup>6</sup> William C. Chittick, *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000): 61.

<sup>7</sup> Hughes, 620.

an offering of love for the Mevlana Rumi and God. Thus the term devotee in this study refers not simply to a worshiper, but to a lover fervently seeking spiritual union with both the Mevlana and Allah through even the most quotidian of gestures and actions.

Finally, in this dissertation I document Mevlevi Sufism not so much as an historical institution, but as a vital, living religious system that thrives both inside and outside of Turkey despite considerable opposition. The general consensus in academic and political circles and among critics of the Mevlevi is that the order is virtually extinct. Likewise, there is the widespread belief that Mevlevi musical and ritual practices, having been co-opted by the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and New Age dabblers, survive today only in adulterated forms as tourist spectacles and farcical ceremonies. As this dissertation demonstrates, nothing could be further from the truth. Viewing Mevlevism from within the context of such modes of social movement as pilgrimage, tourism, and globalization leads to very different conclusions and reveals not only the broader cultural values of motion central to the sect, but also the fact that the tradition flourishes because of its inherent dynamism and aversion to stasis.

Having laid out these three principal avenues of investigation—the aesthetics of motion, music as devotion, and Mevlevism as vital tradition—I provide a biographical sketch of the poet-saint Mevlana Rumi in the following section so as to impart a deeper understanding of the man who inspired the foundation of new religious sects as well as new musical forms of ritual worship, two developments I explore more fully in the succeeding fourth and fifth sections of the chapter. As these three background sections immediately reveal, the concepts of motion and devotion shaped the life of the Mevlana and hence also the religious and musical forms that emerged after his passing.

The sixth and seventh sections of this chapter demonstrate that previous scholarship on Mevlana tradition has failed to highlight these central themes of movement and devotion and consequently has generated a rather limited understanding of the tradition. Thus, after presenting a critical analysis of the available literature on Mevlana culture in the sixth section, I describe in the seventh section my fieldwork experiences in Turkey and elsewhere as I came to understand the importance of these concepts. This reflective section describes my fieldwork process, research methodology, and findings, those elements so critical to an ethnomusicological study. I end the chapter with an outline of the major topics that emerged from my fieldwork and that I explore more thoroughly in the rest of the dissertation.

### **The Journeys of the Mevlana Celal ed-Din Muhammad al-Balkhi al-Rumi**

The aesthetic of motion so prevalent in Mevlevi devotional practice is inspired by and reflected in the semi-nomadic life of the order's widely revered eponymous founder. Although much of what is known about him comes through myth, legend, and scholarly supposition, certain details do emerge from the historical record.<sup>8</sup> The Mevlana Hüdavendigâr Celal ed-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Balkhi al-Rumi, who acquired names and honorifics as he traveled, was likely born on September 30, 1207 in Vakhsh in what is today Tajikistan, near the Afghan border. He was named Muhammad after both the Prophet of Islam and his father Muhammad Baha ed-Din Veled, who also gave him the title of Celal ed-Din ("The Splendor of the Faith"). Celal ed-Din

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<sup>8</sup> For a critical review of the scholarly sources and the most recent scholarly evidence for the life of the Mevlana see Lewis, 42-49 and 90-95. Much of the following discussion is based on Lewis's account.

Muhammad's father was a native of nearby Balkh and a traveling Islamic preacher and jurist of some note who was based largely in Vakhsh between 1204 and 1210.

The town of Vakhsh is situated on the east bank of the main tributary of the Amu Darya River and gives its name to the fertile valley surrounding it. The Amu Darya, which extends from the Aral Sea to the Vakhsh River, is the largest river in Central Asia and is known most widely as the Oxus, an ancient Greek corruption of Vakhsh. In medieval imagination, the Oxus River marked the edge of the civilized world, separating the exquisite cities of Persia from the desolate lands of the nomadic Turkic tribes that lay just beyond (literally, Transoxania). At the turn of the thirteenth century, Vakhsh and more cosmopolitan Balkh, along with Bukhara, Herat, and Samarkand, the fabled hubs of commerce and learning on the Silk Road, were within the fold of Greater Khorasan, the resplendent eastern domain of the Persianate Khwarezmid Empire.

By the end of the first decade of the thirteenth century, however, the atmosphere in either Vakhsh or Balkh must have been that of an anxious, uncertain frontier town. To the east, the forces of Genghis Khan had vanquished the Western Xia, a region comprising what is today Western China and parts of Tibet, and his great Mongol Horde would soon turn its attention further west. By 1222, the entire Khwarezmid Empire had fallen, its great cities burned to the ground, smoldering in ashes. So extensive was the devastation and human toll that over a century later, in the 1330s, the celebrated Muslim traveler Abu 'Abdallah ibn Battuta described Balkh as still "completely dilapidated and uninhabited."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005): 176.

The Veled family, however, had escaped this apocalypse. Baha ed-Din moved his family progressively westward in advance of the Mongol invasions, though they might not have traveled entirely as refugees. It may be that Baha ed-Din became entangled in local Vakhsh religious politics or sought better employment elsewhere and thus the family moved initially more like migrants than immigrants through Samarkand, Balkh, Nishapur, and elsewhere before leaving Persian lands altogether.<sup>10</sup> What is certain is that sometime around 1215 or 1216 Baha ed-Din took his family, the young Celal ed-Din in tow, through Baghdad *en route* to Mecca for the *hajj* and subsequently settled in Larende, modern day Karaman in Turkey.

In 1224 Celal ed-Din Muhammad married Gevher Hatun of Samarkand, whose family had been in the Veleds' caravan to Mecca, and soon had two sons with her, 'Ala ed-Din and Sultan Veled, who assumed his father's legacy after his death. In the meantime, Celal ed-Din's own father, Baha ed-Din, as a scholar and ascetic, settled in nearby Konya where he secured a teaching post in the *medrese* ("Islamic religious school") and developed a religious following. Upon Baha ed-Din's death in 1231, Celal ed-Din inherited his father's legacy, but feeling ill-prepared to continue it, he traveled to Aleppo and Damascus to undergo an extended period of religious education.

Sometime between 1237 and 1241, he joined his family in Konya, becoming a Hanefi jurist and head of the community of mystical disciples established by his father. Konya was the capital of the Selçuk Sultanate of Rum, the large Anatolian Muslim empire that the Selçuk Turks of Central Asia had recently wrested away from "Rome," as Byzantium, formerly the eastern half of the Roman Empire, was still known to Muslims. Celal ed-Din's Konya was at its cultural apogee in the thirteenth century with wealth

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<sup>10</sup> Lewis, 51-52 and 55-66.

from Silk Road trade allowing for an intellectual and artistic flowering that resulted in, among other things, the construction of hundreds of elaborately decorated caravanserais, mosques, and *medrese*-s across the Anatolian Peninsula (see for example Figure 1).



Figure 1: Entrance to Ağzıkara Hanı,  
a 13<sup>th</sup>-Century Selçuk Caravanserai  
(Near Aksaray, June 6, 2002)

Like many other Persian émigrés fleeing the Mongol invasions, Celal ed-Din Muhammad settled in prosperous Konya and married Gerra Hatun after the death of his first wife, fathering a third son and a daughter. There he acquired the toponym Rumi, by which he is today most widely known in the West.

Although he may have physically settled in Konya, it was there that he began his inner spiritual journey. Perhaps in reaction to the growing decadence of daily life in the

city, he turned more seriously to the spiritual, ascetic principles of Sufism, reading the works of mystical writers like his father and undergoing austere acts of self-deprivation including long periods of fasting. Consequently, Celal ed-Din Muhammad Rumi became arguably the most respected, inspiring, and charismatic Sufi master of his time. Yet after the deaths of his two most important mystical teachers, his father and Sayyed Borhan al-Din Mohaqqeq al-Termez, he searched endlessly for a spiritual guide who was in all ways his superior.

Such a teacher came in the form of the Persian dervish Şams ed-Din-i Muhammad al-Tabrizi (literally, “Muhammad of Tabriz, the Sun of the Faith”). Relatively little is known of Şams, who is often likened to the sun coming in from the east and setting Rumi’s heart aflame with the fire of spiritual love (*aşk*).<sup>11</sup> He was originally from Tabriz in the west of Persia and not from Khorasan in the east, which is the traditional heartland of Sufi Islam. Nevertheless, like other Sufis of the time, he was a teacher and traveling ascetic and was evidently highly educated in Islamic theology and law. In addition, he was Celal ed-Din’s senior by a generation, which meant that Rumi would have assumed the role of disciple in the relationship more readily except that Şams was an Ovaysi Sufi, meaning that he sought enlightenment directly from Allah rather than through a Sufi master, and he trained Rumi unrelentingly in the same principle.

Reportedly, the two were kindred spirits, shared an intimate bond of deep personal friendship, and spent extended periods together in isolation, immersed in *sohbet* (“religious conversation”) debating esoteric topics. Upon the mysterious disappearances and later death of Şams, the distraught Celal ed-Din Rumi poured his bereavement into periods of travel, as he attempted to track him down, and into bouts of profuse writing.

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<sup>11</sup> For the most authoritative summary biography of Şams Tabrizi to date see *ibid.*, 134-241.

During this period he composed his *Mesnevi*, a six-volume collection of spiritual couplets, and the *Divani Şamsi Tabrizi* (*The Works of Şamsi Tabrizi*), consisting of over forty thousand verses. Much of this vast corpus comprises love poetry that conflates Şams and Allah and incorporates a series of stock images, themes, and metaphors including notably references to motion and travel.

Here I come again,  
Again I come from the Friend  
Look at me, look at me,  
I've come to look after you  
I come in joy, rejoiced,  
I come freed from all  
Several thousand years went by  
Before I found the words:  
I ascend, ascend  
I dwelt up there, am heading there  
...  
Shams-e Tabriz  
Won't you search me out,  
Comb the earth, end to end?  
For I have criss-crossed  
Heart-sore and soul-sick  
Through the sands of effacement<sup>12</sup>

Such verses are deeply moving and their performances through recitation and music drew a large following and turned Rumi into a venerated saint in his own lifetime. Rumi's most common sobriquet in the Islamic world, already in use during his time, was Mevlana, an Arabic term meaning both "our master" and "our guide" and referring to the spiritual direction his followers receive from his writings and teachings. The Mevlana's following continued to grow well after his death on the evening of December 17, 1273, known to his devotees as his Şeb-i 'urs ("wedding night") when he attained complete union with Allah. While the Mevlana's death and journey of ascent into Paradise may be wrapped in legend, the subsequent spread of his spiritual teachings is not disputed.

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 352-53.

### **Advancing after Annihilation: The Rise of the Cult of the Mevlana**

The Mevlana's cult of disciples was already quite substantial during his lifetime, and, aside from his students, the large audiences that came to hear his lectures included Selçuk nobility and the governing elite of Konya and the surrounding areas. Celal ed-Din himself, however, seemed to have had only limited interest and patience with such audiences and most likely did not preside over a fully established order of followers. As a consequence of the Mevlana's resistance to earthly matters, the initial institutional growth of his cult was somewhat limited until after his death. It was only through much effort, for instance, that the Selçuk financial minister and Mevlana devotee Taj ed-Din Mo'tazz Khorasani was able to establish the early infrastructure for the Mevlana's followers, including the founding of the first *tekke* ("lodge"), despite the Mevlana's refusal.<sup>13</sup> Taj ed-Din's eventual success came only through the intercession of Sultan Veled, the son of the Mevlana.

It is, therefore, Sultan Veled Çelebi (1226-1312) who is generally credited with founding the Mevlevi *tarikât* of dervishes and its sacred rites. The word *tarikât*, meaning literally "path" in Arabic and often translated as "order," "brotherhood," or "confraternity," applies to a sect or cult of Sufi mystics. Despite many points of commonality, Sufi orders are distinguished in particular by the spiritual guides and saints (*pir-s*) they include in their pantheon, their symbols, which are especially evident in their regalia and apparel, and in certain specific theological beliefs and ritual procedures. It is doubtful that during Celal ed-Din's lifetime or even in the early years of the order that his disciples were organized into any strictly defined or structured *tarikât*. Indeed, many

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 425.

features of Mevlevi theology and ritual practice have their origins in the Sufi traditions already common throughout the Islamic world.

That said, Sultan Veled did coordinate the political structure of the order, appointing *şeyh*-s (“elders”) and deputies and establishing himself as *halife* (“successor”). Using the lives of the Mevlana and Şams as models, he also institutionalized particular dress, titular designations, symbolism, terminology, and ritual practices that would distinguish the Mevlevi from other *tarikats*-s.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Sultan Veled and his son Arif Çelebi ensured the financial stability of the growing number of Mevlevi *tekke*-s by securing pious endowments (*vakif*-s) from wealthy patrons and the government. It was through strategic aristocratic and governmental sponsorship that the Çelebis, henceforth a hereditary title designating the supreme Mevlevi authority, accomplished the subsequent spread of the *tarikat* across Anatolia. Under the auspices of the Selçuks and other Anatolian princedoms (*beylik*-s), Mevlevi *tekke*-s and mosques soon sprang up in Kırşehir, throughout the neighboring Kapadokya region, and as far northeast as Erzincan.

During Ottoman rule, royal patronage intensified and the *tarikat* extended deeper into Asia as well as into Europe and Africa. Sultan Murat II (r. 1421-44, 1446-51) supported the Mevlevi Order in Europe by founding a *tekke* in Edirne, near the modern border of Bulgaria. Around 1492, Sultan Beyazıt II (r. 1481-1512) founded the important *tekke* at Galata, today the oldest lodge extant in İstanbul. In the mid-sixteenth century, Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66) had the worship hall (*semahane*) adjacent to the Mevlana’s tomb in Konya constructed as an imperial gift. Other important sultans, including Murat I (r. 1362-89), Mehmet II, conqueror of Constantinople (r. 1444-46,

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<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, Nurhan Atasoy, “Dervish Dress and Ritual: The Mevlevi Tradition” in *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey*, ed. Raymond Lifchez, trans. M. E. Quigley-Pınar (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992): 253-68.

1451-81), Selim I (r. 1512-20), and Murat III (r. 1574-95), were likewise attracted to the Mevlevi order and were strong supporters of its expansion and further development.

Through such patronage the Mevlevi became virtually omnipresent throughout the Ottoman Empire and penetrated into the heart of the rival Shiite empire of the Persian Safavids. At their height, the Mevlevi had fourteen major centers across the Near East, stretching from Yenişehir (modern-day Larissa, Greece) and Gelibolu to Bursa, Manisa, Afyon, Kütahya, Eskişehir, Kastamonu, Aleppo, and Cairo, with four in İstanbul at Bahariye, Galata, Kasımpaşa, and Yenikapı. Another seventy-six smaller *tekke*-s were founded mostly in Anatolia and the Balkans, but also as far afield as Pécs (in modern-day Hungary), Tabriz (Iran), Baghdad, Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. At the geographic and symbolic heart of the Mevlevi world lay the Asitane (“great central lodge”) and *türbe* (“mausoleum,” “tomb,” or “shrine”) of the Mevlana in Konya (Figure 2).

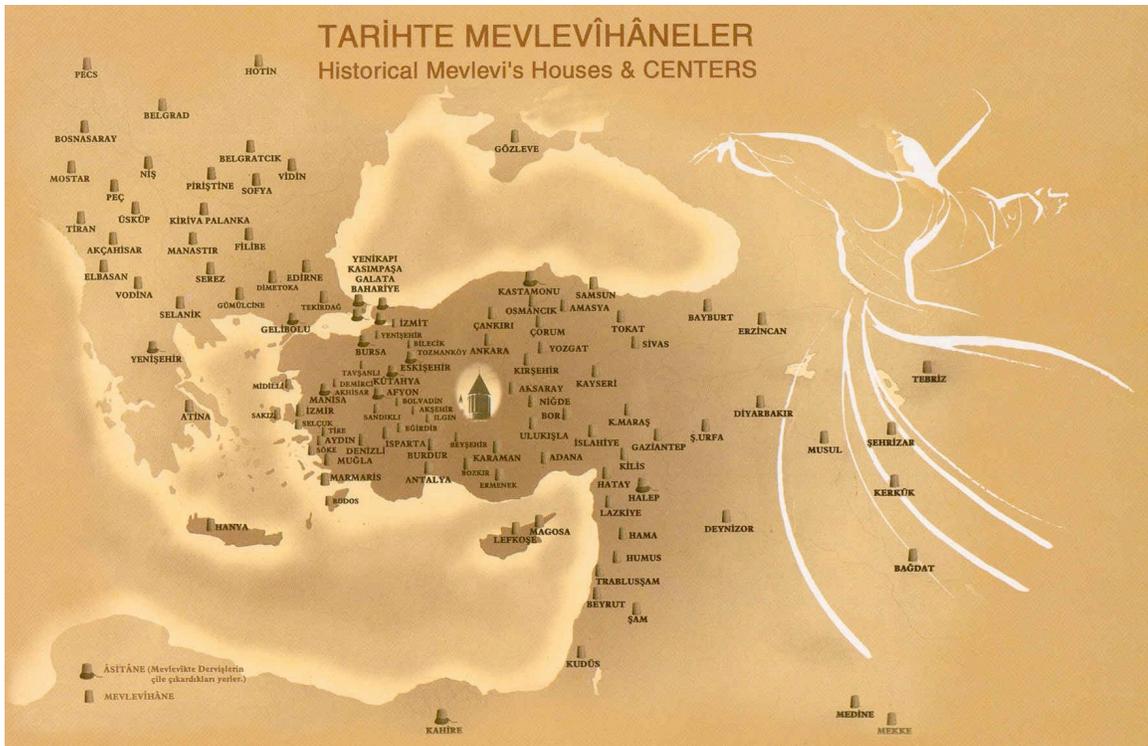


Figure 2: Map of Mevlevi Lodges and Centers in the Near East (Provided by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism)

As impressive as this multitude of Mevlevi centers may be, however, it accounts for only a portion of the Mevlana's cult of devotees. Not all of the Mevlana's disciples subscribed to the Mevlevi *tarakat*, which was, despite all its fame, one of the more modestly sized Sufi orders. Followers of the Mevlana could be found all over the Islamic world as far away as Central and South Asia, including among the Bektaşî, Cerrahi, Chishti, Nakşibendi, and Nimatollahi orders, among many others. In addition, some later *tarikât*-s also adopted the Mevlana's teachings and traced their *silsila* ("spiritual and hereditary lineage") to Celal ed-Din Rumi.

Nevertheless, the Mevlevi were unequivocally one of the most powerful Sufi *tarkitat*-s in the Islamic world, thanks to their Ottoman benefactors. By the reign of Selim III (r. 1789-1807), adherents to the Mevlana commanded from all echelons of the Ottoman Empire; Selim himself, in addition to being the Sultan, was also a poet, ney player, composer, and a Mevlevi.

The political status of these powerful religious leaders within the Ottoman ranks would be their undoing, however, when the forces of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk seized control in the wake of the First World War. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1922, the newly formed Turkish Republic sought to create a secular nation-state and eliminated any potential revival of the Empire. On December 13, 1925, just days prior to 652<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Mevlana's Şeb-i 'urs, the new secular regime, under Article 1 of Law 677, officially banned all Sufi *tarikât*-s. All *tekke*-s were closed down and all ritual accoutrements including costumes and musical instruments were confiscated and put on display in museums as vestiges of Turkish heritage. For the remainder of the twentieth century, the Mevlevi in Turkey languished as cultural relics, their venerated saint

demoted to the status of a mere poet, their centers of worship shut down or turned into museums.

Despite the best efforts of the secular government, however, the Mevlana remained extremely popular. His devotees went underground and continued their traditions in secret. The number of Mevlana admirers did not dwindle over the course of the twentieth century and the government was forced to make several important concessions to them. The most significant of these was that the Mevlana's sacred shrine in Konya was not permanently closed down, but reconstituted as a popular museum in which tourists and large numbers of pilgrims intermingled. Under the auspices of their new patrons, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Mevlevi were partially rehabilitated in 1953 when their sacred liturgy was publicly performed in Konya in honor of the 680<sup>th</sup> Şeb-i 'urs, though officially only as a display of Turkish cultural heritage. In subsequent years more elaborate cultural and tourist performances were permitted in commemoration of the Mevlana's death, first in Konya, then in Ankara and İstanbul.

Most significantly, the Turkish government in collaboration with UNESCO observed the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mevlana's passing in 1973, formally recognized as the Year of Rumi, with great pomp. In addition, the Turkish government permitted the Mevlevi to travel to London, Paris, and across the United States to perform their ceremonies. This tour, along with those through Europe and the U.S. in the years prior, mark the most recent phase of Mevlevi expansion.<sup>15</sup>

After visiting the United States and amassing a modest following, Şeyh Süleyman Hayati Dede of Konya sent his son Celaledin Loras there in 1978 to continue his work in New York and Mendocino, California. Loras officially established the Mevlevi Order

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<sup>15</sup> Much of the following discussion on recent Mevlevi developments is based on Lewis 520-24.

of America in 1980 and has since been especially active along the West coast. The order now boasts centers in Seattle, Portland, Eugene, southern Oregon, San Francisco, and Marin Bay and Sonoma counties, California as well as in Ithaca, New York and even has affiliates in Vancouver, Munich, and Frankfurt. The dervishes of the Mevlevi Order of America regularly perform the Mevlevi rite throughout the United States and Europe as well as in Turkey. In 1994 they were allowed to perform in the *semahane* of the Mevlana Museum in Konya, even though the Turkish government has not permitted local Turkish Mevlevis to do the same. In 1998 and again more recently in 2005, the North American Mevlevis also performed in the Galata Mevlevihane in İstanbul.

A second Mevlevi group known as the Threshold Society was founded in 1975 by Kabir and Camille Helminski in Brattleboro, Vermont, also known as “New Konya” until the Helminskis relocated to Aptos, California. In 1990, Kabir Helminski was appointed a Mevelvi *şeyh* by Celaleddin Bakır Çelebi (1926-96), the Grand Çelebi of the Mevlevi *tarikât*, and began to expand the organization soon after. The Threshold Society now also operates out of San Diego, Portland, Washington state, Washington D.C., Madison, Wisconsin and internationally in Montreal, Toronto, and London, Canada, as well as in Mexico City and Santiago, Chile. Interaction between the two U.S. based Mevlevi groups, however, is limited owing to tensions over which of the two *şeyh*-s, Loras or Helminski, is the rightful head of the Mevlevi in North America.

Although the place of the Mevlevi in Turkey today remains tenuous at best and subject to the whims of capricious Turkish state officials at worst, their presence is growing. As we have seen with their activities in North America, however, the true potency of the Mevlevi at the dawn of the Mevlana’s eighth century is on the global

stage. In 1996, Celaleddin Bakır Çelebi broadened the Mevlevi *tarikât* further by founding the International Mevlana Foundation, which is now headed by his son Faruk Hemdem Çelebi (b. 1950). The Foundation was created to regulate the global presence of Mevlevi and has in a sense replaced the *tarikât* outlawed by the Turkish government. It is currently active in Austria, Chile, Germany, Iran, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. The spiritual direction of the Mevlevi is entrusted to President Çelebi's small but growing contingent of loosely confederated *şeyh*-s currently based in Turkey, Iran, across Europe, and in North America.

### **The Mevlevi and Music for the Mevlana**

In many ways, the globalization of the *tarikât*, particularly in the West, has posed new challenges for the Mevlevi Order. Paramount among the changes ushered in by internationalization is the debate revolving around the expanded definition of a "Mevlevi." Such reevaluation significantly impacts what constitutes Mevlevi ritual practice and complicates traditional notions of what is "Mevlevi music."

Predicated on the principles of mystical love (*aşk*) and self-annihilation (*fana* and *baka*), Sufi identities have always been rather fluid. Historically, many Sufis owed their allegiance to various *şeyh*-s and *pir*-s who may or many not have inspired a specific order. In many cases, especially in that of the Mevlana Rumi, multiple *tarikât*-s would coalesce around the teachings of one mystical leader, forming a sort of brotherhood among various brotherhoods. In a similar manner, it was not atypical for dervishes to be initiates of more than one order. As a result, Sufism developed as a generally open and

occasionally quite heterodox belief system, with many Sufi groups espousing a tolerance and universality that have rendered them rather enigmatic.

To varying degrees, Islam is considered the religious essence and defining feature of most *tarikats*, but Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian influences are prominent among the most basic Sufi theological precepts.<sup>16</sup> The Mevlevi, maintaining that Islam is the shell within which Sufi mysticism is contained, are nevertheless extremely welcoming of Christians, Jews, and even atheists, particularly from the West. Most controversially, the Mevlevi centers in the West do not currently require members to convert to Islam, though they are given Islamic training and engage in study of the Koran.

Another peculiarity of contemporary Mevlevi Sufism is that it has become inextricably linked with Turkish national identity (see Chapter Four), even though the order remains officially banned in Turkey. In particular, the concentration of Mevlevi *tekke*-s in Anatolia over seven centuries has cemented the place of the *tarikats* within Ottoman and Turkish heritage. This has made it difficult for non-Turks to be considered “Mevlevi” in the traditional sense, that is Turkish and Muslim. Yet owing to the worldwide appeal of the Mevlana, the modern Mevlevi is increasingly neither a Turk nor a Muslim.

The last recent significant change to complicate the traditional characterization of a Mevlevi is the more liberal inclusion of women. Particularly contentious have been the initiation of female *şeyh*-s and the intermixing of male and female dervishes in the sacred rite. Khalija Radin Goforth, a disciple of Celaleddin Loras, for instance, serves as a female Mevlevi *şeyh* in Danby, New York where she teaches the Mevlevi rite to Western Sufis of both sexes. After some deliberation in 1991, Celaleddin Bakır Çelebi officially

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<sup>16</sup> Hughes, 609.

granted women the right to participate with men in the public ceremonies commemorating the Mevlana's birth and death. There has been some reticence among traditionalists, however, in accepting these changes fully or in granting women further liberties.<sup>17</sup>

The increased presence of non-Turks and non-Muslims, as well as women, in Mevlevi culture has resulted in appreciable changes in Mevlevi religious practice and music and has initiated serious debate as to the nature and authenticity of current praxis. Although I discuss the nature of historical and contemporary Mevlevi music and ritual in greater detail in the following chapters of this dissertation, it is useful at this point to consider briefly what is meant by the term "Mevlevi music."

Mevlevi music, along with ritual and theology, is based on the many writings, speeches, and sermons of the Mevlana, which, according to tradition, were codified by his followers and his son.<sup>18</sup> Sultan Veled, who once again assumes a legendary role in the origins of the *tarikât*, is often cited as having established the Mevlevi liturgy by setting his father's mystical poetry to music and dance. The implication is that the music performed today, or at least its style, was composed by him and may even date to the time of the Mevlana. Such claims are highly contestable, however, given that the earliest surviving music from Islamic Anatolia comes from the Ottoman, not the Selçuk, period.

It is, therefore, the extant collection of Ottoman classical music composed by Mevlevi Sufis that music scholars, the Mevlevi themselves, and even the Turkish

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<sup>17</sup> In ceremonies I witnessed in Konya, the inclusion or exclusion of women was somewhat arbitrary. At the first *zikr* I attended, the woman I was with was seated with the other female congregants behind a curtain segregating them from the men and the main ceremony. On most subsequent visits with other female visitors, however, men and women worshipped jointly.

<sup>18</sup> Şeyh Nail Kesova for one claims, "The Mevlevi rite, in the form in which it has come down to us, is Sultan Veled's." See James Moore, *The Whirling Dervishes: A Commemoration* (London: International Rumi Committee, 1974): [12].

government overwhelmingly endorse as the primary Mevlevi repertory (see Chapter Four). Comprising both vocal and instrumental compositions dating largely to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the music is performed by ensembles of Turkish classical instruments and choirs of singers. Performances of this music accompany groups of so-called “dancers” who, with outstretched arms, elegantly spin counterclockwise in white flowing gowns. This whirling, called *sema*,<sup>19</sup> is the most characteristic feature of the Mevlevi rite and is performed by devotees in order to achieve a meditative trance state in which the worshiper is believed to be in spiritual unity with mankind, the cosmos, and Allah.<sup>20</sup>

The *sema*, however, is only one aspect of *zikr*, the main Sufi ritual also practiced by the Mevlevi. *Zikr* (Arabic *dhikr*), often translated as “remembrance,” involves the ritualized iteration of the word “Allah” thousands of times, usually in a seated position while swaying from front to back. In Sufi theology, it is believed that through such repetition, eventually, as the formulae cease to have meaning, the distinctions between Allah and the worshiper are neutralized, creating an ecstatic union between the supplicant and the One God. Among several Sufi *tarikāt*-s, including the Mevlevi, this ritual is embellished with the performance of instrumental music, usually Turkish folk music on Turkish folk instruments, and the singing of hymns and odes composed by the great mystic poets, including those of the Mevlana Rumi (see Chapter Five).

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<sup>19</sup> The term *sema* has two different meanings in the Islamic world. In Arabic *samāʿ* means “listening” or “audition” and is used to indicate a concert of music, while in Turkish *sema* means “firmament” or “sky” and refers to the whirling of the Mevlevi dervishes. *Seema* should not be translated into English as a “dance,” however, for both spiritual and linguistic reasons; Sufis do not consider the ecstatic turning to be a kind of dance. The Turkish word for “to dance” is *dans etmek*, while in Arabic the term *raqs* is used.

<sup>20</sup> Although the turning (*deveran*) of the *sema* is most characteristic of the Mevlevi, it is iconic of Sufism in general and is also practiced by many other Turkish Sufi *tarikāt*-s including the Bayrami, Bektaşî, Gülşeni, Halvetî, Kadiri, Rufai, and Uşşaki.

Two parallel Mevlevi musical traditions are thus in existence in Turkey: one the officially sanctioned whirling *sema* accompanied by the staid strains of the Ottoman classical repertory, the other the *zikr* ceremony consisting of ritual trance and exuberant folk-inspired hymns. In Mevlevi spiritual praxis, the latter repertory may in fact be more common today. Accounts of Mevlevi musical practice, however, rarely mention the *zikr* or its music, although it is well documented among other *tarikāt*-s.<sup>21</sup>

The use of this music is significant because it broadens the scope of what is normally meant by Mevlevi music beyond the traditional classical repertory. In fact, Sufi music in general in Turkey, and especially elsewhere in the Islamic world, is not easily understood by such Western distinctions as “classical” or “folk,” but rather by the presence of *tasavvuf* (“mystical spiritual essence”). In an essay entitled “What is Sufi Music?” Jean During suggests that this term may have more to do with spiritual intention than anything inherently musical or sonic.

Now, without the active participation of the subject who performs or listens to the music, no music is *per se* mystical. Let us remember that even the most evocative *dhikr* does not work “automatically”; it is merely a technique employed during *samā* ‘[“spiritual audition”] to activate the intention of the individual and to assist concentration.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, as During argues, “the true Sufi may interpret the most mundane of melodies as ‘music of the spheres’, hearing in it the Divine summons to heed the

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<sup>21</sup> For a listing, see footnote no. 44 in this chapter.

<sup>22</sup> Jean During, “What is Sufi Music?” in *The Heritage of Sufism*, Vol. 2, *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150-1500)*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999): 283.

primordial Covenant,”<sup>23</sup> and he proclaims that musical “form is only secondary to the actual performance.”<sup>24</sup>

Yet, During, defining Sufi music broadly as “music made by, and/or listened to by, Sufis,” nevertheless ultimately sets rather arbitrary restrictions on his “proposed union of sacred and profane genres of music.”<sup>25</sup> Claiming that “some forms are more suitable than others to spiritual purposes,” During prizes the traditional classical forms because they were “originally elaborated by Sufis, or else...are in themselves versatile, so that the same tune can be interpreted in both a spiritual and a mundane manner.”<sup>26</sup> He thus categorically dismisses forms like pop *qawwali* music from South Asia because they “differ from the traditional.”<sup>27</sup>

When we consider music as a form of devotion, however, we are forced to accept other kinds of music as well. The Mevlana’s devotees have not limited their spiritual expression to classical or folk genres only, and some have recast these traditional forms in the sound world of Turkish or even European and American popular music (see Chapter Six). Likewise, when worshipers and pilgrims from other countries come to visit the major Mevlevi sites and shrines in Turkey, they express themselves in accordance with their own musical vocabularies, and not necessarily in Turkish idioms (see Chapter Seven). In fact, such musics may sometimes be more “Mevlevi” in intention and function than those bearing the traditional nomenclature. In an attempt to understand the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 279.

full extent to which music is used in a devotional manner and in keeping with the universalism of Sufism, I have cast as wide a net as possible without losing sight of the object of adoration: the Mevlana. Indeed, during my research trips in Turkey when I would explain that I was conducting research on “Mevlevi music,” many would repeat “Mevlana,” as if correcting my Turkish. Hence, in this study I focus not only on “Mevlevi music” as such, but also on musics performed in honor of or inspired by the Mevlana including popular as well as non-Turkish musical forms. Likewise in this dissertation, while centering largely on the Mevlevi, I also follow the activities of the Mevlana’s other devotees in other *tarikats*-s and those not affiliated with any Sufi sect.

### **Paths Well Trodden: Previous Scholarship**

Given their popularity, scholarship and other literature on the Mevlana and his disciples are profuse. Sufi tradition itself encourages an intensive intellectualism resulting in a vast body of writings, largely theological, polemic, and poetic in nature. Soon after the Mevlana’s death in 1271, for instance, his followers established the biographies that would become the bases of his hagiography, as was typical of the Persian Sufi tradition. Sultan Veled, the Mevlana’s son, led the way with his *Ebtedâ nâme*, a biography of Celal ed-Din Rumi’s life composed prior to the turn of the fourteenth century.<sup>28</sup> Along with the scant information that can be gleaned from the Mevlana’s own writings, it constitutes the earliest of the countless biographical sketches of the great saint. Also important are Faridun Sepahsalar’s *Resâle-ye Sepahsâlâr*<sup>29</sup> and

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<sup>28</sup> Sultan Valad, *Masnavi-ye Valadi, enshâ’ e Bahâ al-Din b. Mowlânâ Jalâl al-Din Mohammad b. Hosayn-e Balkhi, mashhur be Mowlavi*, ed. Jalal al-Din Homa’i (Tehran: Eqbâl, 1316/1937).

<sup>29</sup> Faridun b. Ahmad Sepahsâlâr, *Resâle-ye Sepahsâlâr*, ed. Sa’id Nafisi (Tehran: Eqbâl, 1325/1947).

Şams ed-Din al-Aflaki's *Manâqeb al-'arefin*<sup>30</sup> both of which date from the first half of the fourteenth century, preserve information from the oral tradition, and provide accounts of the early Mevlevi. Following genre conventions, these early sources are full of legendary and mythological pronouncements that have nevertheless been imitated in the scholarly tradition until the present.

Beginning in the twentieth century, however, serious studies of surviving manuscripts from Turkey, Iran, and India provided a more factual account of the life of the Mevlana. Annemarie Schimmel, who has spent a lifetime consulting primary sources, has written several biographies of the Mevlana all maintaining the poetic nature of her predecessors.<sup>31</sup> The most accurate, extensive, and recent of all Mevlana biographies, however, is Franklin Lewis's *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*, to which many references have already been made.<sup>32</sup>

Aside from biographical studies, the great majority of contemporary Mevlana literature consists of commentaries, editions, and translations of the Mevlana's profuse volumes of writings. Dozens have been undertaken by a legion of scholars and authors, and while even a partial listing is impractical here,<sup>33</sup> those by Coleman Barks<sup>34</sup> deserve

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<sup>30</sup> Shams al-Din Ahmad al-Aflâki, *Manâqeb al-'arefin*, in 2 vols., ed. Tahsin Yazıcı (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1959).

<sup>31</sup> See especially Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalâloddin Rumi* (London: Fine Books, 1978) and *I Am Wind, You Are Fire: The Life and Work of Rumi* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1992).

<sup>32</sup> Lewis, 2000.

<sup>33</sup> For a thorough summary see *ibid.*, 528-615.

<sup>34</sup> Coleman Barks, *The Hand of Poetry: Five Mystic Poets of Persia* (New Lebanon, NY: Omega Publications, 1993); *The Essential Rumi* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995); and *The Soul of Rumi: A New Collection of Ecstatic Poems* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002); *The Book of Love: Poems of Ecstasy and Longing* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003).

special mention for their accessibility and poetic spirit, even if the translations are of dubious accuracy and largely based on the work of R. A. Nicholson and A. J. Arberry.<sup>35</sup>

Significantly less scholarship exists on the Mevlana's devotees and their means of worship, despite the fact that the Mevlevi of Turkey remain today the best known of all the Sufi orders. Several early accounts by foreign travelers to Anatolia, though incomplete, introductory, or vague, provide some picture of Mevlevi practice in its first few centuries. Scholars and authors of tourist guidebooks alike have done much to elaborate on the accounts of early pilgrims and visiting dignitaries, with Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı,<sup>36</sup> Shems Friedlander,<sup>37</sup> and Talat Sait Halman and Metin And<sup>38</sup> providing the most detailed studies of the Mevlevi in the twentieth century. More recently, Jean During has written a brief description of some recent Mevlevi activities,<sup>39</sup> though only Franklin Lewis has made any serious effort to document contemporary Mevlevi culture in any detail. Lewis focuses particularly on the Mevlevi in the United States and other Western countries. To my knowledge, however, there exists no ethnographic account of the Mevlevi in contemporary Turkey.

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<sup>35</sup> Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, ed. and trans., *Selected Poems from the Dīvāni Shamsi Tabrīz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898/1977; Arthur John Arberry, *Tales from the Masnavi* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961); *More Tales from the Masnavi* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963).

<sup>36</sup> Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ Celâleddin; hayati, felsefesi, eserleri, eserlerinden seçmeler* [Mevlana Celaleddin: His Life, Philosophy, and Achievements; Selections from His Works] (Istanbul: İnkılâp, 1951); *Mevlânâ'dan sonra Mevlevilik* [The Mevlevi after Mevlana] (Istanbul: İnkılâp ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1953); *Mevlevî Adâb ve Erkânı* [The Mevlevi Adab and Erkan] (Istanbul: İnkılâp ve Aka, 1963).

<sup>37</sup> Shems Friedlander, *The Whirling Dervishes: Being an Account of the Sufi Order, Known as the Mevlevi, and its Founder, the Poet and Mystic, Mevlana Jalalu'ddin Rumi* (New York: Macmillan, 1975).

<sup>38</sup> Talât Sait Halman and Metin And, *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes* (Istanbul: Dost Yayinlari, 1983).

<sup>39</sup> Jean During, "Sufi Music and Rites in the Era of Mass Reproduction Techniques and Culture," in *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and Middle East*, Papers Read at a Conference Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, November 27-27, 1997, ed. Anders Hammarlund, Tord Olsson, and Elisabeth Özdalga (Istanbul: Svenska Forskningsinstitutet; Richmond, England: Curzon, 2001).

Specific studies of music that are informative for modern Mevlevi devotional practice are likewise few in number and are limited largely to the classical Mevlevi repertory, though the existing works tend to be excellent. Mevlevi *neyzen* (“ney player”) and musicologist Rauf Yekta Bey, for instance, compiled a large body of this music, the classical *ayin*-s accompanying the *sema* portion of the *zikr*, from practice current in the 1930s<sup>40</sup> and his collection was updated in 1979 by Sadettin Heper.<sup>41</sup> Yekta and more recently Karl Signell, Walter Feldman, and Owen Wright have written extensively on the *makam-usul* system in which the *ayin*-s were composed.<sup>42</sup> In their writings, each of these musicologists have advanced understanding of the complex Ottoman *makam* system and have clarified some of the earlier history of this music within a Mevlevi context. Because this music is related to the classical modal system in use throughout the Islamic world, the writings of John Baily, Alexis Chottin, Hormoz Farhat, Lois al-Faruqi, Scott Marcus, Józef Pacholczyk, and Ali Jihad Racy are also enlightening.<sup>43</sup> Comparative study is

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<sup>40</sup> Rauf Yekta, *Mevlevî Ayinleri* (Istanbul: Istanbul Belediye Konservatuvarı, 1923-39).

<sup>41</sup> Sadettin Heper, ed., *Mevlevî Ayinleri* (Konya: Konya Turizm Derneği Yayını, 1979).

<sup>42</sup> Raouf Yekta Bey, “La musique Turque” in *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du Conservatoire*, ed. A. Lavignac (Paris: Delagrave, 1922); Karl Signell, “Esthetics of Improvisation in Turkish Art Music,” *Asian Music* 5, No. 2 (1974): 45-49; *Makam: Model Practice in Turkish Art Music* (Seattle: Asian Music Publications, 1977); Walter Feldman, “Ottoman Sources on the Development of the Taksim,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 25 (1993): 1-28; *Music of the Ottoman Court: Makam, Composition and Early Ottoman Instrumental Repertoire* (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1996); “Structure and Evolution of the Mevlevî Ayîn: The Case of the Third Selam” in *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and Middle East*, Papers Read at a Conference Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, November 27-27, 1997, ed. Anders Hammarlund, Tord Olsson, and Elisabeth Özdalga (Istanbul: Svenska Forskningsinstitutet; Richmond, England: Curzon, 2001); Owen Wright, “Aspects of Historical Change in the Turkish Classical Repertoire,” *Musica Asiatica* 5: 1-108; *Demetrius Cantemir: The Collection of Notations, Part 1: Text Transcribed and Annotated*, School of Oriental and African Studies Musicology Series, Vol. 1 (London: University of London, 1992); *Demetrius Cantemir: The Collection of Notations, Volume 2: Commentary* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000).

<sup>43</sup> John Baily, *Music of Afghanistan: Professional Musicians in Herat* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Alexis Chottin, *Corpus de musique marocaine* (Paris: Au Ménestrel Heugel, 1931-33); *Tableau de la musique marocaine* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1938); Hormoz Farhat, *The Dastgah Concept in Persian Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Lois Ibsen al-Faruqi,

likewise critical in supplementing the dearth of modern descriptions of the Mevlevi *zikr* and other ritual practices.<sup>44</sup>

Regarding the concept of motion at the core of this dissertation, I rely heavily on various works in several different disciplines, because no scholar discusses it directly as an aesthetic in Sufi music. Only Bente Nikolaisen, in a brief essay on the principle of motion in Turkish culture, associates it directly with Mevlevi devotional practice.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, from scholarship in the field of dance and ethnochoreography, I use Adrienne Kaeppler's notion of "structured movement systems" to analyze not only the whirling *sema*, but the gestures employed in the *zikr* as well other important physical movement.<sup>46</sup>

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"Ornamentation in Arabian Improvisational Music: A Study of Interrelatedness in the Arts," *The World of Music* 20, No. 1 (1978): 1-28; Scott L. Marcus, "Modulation in Arab Music: Documenting Oral Concepts, Performing Rules and Strategies," *Ethnomusicology* 36, No. 2 (1992): 171-95; Józef Pacholczyk, *Sufyana Musiqi: The Classical Music of Kashmir* (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1996); Ali Jihad Racy, "Improvisation, Ecstasy, and Performance Dynamics in Arab Music," in *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed. Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998); "The Many Faces of Improvisation: The Arab Taqasim as a Musical Symbol," *Ethnomusicology* 44, No. 2 (2000): 302-20; Ali Jihad Racy, *Making Music in the Arab World: The Culture and Artistry of Tarab* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> Eltigani Gaafar Eltahir, "Comparing the Incomparable: Religion, Chanting, and Healing in the Sudan, the Case of Zar and Zikr" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2003); Walter Feldman, "Musical Genres and Zikr of the Sunni Tarikats of Istanbul," in *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey*, ed. Raymond Lifchez, trans. M. E. Quigley-Pinar (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992): 187-202; Christian Poche, "Zikr and Musicology," *The World of Music* 20, No. 1 (1978): 59-71; Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context, and Meaning in Qawwali* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Catharina Raudvere, *The Book and the Roses: Sufi Women, Visibility, and Zikir in Contemporary Istanbul*, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2002 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002); Daniel A. Sonneborn, "Music and Meaning in American Sufism: The Ritual of Dhikr at Sami Mahal, a Chishtiyya-Derived Sufi Center" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1995); Ahmet Yürür, "Miraclama in the Liturgy of the Alevi of Turkey" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Maryland Baltimore County, 1989).

<sup>45</sup> Bente Nikolaisen, "Embedded Motion: Sacred Travel among Mevlevi Dervishes," in *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion*, ed. Simon Coleman and John Eade (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>46</sup> Adrienne Kaeppler, "Structured Movement Systems in Tonga," in *Society and the Dance: The Social Anthropology of Process and Performance*, ed. Paul Spencer (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1985); "Cultural Analysis, Linguistic Analogies, and the Study of Dance in Anthropological Perspective," in *Explorations in Ethnomusicology: Essays in Honor of David P. McAllester* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1986).

Recent work in anthropology and cultural studies on a variety of social movement provide a broader context for the study of music and dance and reveal how concepts of motion permeate Islamic culture in general, and Mevlevism in particular. Especially significant are the studies of globalization, diaspora, and migration by such figures as Arjun Appadurai, Stuart Hall, and James Clifford.<sup>47</sup> These writings on social movement in the postmodern world, as well as Victor and Edith Turner's landmark study<sup>48</sup> of pilgrimage have led to a serious reappraisal of pilgrimage within the anthropology of religion<sup>49</sup> and other fields.<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, anthropological studies of tourism have done much to undo its erroneous separation from the study of pilgrimage.<sup>51</sup>

### **Fieldwork in Multiple Field Sites**

In late spring 2001, when my attentions began to turn to doctoral work in ethnomusicology, I was having difficulties settling on a specific area of specialization; I wanted fieldwork to be essential to my dissertation, but I had too many interests to pick just one single field site. After much deliberation one evening—half capriciously, half in

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<sup>47</sup> Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Public Culture* 2, No. 2 (1990): 1-24; Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990); James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>48</sup> Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

<sup>49</sup> Simon Coleman and John Eade, eds., *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004); Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori, eds., *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).

<sup>50</sup> Maribel Dietz, *Wanderings Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> Ellen Badone and Sharon R. Roseman, eds., *Intersecting Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage and Tourism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Erik Cohen, "A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences," *Sociology* 13, No. 2 (1979): 179-201; John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990).

frustration—, I grabbed my globe and gave it a hearty spin. As the world turned counterclockwise, my index finger skimmed across its surface and bounced a few times before eventually landing on the border between Turkey and Iran. Having thus made my decision, I began immersing myself in the vast world of scholarship on Middle Eastern music and culture. I did not turn to Sufism or the Mevlana right away, but, as I read, it became increasingly obvious to me that the scarcity of contemporary ethnographic accounts on Sufi traditions in Anatolia, as I described in the previous section, merited serious attention. The Mevlevi in particular were presented only in historical terms and were represented by tropological writings that were, by and large, non-specific in nature.

Because academic literature in general poorly described the living and developing Mevlevi tradition in Turkey, I found that an ethnomusicological approach more soundly rooted in anthropology and fieldwork was necessary. In May and June 2002 I conducted the first of two fieldwork trips to Turkey; regrettably Iran was not an option owing to political circumstances after September 11, 2001. On this shorter trip, I conducted a general survey of Turkish music and culture, traveling widely throughout Anatolia. During this time, I made my first important contacts with the Mevlevi in Konya as well as with the Bektāşi in İstanbul. Thanks to the hospitality of my contacts, I was permitted to witness, record, and document a small but representative number of various private Sufi ceremonies and tourist performances.

After a one month trip in July and August 2003 to northern India where I studied local Sufi musical forms, I returned to Turkey in September 2004 to carry out more extensive research on contemporary Mevlana music and culture, staying there through August 2005. Officially, I traveled as a tourist because the Turkish Embassy in

Washington did not recognize my work on contemporary culture as “research,” arguing that they “only grant research visas to those working in libraries.” Turning disadvantage into virtue, I traveled more extensively than on my previous trip as my research led me between multiple field sites. I visited mosques and *tekke*-s, shrines and museums, tombs and cemeteries, often finding myself in a state of itinerancy. Tracing the route of Rumi and his devotees, I conducted research in İstanbul, Kütahya, Afyon, Sivas, and Ankara, as well as in Lefkoşa (Nicosia), Cyprus and Cairo, Egypt. I also traveled to Aleppo, Syria, but was unable to make any contacts in the Sufi community there during my stay.

Despite my travels, my research was concentrated primarily in Konya, to where I commuted often from my residence in İzmir. There I attended dozens of public tourist performances of Mevlevi music as well as sacred private rituals, which I documented in audio or video format whenever permissible. In addition, I collected data in the form of still photography, a method that, ironically, proved to be rather revealing for the study of moving phenomena. In circumstances where recordings or photography were not possible, I recorded my observations systematically in field logs and personal journals in which I documented all of my other findings. The interviews I conducted with a variety of individuals, including both devotees and detractors, were likewise recorded in audio, video, or written format. Although I have chosen not to identify my interviewees by name in this dissertation owing to the technical illegality of Sufism in Turkey, their particular insights into some of the hidden symbolism of the tradition as well as into the authenticity debates that surround the Mevlevi today have been invaluable.

Whenever possible, I sought also to be a participant observer while in the field. On a limited basis, I took music lessons on the *ud* in İzmir and the *ney* in Konya, in order

to gain a deeper appreciation for and a more practical understanding of the classical foundations of traditional Mevlevi music. More frequently and with the encouragement of the Mevlana's devotees, I participated in *zikr* ceremonies through chanting and singing of hymns.

Though I gathered information continuously throughout the duration of my fieldwork expeditions, my richest single burst of ethnographic data collection occurred during the events of the Mevlana Festival held on December 10-17, 2004, which commemorated the 731<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Mevlana's death. As the most legitimate public display of Mevlana religiosity in Turkey today, the festival's cultural and political significance cannot be understated, and I refer to it and to the numerous parallel private ceremonies continuously throughout this study.

### **Itineraries to Enlightenment: Structure of the Dissertation**

The findings of my research are organized into the eight chapters of this dissertation. In Chapter Two, I develop the case for understanding Sufi music through broader cultural, religious, and aesthetic values by espousing the ethnomusicological theory of "music as culture." My discussion focuses on the place of music and the other arts, including calligraphy, architecture, and miniature painting, in orthodox Islamic and Sufi theology. Specifically, I trace the religious and cosmological origins of particular aesthetic elements, especially those related to the concept of motion, in order to explain the devotional nature of the arts in Islamic culture and to establish how music functions as a form of devotion among followers of the Mevlana.

In Chapter Three I provide the necessary theoretical context for understanding the concept of motion in the music discussed in the subsequent chapters. I compare such indigenous concepts of travel and movements as *hijra* (“migration”), *hajj* (“pilgrimage”), *ziyara* (“pilgrimage to saints’ shrines”), and *rihla* (“search for knowledge”) with the Western academic notions of globalization, pilgrimage, tourism, trance, dance, and structured movement systems. My aim in this chapter is to highlight the centrality of the concept of motion in Turkish culture.

In chapters Four through Seven, I explore the four major categories of music through which the Mevlana is venerated. I apply the theories I discussed in Chapters Two and Three and use them as the basis for my analysis of Mevlana-related music, dance, and ritual.

Thus, in Chapter Four I investigate the classical Mevlevi musical tradition developed during the Ottoman period and now sponsored by the Turkish state. My discussion draws parallels between the historical Mevlevi repertory and that of the Ottoman court and examines the modern complexities arising from the fact that the secular state is now the primary sponsor of this music. My focus is on one specific public ceremony featuring the music of the nineteenth-century composer Mustafa Nakşi Dede as performed during the 2004 Mevlana Festival. My analysis of the music of this performance demonstrates that the aesthetic of motion in this tradition occurs most prominently by way of modal modulation.

One of my primary goals in Chapter Five is to investigate more deeply a little documented ceremonial form also used by the Mevlevi and other devotees of the Mevlana, the more secretive *zikr* trance ritual. After exploring the concept of *zikr* fully, I

compare these rituals with the public ceremonies discussed in the previous chapter and then analyze the aesthetics of motion in one specific *zikr* gathering. My analysis focuses on particular physical gestures and musical elements as well as on overall structure of the ritual.

In Chapter Six I extend my study beyond the typical limits of scholarship on Mevlevi music by considering the place of the Mevlana in popular music and culture. My discussion covers music of the New Age movement as well as Western, South Asian, and Turkish popular music. Through analysis of such styles, I make the case for the persistence of Mevlevi and broader Sufi aesthetics, especially that of motion, outside of more traditional musical forms. My examples are drawn from Western pop, South Asian rock and film music, and especially from an array of Turkish popular music genres, including commercial pop, rock and roll, and ambient techno.

Continuing in a somewhat similar vein, I explore non-Turkish musics used in the worship of the Mevlana in Chapter Seven. I concentrate mainly on the music performed during the Mevlana Festival of 2004, especially that featured at the First Annual International Mystic Music Festival, which was held concurrently with the main events commemorating the Mevlana's death. My discussion draws on various musical traditions from Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, France, and elsewhere.

In the final chapter, I present a survey of some of the major developments taking place in Turkey and across the world at the time of this writing, as UNESCO celebrates the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mevlana's birth. In addition, I highlight the main arguments and conclusions I make in this study and give suggestions for future areas of research on the music for the Mevlana.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE GEOMETRIES OF BELIEF: TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE AESTHETICS OF MOTION

My goal in this chapter is to explain the religious foundation of Mevlevi Sufi symbols of motion. Movement, as I assert throughout this study, is a fundamental characteristic of Sufism that is made present especially through symbolic means. Symbolism, at least in part, defines Sufism as well as the elusive, interconnected concept of *tasavvuf* (“mystical essence”). For Sufis, symbolism is the cornerstone of devotional practice, and there exists in Sufism an especially strong and fluid interrelationship between symbolic thought and religious action that is manifest most directly in *sema*, *zikr*, music, and the other arts. The aesthetics of these Sufi expressive forms have in turn profoundly shaped the cultures in which they proliferate.

It is this notion of the symbiotic relationship between music and culture that constitutes the central theme of this chapter. I begin by providing an ethnographic description of the Mevlana’s shrine, the holy center of the Mevlevi sect in which the symbols of motion are most clearly evident. After exploring the origins of the theory of “music as culture” in the second section of the chapter, I proceed in the subsequent three sections to place Sufi music within its cultural context, explaining primarily how it relates to belief and worldview. Thus, in the third section of the chapter I discuss the legal status of music in Islamic theology to highlight the importance of music to Sufi adherents. In the fourth and fifth sections I concentrate on the aesthetic features of Sufi music, primarily that of motion, tracing their origins to Sufi cosmology, explaining their manifestation through symbolism, and providing examples of their application in the

visual arts. Having established the historical, religious, and aesthetic contexts for Sufi music, I conclude the chapter with an explanation of the specific symbolic and devotional nature of Sufi music, upon which the remainder of the dissertation is predicated.

### **At the Shrine of the Mevlana**

November 14, 2004 Konya

This is my second visit to the shrine of the Mevlana. Unfortunately, it is closed for Bayram, the Turkish holiday marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. In fact everything in Konya is closed and the streets are completely deserted, except in front of the sealed doors of the Mevlana's shrine complex where some have come to pray by its walls. A friend and I have just arrived from İzmir and are eager to go inside, as much to visit the relics as to find shelter from the biting Anatolian winter. Since 1927 the former Asitane ("great central lodge") of the Mevlevi Order has been officially known as the Mevlana Museum (Figure 3).



Figure 3: The Mevlana Museum and the Rear Garden  
(Konya, July 9, 2005)

Locals, however, continue to refer to it by a variety of religious designations including *tekke* (“lodge”), *türbe* (“tomb,” “shrine”), and *dergah* (“*tekke* with an attached *türbe*”). Told by a worshiper that it will open “later,” I decide in the meantime to give my friend a tour of central Konya. As we wander around the empty city, the shrine’s distinctive turquoise tower, visible from almost anywhere, beckons; it is the only bright color in the grey, dreary sky.

After exploring for a couple of hours, we walk back down to the end of Mevlana Caddesi (Mevlana St.), arriving again at the *türbe*, where a small crowd has formed, demanding entrance into the “museum.” One of the workers, exclaiming that they too want to celebrate the holiday with their families, claims the museum will open once the director comes. As we wait, Roma children peddle their trinkets; among the colorful wares are amulets adorned with writings from the Mevlana’s *Mesnevi* and earrings depicting Mevlevi whirling dervishes. Eventually, the huge gate swings open and we are all funneled into the line for the ticket booth, though there are few tourists among us. Most are local worshipers, and there is a more modest contingent of pilgrims from neighboring Anatolian towns.

Tickets in hand, we cross the large, open courtyard past the hexagonal “wedding night” pool, around which Mevlevi dervishes once performed their whirling *sema* ceremony and where now the faithful fill their Fanta bottles with the sacred healing waters. Past the lavish ablutions fountain donated by Sultan Selim I, we approach the main entrance to the complex, where we remove our sneakers, while others wrap around their shoes the colorful plastic bags the museum staff provides for protecting the fine carpets inside.

Progressing to the right, we enter the first chamber of the Asitane, the Koran reading room where dervishes used to copy and decorate manuscripts. The walls are covered with their work: dozens of specimens of ornate calligraphy, some written in gold leaf on vellum, others carved into wood or delicately cut into tree leaves. Careful not to break Sufi taboo and stand on the threshold, I point out the elaborate geometric patters on the room's heavy wooden doors to my friend. The finely carved pentagons, flowers, and other designs (Figure 4) draw everyone's attention, and a bottleneck soon forms before we even enter the complex, giving us only a few hectic moments to admire the artistry.



Figure 4: Right Door of the Main Entrance to the Mevlana Museum (Konya, June 18, 2005)

The crowds quickly push us on into the main hall, which is lined on either side by more than sixty tombs containing the remains of Mevlevi *şeyh*-s, the Mevlana's family, and early devotees. A little further ahead, beneath the fluted dome covered on the outside by the vibrant turquoise tiles that guided us through the city and decorated on the inside

by a golden eight-pointed motif, lay the coffins of the Mevlana Celal ed-Din Rumi and his son, Sultan Veled (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Tomb of the Mevlana Celal ed-Din Rumi, Mevlana Museum (Konya, June 9, 2002)

Draped in black silk cloth entirely decorated with gold calligraphy—a gift from Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II—and capped with green turbans, the sarcophagi rest on a raised pedestal, the steps to which are plated in silver and covered by throngs of worshipers who press their faces to them during prayer. The mausoleum is almost blinding with the natural light coming through the green and white stained-glass window and reflecting off the gold calligraphy, the sumptuous arabesques, and the flowered depictions of Paradise covering the walls.

The adjacent room to the left and opposite the tombs is nearly as impressive. The former *semahane* where the Mevlevi performed *sema* now houses a sizable collection of Selçuk and Ottoman era musical instruments in addition to other Mevlevi artifacts and

clothing worn by the Mevlana. One glass case contains two enormous *tespih*-s (“prayer beads,” “rosaries”) made of ninety-nine beads, which the dervishes, sitting in a circle, would slowly rotate during *zikr*. Painted on the dome above is a hexagon surrounded by intertwined flowers, calligraphed leaves, and six pentagons, each with five spiraling arms, creating a representation of swirling cosmic motion (Figure 6). Also wafting above is the sound of a prerecorded *ney taksim*, creating a meditative atmosphere that spills over into the mausoleum as well as into the neighboring room.



Figure 6: Interior Dome Decoration, *Semahane*, Mevlana Museum (Konya, November 14, 2004)

Advancing to the left, we step into a now defunct mosque, the last room of the complex open to the public. Like the *semahane*, it houses a striking collection of manuscripts of the *Mesnevi* and the Koran as well as numerous illuminations of exquisite miniature paintings. A small box supposedly containing a strand of hair from the Prophet Muhammad’s beard is located at the center of the room beneath a dome decorated with a

twelve-point studded circle and three bands spiraling toward the center, again symbolizing the cosmos (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Interior Dome Decoration, Mosque, Mevlana Museum (Konya, June 9, 2002)

To the left of the mosque entrance and around the many display cases is the mosque's *mihrab* ("prayer niche"), which faces Mecca and, more immediately, the tomb of the Mevlana. Staring in the direction of Mecca, it suddenly dawns on me that, like all visitors to the "museum," we have been following a spiraling, counterclockwise route through the complex that leads here to the *mihrab* and culminates just outside at the garden, which represents Paradise.

### **Music As Culture: Worldview in the Study of Music and Culture**

The theory of "music *as* culture" is unquestionably the single most important intellectual advancement in the field of ethnomusicology since its inception in the mid-1950s. Postulating a symbiotic interconnection between music and culture, the theory

treats the two entities as virtually synonymous and, in essence, argues that music and culture operate equally on the same level and in the same manner. According to the theory, the concepts, patterns, and rules that shape musical systems are the same ones that shape cultural systems. Therefore, music should not be understood simply as a mirror of culture, because music in fact shapes culture in the same way that culture shapes music. For the analyst, the theory allows for more holistic understandings of music and culture, since musical data and cultural information are assumed to be mutually informative. Thus, musical aesthetics, for instance, have direct corollaries in cultural values. Likewise, musical structures can be thought of as being paralleled in social structure, with musical interaction being symbolic of social behavior.

Such lines of thinking, now central to ethnomusicology, gained currency at the turn of the 1960s when Alan Lomax hypothesized that musical structures “correspond to and represent patterns of interpersonal relationship which are fundamental in the various forms of social organization.”<sup>52</sup> Lomax attempted to substantiate such claims with his ambitious cantometrics and choreometrics projects, in which he took salient features of songs and dances as “symbols for the key institutions of society such as sexual division of labor and the state.”<sup>53</sup> Taking into account data collected from many different world aesthetic systems, Lomax’s pioneering work was as broad in scope as it was in vision.

Alan Merriam was among the first important ethnomusicologists to endorse Lomax’s approach, inspiring a legion of ethnomusicologists to further develop what

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<sup>52</sup> Alan Lomax, “Song Structure and Social Structure,” *Ethnology* 1, No. 1 (1962): 449.

<sup>53</sup> Alan Lomax, *Cantometrics: A Method in Musical Anthropology* (Berkeley: The University of California Extension Media Center, 1976): 9.

would later be known as the “music as culture” paradigm.<sup>54</sup> In a cross-cultural discussion of the aesthetics of music in his seminal *The Anthropology of Music*, Merriam writes, “music reflects the social and political organization, economic behavior, religious activity, and other structural divisions of society, and in this respect it is, in a sense, symbolic of the formal aspects of the culture.”<sup>55</sup> Merriam was so enamored of the way the theory connected music to other socio-cultural institutions that he even attempted to redefine the field of ethnomusicology as the study of “music as culture” in the mid-1970s.<sup>56</sup>

As widely as Lomax was heralded, however, he also received heavy criticism for his propensity for overgeneralization and his arbitrary methodologies, as well as for a host of other problems.<sup>57</sup> Yet few questioned his primary area of focus and basic premise that occupation and thereby social hierarchy are the principal determinants in the formation of an aesthetic system.<sup>58</sup> This assumption has resulted in culturally

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<sup>54</sup> For applications see John Miller Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-Nine Issues and Concepts* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983); Anthony Seeger, *Why Suyá Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); John E. Kaemmer, *Music in Human Life: Anthropological Perspectives on Music* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

<sup>55</sup> Alan Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964): 248.

<sup>56</sup> Alan Merriam, “Definitions of ‘Comparative Musicology’ and ‘Ethnomusicology’: An Historical-Theoretical Perspective,” *Ethnomusicology* 21, No. 2 (1977): 204.

<sup>57</sup> Hewitt Pantaleoni, Review of *Folk Song Style and Culture*, by Alan Lomax, *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 4 (1972): 158-61; Joann W. Kealiinohomoku, Review of *Dance in Human History*, by Alan Lomax, *Ethnomusicology* 23, No. 1 (1979): 169-76; David Locke, Review of *Cantometrics: An Approach to the Anthropology of Music*, by Alan Lomax, *Ethnomusicology* 25, No. 3 (1981): 527-29; Jeff Todd Titon, “Cantometrics,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 95, No. 377 (1982): 370-74; David Locke, Review of *Dance in Human History*, by Alan Lomax, *Ethnomusicology* 36, No. 2 (1992): 307-11.

<sup>58</sup> See especially Steven Feld, “Sound Structure as Social Structure,” *Ethnomusicology* 28, No. 3 (1984): 383-409; Marina Roseman “The Social Structuring of Sound: The Temiar of Peninsular Malaysia,”

inappropriate and musically inaccurate interpretations and analyses. In his choreometrics project, for example, Lomax operates under the assumption, perhaps rooted in Western values of labor, that it is the gestures performed during food production that shape the aesthetics of dance. Proceeding from this conjecture, he is misled into classifying Middle Eastern dance forms, including the Mevlevi *sema*, as circular and two-dimensional, when, as I discuss later in this chapter, lines, curves, and spirals may be more appropriate geometric metaphors.<sup>59</sup> The most serious error in Lomax's approach, which is likewise inherent in the "music as culture" theory as a whole, is that theoretical speculation supercedes actual data; potentially, deviations from the analyst's preconceived music-cultural reckoning can be ignored or overlooked, even when they may be of critical importance.

Yet despite its dangers, the "music as culture" paradigm remains the most effective in explaining the symbolic links between music and culture, particularly if the center of focus is shifted from social hierarchy to the ontological, religious, and scientific beliefs that comprise worldview. In fact, it is worldview and not social organization, as Lomax assumes, that shapes the aesthetics, musical or otherwise, of any given culture.<sup>60</sup> The preeminent Viennese art historian Alois Riegl argued very much along these lines through his concept of the "will to art" (*Kunstwollen*), which is defined by worldview and

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*Ethnomusicology* 28, No. 3 (1984): 132-67; Thomas Turino, "The Coherence of Social Style and Musical Creation Among the Aymara in Southern Peru," *Ethnomusicology* 33, No. 1 (1989): 1-30.

<sup>59</sup> *Dance and Human History*, written and produced by Alan Lomax, distributed by University of California Extension Media Center, Berkeley, CA (video, color, 40 mins., 1974).

<sup>60</sup> The German term *Weltanschauung* was first used by Kant in 1790 in connection to the concept of aesthetics; see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987).

determines aesthetic style.<sup>61</sup> It follows, therefore, that the aesthetics of a musical system are likewise formed by a shared, cultural worldview, especially given that “the closest bond between music and any other aspect of life,” as Marcia Herndon and Norma McLeod maintain, “is with religion,”<sup>62</sup> or what I term more broadly worldview or belief system.

Because worldview systematically encompasses ontology, language, politics, economics, and everything else that also comprises culture in a unified, logical whole, an analysis of music from this perspective naturally yields more comprehensive and useful results than one made from its more limited constituent parts. Hence, the most convincing applications of the “music as culture” theory are those that account for the belief system predominant in a culture.<sup>63</sup> Studies of Indonesian music and culture, for example, have shown how Balinese and Javanese musical styles reflect the Hindu-Buddhist worldview. Specifically, ethnomusicologists equate large-scale repetition of melody and rhythm with cyclical perceptions of time, cosmology, language, agriculture, and, ultimately, of life and death through cycles of reincarnation.<sup>64</sup>

Similar geometric reckonings of worldview, culture, and music can likewise be made of Middle Eastern societies. On the surface, Islamic culture espouses a

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<sup>61</sup> Significantly, Riegl developed this notion of *Kunstwollen* from his studies of ancient Near Eastern, Greco-Roman, and Islamic ornamental styles. See Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, trans. Rolf Winkes (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1985).

<sup>62</sup> Marcia Herndon and Norma McLeod, *Music as Culture* (Pt. Richmond, CA: MRI Press, 1979): 117.

<sup>63</sup> Marina Roseman, *Healing Sounds from the Malaysian Rainforest: Temiar Music and Medicine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Katherine J. Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

<sup>64</sup> Judith Becker and Alton Becker, “A Musical Icon: Power and Meaning in Javanese Gamelan Music” in *The Sign in Music and Literature*, ed. Wendy Steiner (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). See also, Judith Becker, “Time and Tune in Java” in *The Imagination of Reality*, eds. Alton L. Becker and Aram A. Yengoyan (Nowrwood, NJ: Ablex, 1979); Lisa Gold, *Music in Bali: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

predominantly binary, linear worldview, rooted in the traditions of the ancient Near East and sharing much with neighboring Europe. Both Islamic and European cultures inherited from Zoroastrianism and ancient Greece the binary ways of thinking that denote a particularly linear worldview: beginning and end, past and future, right and wrong. Following a unidirectional model in which time is perceived as linear and causal, progressing from a point of origin to one of termination, Muslims believe that Islam is the endpoint of the prophetic line of Abraham, which moved from Judaism through Christianity and will culminate with the arrival of the *mahdi* (“guided one”), a messianic figure who will come at the time of the world’s end. Defined by its monotheism, Islam also prizes unity, completeness, and the oneness of being (*al-tawḥīd*), in which all submit (*islam*) and move to the Godhead.

This unidirectional worldview is manifest and reinforced in all aspects of society. Islamic political structure, for instance, is hierarchical, much like the kingdoms of the ancient Near East, and based on the successor (*khalife, halife*) system in which a leader typically claims authority to protect the community (*ummah, umma*) through his *silsila* (“lineage”). The two-dimensional representations of gods, warriors, and harpists in the royal tombs of ancient Egypt are another expression of unidirectional thinking as are the modal suites of Middle Eastern classical music, in which the listener moves, largely by continuously developing improvisation, through a series of ever-different pieces from various genres. The linear model is likewise performed through popular communal dances like the Jewish *hora* or the Arabo-Turkish *dabke*, most likely of Turkish or Ottoman origin, in which dancers, led by a single “head” dancer (*baş, rās*), closely link

arms and move back and forth in a straight line while rhythmically stomping up and down (Figure 8).<sup>65</sup>



Figure 8: *Dabke* Dance Performed at a Circumcision Celebration (Konya, July 9, 2005)

Although *dabke* initially appears to be expressive of an absolutely linear worldview, it is in fact typically danced in a slightly curved line that broadly surrounds the *zurna* (double reed) and *davul* (drum) players, which ultimately suggests that Islam is not a belief system consisting only of unidirectional elements. Classical Islamic scientists envisioned a geocentric cosmology, while Sufi theologians taught a two-directional nature of worship between man and Allah. Moreover, the *sura*-s (“chapters”) of the Koran do not recount a linear history like the Torah and the Bible do overall, but rather are organized by size and content, with the largest, more significant scriptures coming first. Similarly the pages of Koran are turned from left to right, and as one quickens to the shortest *sura*-s at the end; the progression suggests a sort of

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<sup>65</sup> Regrettably, there are very few studies of Middle Eastern dance genres. For a discussion of the genre under consideration here, see Jennifer Lee Ladkani, “*Dabke* Music and Dance and the Palestinian Refugee Experience: On the Outside Looking In” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Florida State University, 2001).

counterclockwise turning. In addition, Muslim cities and bazaars, although usually built around one principal thoroughfare, are not linear and grid-like as in the West, but comprised of complex, interwoven networks of side streets, alleys, and hidden entrances that likewise require a fair share of turning in order to maneuver.<sup>66</sup>

Muslim culture is ultimately an amalgam of multiple worldviews—ancient Greek and Persian, Byzantine and Jewish, Turkic and Indian—and reflects a dual worldview that can be geometrically represented by both linear and circular models, or perhaps most appropriately by a spiral, which depicts the linear motion of a circle. Sufi beliefs and musical and ritual practices, which bear some Hindu-Buddhist influences, are particularly well characterized by circles and spirals, as I highlight later in this chapter.

### ***Haram as Aesthetic: The Legality of Music and the Arts***

The use of geometric metaphors and grand theories to describe the dynamic interconnections between music, culture, and worldview, however, is problematic in instances when music is excluded from or thought to be contradictory to the belief system. Such is the case with music and the other arts in the Islamic world, where they are regarded as trivial or dangerous forms of human behavior and are sometimes even outlawed by Islamic law (*sharī'ah*, *ṣariat*). Such attitudes, like Islamic law, are predicated on exegesis of the Koran and interpretations of Hadith (“oral traditions” pertaining to the Prophet Muhammad not written in the Koran), and they play a critical

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<sup>66</sup> Sometimes a Muslim city revolves around one main central point as in the case of Trablus, Lebanon where most traffic from Beirut into the city circumambulates, in a counterclockwise direction, a distinctive sign bearing the name of Allah in the center of the Abdel Hamid Karmi roundabout. More indicative of the spherical layout of Muslim cities is Baghdad, also known as the “Round City” because the Abbasids founded it in the eighth century within the confines of fortified circular walls.

role in determining some of the aesthetic features of Middle Eastern art and music. A brief review of the legal status of art and music is therefore useful at this point.

In the case of visual art, the Koran twice makes injunctions against idolatry. In both instances travel is invoked figuratively and literally to warn of how the engraved arts divert the believer from the path to God. Verses vi: 71-74 warn against mistaking “idols for gods” for “God’s guidance is the only guidance” and “it is to Him that we shall be gathered together.”<sup>67</sup> With respect to the pilgrimage to Mecca, verse xxii: 30 commands, “Shun the abomination of idols, and shun the word that is false.” In following these decrees, Muslims have been more vigilant than many of their Jewish or Christian brethren, even while the Books of Genesis (xx: 4) and Deuteronomy (v: 8) make far stronger and more direct proclamations against engraved images.

Following several official proscriptions, Muslim artists have shunned outright depictions of human and animal forms, believing that only Allah is endowed with generative powers.<sup>68</sup> The notable exception to this is the art of miniature painting used in book manuscripts as an aid to storytelling. Such illuminations are by intention small and highly detailed, yet carefully eschew any sense of realism; figures are deprived of individuality and there is a deliberate avoidance of three-dimensional representation. More commonly, Muslim artists have cultivated an aesthetic inspired largely by calligraphy, floral patterns, arabesques, and geometric designs. Such embellishments liberally adorn carpets and textiles, wall interiors, all forms of architecture, and even

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<sup>67</sup> All translated Koran quotations used in this dissertation are either taken directly from or are based on those in Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Qur’an: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur’an Inc., 1987).

<sup>68</sup> Alexandre Papadopoulos, *Islam and Muslim Art*, trans. Robert Erich Wolf (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1979): 52.

copies of the Koran itself. Thus, artists and architects, rather than being frustrated by legal denunciations, have used them as a source of inspiration.<sup>69</sup>

The arguments against music and dance have been far less conclusive than those against art, because neither the Koran nor the Hadith makes any clear declaration whatsoever.<sup>70</sup> Polemic arguments for and against performing and even listening to music have occupied Islamic jurists for over a millennium, inciting only temporary prohibitions. Legal scholars have pointed to verse xxxi: 6 of the Koran warning against “those who purchase idle tales without knowledge to mislead from the Path of God” as justification for the banning of music, while verse xxxix: 18 is typically invoked in defense of music: “Those who listen to the Word (*al-qawl*), and follow the best in it, those are the ones whom God has guided, and those are the ones endowed with understanding.” Neither passage refers to music specifically, perhaps because in the Islamic world, music, song, and speech are not as strongly distinguished as in European culture.<sup>71</sup>

Although no Islamic society today has a full ban on music,<sup>72</sup> already under Abu Bakr (r. 632-34), the first successor to the Prophet Muhammad, music was considered a

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<sup>69</sup> The case of figurative calligraphy is an especially compelling obfuscation of the edicts against the representation of human and animal forms. One famous example is housed in the Hacibektaş Museum (shrine) in Hacibektaş, Turkey.

<sup>70</sup> For a good introduction to the debates see Amnon Shiloah, *Music in the Islamic World: A Socio-Cultural Study* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Islam and Music: The Legal and the Spiritual Dimensions,” in *Enchanting Powers: Music in the World’s Religions*, Lawrence E. Sullivan, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997): 219-35. For alternative perspective on the question of music’s legality in Islam, see Dane Kusić, “Positivity of Music and Religion in Turkey,” *Narodna umjetnost: Hrvatski casopis za etnologiju i folkloristiku* 34, No. 1 (1997): 147-78.

<sup>71</sup> According to Shiloah, 1995, 32, the term *al-qawl* also refers to the singing of folk poetry. Similarly, the term *qawwali* in India and Pakistan denotes a genre of devotional and popular music based on the singing of Sufi poetry (see Chapter Six). For a discussion of what constitutes “music” in the Muslim world see Nasr, 1997 and Kristina Nelson, *The Art of Reciting the Qur’an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985): 32-51.

<sup>72</sup> Musical performance is proscribed in Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan as well as in certain parts of northern Nigeria, where it is forbidden after sunset under local Islamic law.

*malahi* (“forbidden pleasure”) and, therefore, *haram* (“illegal”).<sup>73</sup> Indictments against music, however, are hardly particular to Islam, and are rather endemic to the region as a whole; Jewish and Christian theologians also warned of the ability of music to distract from prayer, while the ancient Greeks before them debated the effects of Apollonian and Dionysian music on human behavior.<sup>74</sup> Still, as with art, Muslims have been more cautious than their fellow monotheists. Historically, orthodox Muslims tended not to perform music and dance professionally, and cultivated instead an advanced amateur tradition. Professional paid entertainers were hired from the various minority groups on the margins of society: the blind, homosexuals, women, and most notably non-Muslims. At the Ottoman court, for instance, Jewish and Greek and Armenian Christian musicians were especially prominent.

Non-Muslims aside, the Middle East has developed an important, distinctly Muslim musical heritage thanks largely to Sufi mystics, who, even while also comprising a religious minority in the region, have dominated musical life for much of Islamic history. In part because of their intense cultivation of music and dance, Sufi groups retain a precarious place within mainstream Muslim society. Orthodox Muslims have often openly censured Sufis for performing music and dance, especially during ritual prayer (*namaz*).<sup>75</sup> In a manner worthy of the binary discourses of the ancient Greeks,

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<sup>73</sup> Henry George Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century* (London: Luzac and Company, 1929/1967): 40.

<sup>74</sup> For an extract from Aristotle’s *Politics* concerning this issue see Thomas J. Mathiesen, ed., *Source Readings in Music History*, Vol. 1, *Greek Views of Music*, ed. Oliver Strunk, rev. ed. Leo Treitler (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998): 26-34.

<sup>75</sup> Kudsi Ergüner gives some examples pertaining to the Mevlevi and the Kadari in his *Journeys of a Sufi Musician*, trans. Annette Courtney Mayers (London: SAQI, 2005): 24; likewise Elizabeth Sirriyeh cites two similar cases involving the Mevlevi in Lebanon in her *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking, and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999): 100, 148.

however, Sufis contend that music and dance, rather than distracting from prayer, on the contrary, provide the most direct path to God. Medieval Sufi scholars in particular defended music and their liturgical use of it by describing its cosmological significance, using it to explain the very nature of the universe. Such theological arguments deeply influenced Muslim musical aesthetics and it is to them that we now turn.

### **Motion as Devotion: Motion in Sufi Cosmology**

The primary concern of pre-modern Sufi scholarship was the establishment of Islamic cosmology within the Hellenistic framework inherited from the ancients and prevalent throughout the Mediterranean world. Perhaps the most important account of Islamic cosmology, produced during one of the most intellectually active periods in Muslim history, is that of the Ikhwan al-Safa (“The Brotherhood of Purity”), a mysterious collective of Neo-Platonic Sufi scholars active in Basra, Iraq in the tenth century. Their *Rasā’il ikhwān as-ṣafā’ wa khullān al-wafā’* (*Epistles of the Brethren of Purity and Loyal Friends*), in fifty-two tracts and one additional supplemental commentary, serves as a Muslim corollary to the quadrivium. Translated from the original Arabic into Farsi, Turkish, and several other languages, the treatise was widely read by most Muslim scholars, including such Sufi luminaries as al-Ghazali (1058-1111) of Khorasan and Ibn al-‘Arabi (1165-1240) of al-Andalus, and presents one the most dominant Muslim conceptions of the universe of the past thousand years.<sup>76</sup>

At the heart of the Ikhwan’s ontology and indeed all Sufi theology is the concept of *al-tawḥīd*, the unity of all things in the Divine Presence. All things generate from

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<sup>76</sup> Much of the present discussion on Sufi cosmology and theology is based on Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods Used for its Study by the Ikhwan al-Safa’, al-Biruni, and Ibn Sina*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

Allah, the One, the Creator, and movement away from and toward the Universal Oneness defines existence. For the Ikhwan al-Safa, motion is not predicated on cause, but is inherent in the divine being; movement is alive because the universe and being are alive.

As Seyyed Hossein Nasr explains,

The question of motion is inseparable from the Universal Soul and its faculties inasmuch as all motion is due to this soul. As the Ikhwan state: “We call ‘souls’ certain real substances, living and moving by their essences, and we designate under the name ‘movement’ the actions of a soul on a body.” And again: “By its active life the soul models the matter of the body as well as of the exterior world.” Universal Soul, then, is the cause of motion, while “movement is a form imposed on a body by the Universal Soul after it has been shaped, and rest is the absence of this form.”<sup>77</sup>

The Ikhwan go on to explain that “Movement is a spiritual and complimentary form (*al-ṣūrat al-rūḥanīyah*) which traverses all parts of moving bodies and expands within them instantaneously like light in order to terminate abruptly their rest.”<sup>78</sup> Motion is, thus, understood mystically as a means of being with Allah and it follows that movement in itself is a devotional act.

Although the Ikhwan do not discuss motion in the detail of later philosophers like Ibn Sina (980-1037),<sup>79</sup> they do recognize several different forms of motion according to the objects being moved by the Universal Soul. They divide motion into two broad categories: physical (*jismānī*) and spiritual (*rūḥānī*), the former generally being the concern of the Peripatetic school of Aristotelian philosophy, while the latter remains in the domain of mystical writings, albeit latently.<sup>80</sup> As Nasr points out, the Ikhwan do

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 64-65.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 65.

<sup>79</sup> See *ibid.*, 226-31.

<sup>80</sup> See for instance the summary of Ibn Sina’s metaphysical narratives in *ibid.*, 263-74.

draw parallels between physical and spiritual motion in an attempt to demonstrate the unity of all things, but their discussion of motion largely follows along Aristotelian lines.<sup>81</sup> Physical motion is further subdivided into six categories: generation (*kawn*), corruption (*fasād*), augmentation from the center of a body (*ziyādah*), diminution to the center of a body (*nuqṣān*), alteration in quality or form (*taghyīr*), and translation or local movement through time and space from one point to another (*naqlah*). *Naqlah* is described as straight (*mustaqimah*), circular (*mustadirah*), or a combination of the two (*murakkabatun minhumā*).<sup>82</sup>

Expanding on the Ikhwan al-Safa, Ibn al-‘Arabi explains the generative motion of *kawn*, describing it as the “movement of love” in which Allah seeks being known, as multidirectional and emanating for a single focal point. The centrifugal movement of creation is, therefore, complemented by the centripetal pull toward divine sustenance. ‘Abd al-Razzaq al-Qashani (d. 1329), the well-known commentator on Ibn al-‘Arabi’s writings, elaborates on this, describing creative movement in three directions from a central point: downward motion (*al-ḥaraka al-mankūsa*) as in Allah’s creation of the lower, physical world or the downward growth of a plant’s roots; horizontal motion (*al-ḥaraka al-ufuqiyya*) as with the growth and movement of animals; and ascending movement (*al-ḥaraka al-mustaqīma*) characteristic of God’s creation of the divine worlds and souls, human growth, and humanity’s progression toward enlightenment. Thus, al-Qashani envisioned generative motion as a three-directional and three-dimensional cross similar to that used by Ibn al-‘Arabi to describe the six movements of the human body

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>82</sup> For a visual representation of this see *ibid.*, 66.

(*jism*): up and down, right and left, front and back.<sup>83</sup> Such a conception of creative and bodily movement is traditionally associated with verse ii: 115 of the Koran which states, “To God belong the East and West: wherever you turn, there is the face of God. For God is All-Pervading, All-Knowing.”

All motion derives from and moves towards unity (*al-tawhīd*) with God, and this is the central tenet of the Ikhwan al-Safa, who, in keeping with Sufi doctrine, attempted to describe the universe as a unified whole. The similarity of the Ikhwan’s cosmology to ancient Greek, Indian, Chinese, and Christian traditions underscores their claims to universality and is in accordance with the unifying tendency of Sufism in general.<sup>84</sup> The Ikhwan’s ontology, however, is more specifically predicated on Pythagorean-Hermetic doctrines and informed by Sufi gnosis, meaning that everything in the universe is explained and understood through the analogy of numerical symbolism, known as *‘ilm al-‘adad* (“science of number”). Their numerical explanation of existence relies on the association of numbers with certain specific cosmological and religious concepts, as well as with the letters of the Arabic alphabet<sup>85</sup> and geometric shapes. While a complete catalog of this numerology is impractical here due to the existence of multiple, differing systems, I highlight in Figure 9 the more universally accepted schemes employed by such Sufi scholars as the Ikhwan al-Safa and Ibn Sina as they are the most critical to the present study.

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<sup>83</sup> See Samer Akkash, *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas* (Albany: State University of New York, 2005): 84-95.

<sup>84</sup> Nasr, 1993, 66.

<sup>85</sup> The numerological symbolism of letters is known as *‘ilm al-jafr* (“science of letters”).

Numeral	Letter	Shape	Attributes	Name of Allah
١ (1)	A (ا)	·	Creator ( <i>al-Bārī'</i> ), Oneness, Indivisibility, Completion	“Allah”
٢ (2)	B (ب)	—	Intellect ( <i>al-'aql</i> )	“Beneficent”
٣ (3)	J (ج)	▲	Soul ( <i>al-nafs</i> )	“The Merciful”
٤ (4)	D (د)	+ ■ ◆	Matter ( <i>hayūlā'</i> ), Bodily humors; Nature ( <i>al-tabī'ah</i> )	“The King”
٥ (5)	H (ه)	* ● ○	Nature ( <i>al-tabī'ah</i> ), Senses; Creator in relation to what is below Him ( <i>al- Bārī' bi'l-idāfah</i> )	“Most Holy”
٦ (6)	U, W (و)	* ● *	Body ( <i>jism</i> ), Motion	“All-Peaceful”
٧ (7)	Z (ز)		Sphere, Planet, Active powers	“Grantor”
٨ (8)	Ḥ (ح)	* ● *	Elements, Natures, Musical pitches	“Protector”
٩ (9)	T (ت)		Worldly Beings, Bodily levels, The heavens	“Mighty”
١٠ (10)	I, Y (ي)	*	The plan of the Creator ( <i>al-ibda'</i> )	“Comforter”
١٢ (12)			Zodiac	“Creator”
١٤ (14)			Septentrional and Meridional Zodiac, Half of the alphabet	“Shaper”
٢٧ (27)				“All-Hearing”
٢٩ (29)	ل= L (ل) +A (ا)			“Judge”
٩٤ (94)				“Guide”
٩٩ (99)			Names of God	“Patient”

Figure 9: Sufi Numerical Symbolism  
(Based partially on the Ikhwan al-Safa and Ibn Sina)<sup>86</sup>

The Ikhwan al-Safa utilize this numerological system in the conceptualization of their *Rasā'il* and employ it throughout their writings. Thus, their cosmology is organized in four books, representing the four kinds of matter in existence: matter of artifacts, physical matter, universal matter, and original matter. Book I, containing the first fourteen epistles, is dedicated to mathematics and education. It begins with a tract on the properties of numbers and is followed successively by treatises on geometry, astronomy,

<sup>86</sup> There are many discrepancies in the attributes of certain numbers in Islamic cosmological literature, particularly with respect to the hierarchy of beings in the universe. Such variations reflect the fact that there exist, in total, thirteen different numerological systems, although only six are in common use. Starting with the number four, Ibn Sina deviates from the Ikhwan as-Safa's reckoning; I include here only his attributions of the hierarchy of the universe for the numbers four, five, and ten. The chart is adapted from Nasr, 1993, 50-52, 96, and 210.

geography, and music, their ordering having specific cosmological implications.

Evidently, while all numbers have symbolic meanings, some are considered more significant than others due to their religious and cosmological associations. Among the most important numbers are one, four, five, six, eight, and twelve.

The number one is unquestionably the single most important number in Islam. It represents Allah, the One God, who is eternal, indivisible, and unchangeable. The number one is similar in appearance to the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, with which it shares many attributes because both are written with a downward stroke, evoking Allah's creation of the world. Thus, a single point or vertical line can be understood as a symbolic, geometric representation of the Creation or *al-tawhīd* ("unity and oneness of being").

While Allah is One, He is also All, and so it follows that He is also known by a multitude of other names. Although none supplants that of Allah, the ninety-nine *asmā' Allah al-husna* ("beautiful names of Allah") are all found in the Koran, which contains many others as well. The practice of reciting the divine names aloud perhaps dates back to the eighth century. In medieval times, the ninety-nine names were organized into three categories, one of which included the "names of actions" (*asmā' al-af'āl*), and it is noteworthy that the ninety-fourth name of Allah (al-Hādī, the "Guide") is also associated with motion. Muslim theologians have speculated that the last of the divine names (as-Sabūr, "Patient") may suggest yet one more final name, the hundredth, which according to various traditions may refer to the *mahdi* yet to come or to the Sufi quest for

transcendental sublimation in the One God.<sup>87</sup> Hence, the number one, despite all others, is always being sought after; reflecting Sufi ontology, all numbers ultimately refer back to one and are products of it.<sup>88</sup>

While the numbers two and three are related to the Active Intellect (*al-‘qal*) and the Universal Soul (*al-nafs*), respectively, taking on significant esoteric meaning among Sufi gnostics, their preeminence is eclipsed in many ways by the number four, which is associated with the very matter (*hayūlā’*) created by Allah and which is itself of four kinds, as described earlier. Doubtless, the Sufi obsession with the number four derives from their championing of Platonic texts expounding a worldview in which tetrads are manifest in many aspects of physical being. There are four elements (earth, fire, wind, and water), four cardinal directions and winds (north, south, east, and west), four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter), four bodily fluids (blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm), and four ascending pitches that identify any musical mode (the tetrachord). Fours are so prevalent in the natural world that some scholars like Ibn Sina consider it emblematic not of matter, but of nature proper (*al-tabī‘ah*). In either case, the number is considered perfect and consists of all the simple numerals that equal ten (1 + 2 + 3 + 4), the base root of the decimal system, and generate the other compound numbers (5, 6, 7, 8, and 9).<sup>89</sup> The number four is represented geometrically by any quadrangular shape, though the perfect square, diamond, and cross are preferred. Fittingly, the fourth name of God, the “King” (*al-Malik*), refers to His dominion over His perfectly constructed world.

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<sup>87</sup> According to Ibn Sina, the number one hundred represents “the assembly of all things in the plan of the Creator” and is identified with the letter (ġ). See *ibid.*, 210. For a historicized discussion of the ninety-nine names of God see Akkach, 49-53.

<sup>88</sup> For an abbreviated translation of the Ikhwan’s lengthy derivation of the numbers by the addition of unity (one) see Nasr, 1993, 46, footnote 13.

<sup>89</sup> Józef Pacholczyk, “Music and Astronomy in the Muslim World,” *Leonardo* 29, No. 2 (1996): 145-46.

The number five is perhaps the next most theologically symbolic number in Islam after one. According to the Ikhwan al-Safa, it is analogous to nature (*al-tabī'ah*) by way of its five elements (the four elements plus ether) and the five senses (hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch) that enable perception of it. In addition to these associations from ancient Greece, the number five is also prominent in Islamic worship. Islam recognizes five principal pillars of faith (*arkān*): namely, proclamation of faith (*shahādah*, *kelime-i şehadet*), ritual worship (*salāh*, *namaz*), almsgiving (*zakāh*, *zekat*), fasting (*sawm*, *oruç*), and pilgrimage (*hajj*, *hac*). Five times each day, the skies of the Muslim world are filled with the call to prayer (*adhan*, *ezan*), imploring the faithful to perform the second of these *arkān*, their five daily ritual prayers. Additionally, the hand has five fingers, which when read right palm up and left palm down spell out the letters of the name of Allah, and the image of an open hand is typically used in the Muslim world as a symbol of the religion. The fifth name of God is “Most Holy” (al-Quddūs), connoting purity and perfection, and therefore it comes perhaps as no surprise that the numeral is represented in the Arabic script by a full circle and is associated with all the perfection thereof.

The number six shares some of the connotations of the number five, but whereas five is associated with the principal concepts of orthodox Sunni Islam, the number six is in many ways a more “Sufic” number, endowed with abundant esoteric meaning. As a product of two and three, it is related to five, and the Ikhwan consider it a complete (*tāmm*), or perfect, number. Six is imbued with the same sense of circularity as the number five. Indeed, the sixth name of Allah is as-Salām (“All-Peaceful”), which in the oral tradition is used to describe God as free from imperfection. However, the manifest form of the number six is more mystical than exact. Unlike the number five which is

represented in its numeral form as a complete circle, the number six is most often symbolically depicted by the spiraling Arabic letter  $\text{و}$ . In the Ikhwan's hierarchy of being, both six and  $\text{و}$  correspond to the body (*jism*) and its six directions of movement (*ḥarakāt*) and, thus, they are symbolic of motion in general. In Sufism, they specifically reference mankind's upward, incremental arc of ascent towards spiritual unity with the Universal Oneness—the state of dying while living—and the complementary downward arc of descent from Allah to humanity.<sup>90</sup>

There are many examples of spirals in daily ritual and the arts that likewise connote Sufi conceptions of the cosmos and spiritual sublimation with Allah. Spiraling upward movement toward Allah is performed five times daily when a *muezzin* climbs up a mosque's spiral staircase, typically hidden from view within the rounded surface of a minaret, to intone the call to prayer; here the five *ezan*-s and the singular minaret may also evoke the number six. Alexandre Papadopoulo, in his enlightening study of Muslim art, found the spiral to be one of the most significant and pervasive aesthetics in architecture and painting, embedded even in the art of miniature painting.<sup>91</sup> As evident in Figure 6, spirals and hexagonal shapes, sometimes in conjunction with pentagons, are often used to invoke the circular, swirling movement of the cosmos and ultimately mystical union.

In the numerological study of letters (*'ilm al-jafr*), six and  $\text{و}$  have yet other associations with motion, sound, and transcendence. In the Arabic alphabet  $\text{و}$  is both a vowel (U) and a consonant (W). There are in total six vowel sounds (three hard and three

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<sup>90</sup> Henry Corbin, *Histoire de la Philosophie Islamique*, in 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

<sup>91</sup> Papadopoulo, 1979, 101-102 and for many reproductions of spirals and arabesques in miniature paintings see figures 569-603.

soft) that, as Samer Akkach explains, allow for the activation and enunciation of consonants and are connected to “the Sufis’ pattern of cosmic existence, spatial unfolding, and natural growth.”<sup>92</sup> The six vowels move consonants from their state of stillness (*sukūn*) through “phonetic motions” categorized as “motions of expression” (*ḥarakāt al-i‘rāb*) and “motions of building” (*ḥarakāt al-binā’*). The vowels are all conceived of as active verbs: the letters ۱ and ۲, for instance, have the properties of “erecting” (*naṣb*) and “bringing down” (*khafḍ*), respectively, while significantly ۳ is described as “raising” (*raf’*).

It is also worth mentioning at this point that the letter ۳ is the twenty-seventh letter of the Arabic alphabet and is symbolically connected to the twenty-seventh name of Allah (as-Samī, the “All-Hearing”). I have observed that in South Asia the expression “wah,” deriving from the Arabo-Urdu vowel ۳, is often exclaimed during musical performance to indicate a moment of greatness and even transcendence. It is usually accompanied by physical gestures also commonly used in the Mevlevi tradition and also related to the Sufī notion of ascent: the head is tilted at a forty-five degree angle, symbolizing severance from the physical world, and the right hand is lifted with palm up to the heavens.

The last number I consider here in depth is eight. Its pervasiveness in Islamic culture and significance in Sufism cannot be underestimated. The number eight shares many of the attributes of the numbers two and four, of which it is a product. Following ancient Greek custom, it is used in particular to describe the physical world in its totality, although the Arabic numeral ٨ visually evokes upward movement towards Oneness and it is therefore also connected to the spiritual world. The four primary elements of physical

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<sup>92</sup> Akkach, 106; for a more thorough analysis see pages 95-107.

matter are characterized by a second tetrad of properties comprising two sets of contrasting and complementary qualities: cold and warm, wet and dry. Each element has two properties and so, earth is considered cold and dry, water is cold and wet, fire is warm and dry, while air is warm and wet. Two interlocking squares forming an octagon, the geometric design *par excellence* in the Muslim world, are often used to depict this cosmology.

Octagons are also ubiquitous in Islamic architectural structures as well as in artistic decorations. In verse lxix: 17 of the Koran the Divine Throne of Allah is described as resting on eight pillars, which Ibn al-‘Arabi depicts as an octagon within a circle in his *Futūḥāt al-makkīyah (The Meccan Revelations)*.<sup>93</sup> Even though the circle and sphere are the most architecturally sound geometric shapes, the octagon here is likewise suggestive of strength. Ibn al-‘Arabi’s association of the octagon with the circle is typical of Sufi tradition and demonstrates the Sufi affinity for esoteric obfuscation; in Sufism, the octagon is known as the shape most similar to a circle without actually being one. This may well explain its prevalence. It may well also be that the eighth name of Allah (al-Muḥaymin, “Protector”) is latently connected to the architectural sturdiness of the octagon.

Along with the octagon, the cube is also a geometrically significant shape based on the number eight. The Ikhwan al-Safa point out that eight is the first cubic number. Comprising eight angles and six square faces in three dimensions, the cube is as potent

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<sup>93</sup> See *ibid.*, 125-30.

mathematically as it is structurally. Significantly, it is often used in the construction of tombs as a representation of the terrestrial plane of existence.<sup>94</sup>

Brief mention here should also be made to a few other numbers that, although not as symbolically resonant as those described above, nevertheless bear some significance in this dissertation. The number twelve indicates the signs of the zodiac and is associated with Allah as the Creator (al-Khāliq).<sup>95</sup> Many attempts have been made to organize the musical modes and rhythmic cycles according to this model of the cosmos, though none successfully reflects actual musical practice.<sup>96</sup> The number twenty-nine would not normally be mentioned in a study of Islamic cosmology, except that the character ۲, a compound of the letters ۱ and ۱, is sometimes considered by Sufis as the twenty-ninth, non-traditional letter of the Arabic alphabet. The character actually spells out the word *lā* (“no”), and its shape is connected to the swaying motions performed during the seated Sufi *zikr* ritual both for the purposes of not-forgetting the name of God and renouncing the physical world for unity with the Universal Being (see Chapter Five).

It is from such numerological reckonings that Sufi authors developed the geometric designs that enabled them to chart out the cosmos, map the world, and graphically depict existence itself.<sup>97</sup> In a passage based on the writings of Ibn al-‘Arabi and al-Qashani entitled “The Geometry of Being,” for instance, Samer Akkach presents

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<sup>94</sup> Pacholczyk, “Music and Astronomy in the Muslim World,” 146-47.

<sup>95</sup> Similarly, the number fourteen, as well as twenty-eight, is also used to describe the two Septentrional and Meridional halves of the zodiac and the two halves of the Arabic alphabet. The fourteenth name of God, al-Musawwir (“Shaper” or “Fashioner of Forms”), is likewise comparable to that of the twelfth.

<sup>96</sup> Jean During, “The Symbolic Universe of Music in Islamic Societies,” in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Volume 6, *The Middle East*, ed. by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2002): 184.

<sup>97</sup> For several reproductions see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Science: An Illustrated Study*. [s.l.]: World of Islam Festival Publishing Company, Ltd., 1976): 27-48.

the nature of being in the form of a diagram constructed of various geometric shapes. On a white background, symbolizing the Primordial Presence, is a single point, representing Transcendental Unity, contained within a square and sphere, signifying the Divine Presence, and a six-pointed cross, indicating the Human Presence.<sup>98</sup> While such mandalas are extremely popular in Sufi literature, and while Sufi cosmologies are beautifully rendered across the Islamic world in art and architecture, music and dance too are used to describe, physically embody, and perform the nature of existence. In the following section I explain not only how music is a manifestation of ontology, but how it is also a devotional act that reinforces and perpetuates the worldview.

### **Music as Devotion: The Music of the Spheres**

The study of musical performance as an act of devotion proper has been largely contained to the Christian and Hindu-Buddhist traditions. Historical musicologists researching the Medieval and Renaissance eras of Europe typically focus on the devotional nature of the extant corpus of liturgical music because much of it survives in abundance usually without any other discernable contextual information.<sup>99</sup>

Ethnomusicologists working in South Asia have likewise infused the strong religious sentiment apparent in the culture into their writings.<sup>100</sup> Rarely, however, has Islamic music been approached from its primary function as a manifestation of piety and

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<sup>98</sup> Akkach, 111.

<sup>99</sup> Howard Mayer Brown, "The Mirror of Man's Salvation: Music in Devotional Life about 1500," *Renaissance Quarterly* 43, No. 4. (1990): 744-73.

<sup>100</sup> Terry Jay Ellingson, "The Mandala of Sound: Concepts and Sound Structure in Tibetan Ritual Music" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1979); David Henderson, "Emotion and Devotion, Lingering and Longing in Some Nepali Songs," *Ethnomusicology* 40, No. 3 (1996): 440-68; Anna Schultz, "Hindu Nationalism, Music, and Embodiment in Marathi Rashtriya Kirtan," *Ethnomusicology* 46, No. 2 (2002): 307-22.

religious passion, except in studies of Muslim music in South Asia.<sup>101</sup> Rather, studies of music in the Islamic world, especially that of West Asia, have tended to dwell primarily on the way that music conforms to cultural ideals, especially those of cosmology. Such an approach implies that musicians perform music purely from the standpoint of tradition as a celebration of a worldview—an ancient, geocentric one that is no longer totally in keeping with contemporary understandings of existence, I might add—and not also as an act of religious adoration. While this may be true in some cases, and it is certainly in line with Kemalist elements in the Turkish government, it fails to account for the most fundamental element of Sufi music: its ecstatic nature.

The problem can be traced in part to the habit, even among some early Sufi scholars, of approaching ancient Greek and Muslim music solely from a theoretical perspective. Sufi authors cast their musical treatises in the mold of the Greek discourse on the music of the spheres, the celestial sounds generated by the movement of the heavenly bodies. Pythagoras was the first to promulgate this doctrine of a universe governed by the mathematical proportions that generate the intervals between musical pitches. Sufi cosmologists like the Ikhwan al-Safa, operating within the staunch monotheism of Islam, readily embraced the Pythagorean association of a single resonating string with the Universal Soul, and the subdivision of this monochord into ratios that can then be applied to the distance between the earth and the heavenly bodies. Like all pre-modern Muslim scholars, the Ikhwan also accepted the ancient Greek 2:1 division of the monochord that can be filled with a rising scale of pitches in two interconnected tetrads forming the octave. Acoustically speaking, the number eight, then,

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<sup>101</sup> See Qureshi, 1996 and her “‘Muslim Devotional’: Popular Religious Music and Muslim Identity under British, Indian and Pakistani Hegemony,” *Asian Music* 24, No. 1 (1992-93): 111-21.

is of the same quality as the number one,<sup>102</sup> and so the Greek custom of associating the two intervening tetrads with matter, the elements, and so forth was also adopted by Muslims because ultimately they could all be made to relate back to the one.

Thus, Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic cosmological doctrines were accepted because they were consonant with Islamic worldview, but what is interesting to note is the manner in which other aspects were Islamicized. For instance, by the advent of Islam, the teaching of music (harmonics) in the Christian world was well established in the quadrivium, the four mathematical studies of the seven liberal arts that also included arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. The Ikhwan al-Safa, however, place their *Risāla fī'l-Mūsīqī* (*Epistle on Music*) fifth after four tracts on the properties of numbers, geometry, astronomy, and geography, thus also imbuing music with the Islamic attributes of the number.<sup>103</sup> In addition, the Ikhwan al-Safa, following al-Kindi and al-Farabi, illustrate the musical and cosmic proportions using the strings of the *ud* (Figure 10), describing it as “the instrument closest to perfection.”<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> The Ikhwan describe this proportion as “that which is equal.” See Amnon Shiloah, trans., *The Epistle on Music of the Ikhwan al-Safa* (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Press, 1978): 34-35.

<sup>103</sup> Though the *Epistle on Music* is traditionally accepted as the fifth of the Ikhwan’s fifty-two tracts, see Nasr, 1993, 42, Shiloah actually states that is either the fourth or fifth (1978, 5) and elsewhere (1995, 50) places it fourth after the *Epistle on Astronomy*.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 32, see also 33-40 and 43-49.



Figure 10: Ud, Mevlana Museum  
(Konya, June 18, 2005).

Indeed, the Ikhwan first establish that the pear-shaped lute should be constructed in a ratio of 3:2, the interval of the fifth, then explain how each of its four strings should increase in thickness and be tuned in proportions of 4:3, i.e., the interval of a fourth. The four strings are then associated with the elements and humors and to the movements of the celestial spheres.<sup>105</sup> In the end, the Ikhwan cannot escape the ancient pagan predilection for the 4:3 ratio and so adopt it enthusiastically, explaining that the Greek philosophers “wished to imitate the science of the Creator — great are His praises — and reproduce the signs of His art in the natural productions.”

This musical microcosm of the universe presented by the Ikhwan al-Safa and others is well known by modern scholars, but what is often forgotten is that the notion of a moving, musical universe was not simply metaphorical, it was an Islamic and Sufic truth. As the Ikhwan insist,

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<sup>105</sup> For more on the symbolism of musical instruments, see Chapter Four of this dissertation.

These coordinated movements [of the spheres] produce harmonies, melodies, touching, symmetrical and sweet, as we have clearly established in speaking of the movement and melodies produced by the strings of the lute...[and confirm]...a work conceived by a wise Artisan, constructed by a zealous Constructor and composed by a benevolent Composer.”<sup>106</sup>

Such a fervent religiosity is evident throughout the *Epistle on Music*, which commences with the *Bismillah*, the Koranic proclamation stating the every word and action following is done “In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.” Indeed, as these next key passages indicate, the Ikhwan’s central aim in discussing music is not simply to state its cosmological significance, but also to express its ability to engender transcendence.

We propose in this Epistle called “Music”, to study the art which is constituted at the one and the same time of the corporeal and the spiritual. This is art of harmony (*ta’lif*) which can be defined in terms of proportions.

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The soul of this man [one who seeks ascent into the celestial world by means proclaimed in verse xix: 57 of the Koran] will also follow the example of the soul of Pythagoras the philosopher who heard the music of the spheres after having been cleansed of the defilement of corporeal appetites and raised to the sublime by constant reflection and by the sciences of arithmetic, geometry and music. Apply yourself, therefore, O my brother — may God assist you and assist us through the spirit (emanating) from Himself — to deliver it (your soul) from the ocean of matter, the prison of nature and the subjection of the corporeal appetites.<sup>107</sup>

Ultimately then, music is at once both a byproduct and source of movement. The universe itself resonates with the music of the celestial bodies in motion, yet at the same time, music compels movement toward spiritual unity with Allah, the One God and Universal Soul.

In short, motion is a fundamental aspect of Islamic faith and it is manifest in most, if not all, levels of Muslim culture, as I explore further in the following chapter. It is

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<sup>106</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 56-57.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 12 and 57.

expressed in art, music, and dance sometimes openly, but more often indirectly and esoterically through numerical and geometrical symbolism as deliberated on by the Ikwhan al-Safa and discussed in detail in this chapter. But music and dance are not simply analogies for movement, and their symbolism does not serve as mere artifice. Creating, performing, and listening to music embedded with concealed meanings stimulates the process of symbolic interpretation (*ta'wīl*) that leads ultimately to ecstatic union with the Creator, for the meanings become clear only through a journey of reflection. Music is then an ongoing action, in a sense, equivalent to religious worship. It is from this cosmological, aesthetic, and devotional perspective that the music and spiraling *sema* of the Mevlevi rite must be understood.

## CHAPTER THREE

### MODES OF MOTION: THE SPIRIT OF MOTION IN MUSICS FOR THE MEVLANA

Whereas in the previous chapter I concentrated on movement in the abstract sense of Sufi Muslim cosmology and symbolism, here I discuss it in more concrete terms, focusing especially on travel as a lived reality. Ultimately, my goal is to explain the broader universe in which music for the Mevlana exists and is most fully understood. Pursuant to these ends, I begin by giving an ethnographic description of the Konya *otogar* in order to impart a sense of how central the concept of mobility is in Turkish culture. Afterwards, I explore the scholarly literature on various forms of social movement within a Muslim context. Islamic tradition itself recognizes several different categories of long-distance travel including *hijra* (“migration”), *hajj* (“pilgrimage”), *ziyara* (“pilgrimage to saints’ shrines”), and *rihla* (“search for knowledge”), to which I refer throughout this chapter. In the second section of this chapter I discuss travel associated with globalization, focusing especially on that brought on by world conquest, trade, and missionary efforts. In the following section, I compare religious pilgrimage to tourism, finding the critical distinctions and intersections between the two. Subsequently, I turn to spiritual movement, delving into the scholarly approaches to religious trance experience. I conclude the chapter with a consideration of motion more directly connected to music and dance, adopting Adrienne Kaeppler’s notion of structured movement systems.

## **The Konya *Otogar*, A Modern Caravanserai**

The city of Konya lies on the central Anatolian plateau at the intersection of two very old, yet still vital commercial and religious routes. It is here that even today merchants traveling between east and west on the Silk Road meet pilgrims from the north heading south to Mecca and the Biblical holy lands. No mere way station, however, the former capital of the Selçuk Empire is Turkey's fifth or sixth most populous city and capital of the country's largest province. Its booming economy is based largely on agricultural harvests from the vast surrounding steppe and the local textile, wood, and confection industries. Konya also has the reputation of being the most religiously conservative city in Turkey, and, with the shrine of the Mevlana Rumi at its heart, it is the country's most prominent pilgrimage center.

As traders and pilgrims, the originally nomadic Turks have always been a highly mobile people sensitive to the demands of travel and keen to develop its infrastructure. The Selçuk and Ottoman Turks built and maintained dozens of large *han*-s ("inns") around the city of Konya, nearly twenty-five alone on the roads east to Kayseri and north to Sivas. Otherwise known as *kervanseray*-s (caravanserais; literally, "caravan palaces"), these *han*-s were the best forms of roadside accommodation in the pre-modern Muslim world, most boasting ornately decorated portals along with baths, sleeping quarters, storerooms, and a mosque around a large open courtyard (see Chapter One, Figure 1).

Some ten kilometers northeast of the city center stands Konya's *yeni otogar* ("new bus station"), the modern day version of the old caravanserai (see Figure 11). Like the ancient *han*-s, Konya's busy bus station teems with travelers twenty-four hours a day.



Figure 11: Front View of the Konya *Otogar*  
(Konya, November 14, 2004)

Modern Turks have traded the bumpy camel for the comforts of Kamel Koç, one of hundreds of commercial bus companies that together comprise the world's most extensive, efficient, and comfortable intercity busing network.<sup>108</sup> Virtually every bus company provides a minimal amenity of complimentary tea, coffee, and/or soda, though most also offer assorted cakes and crackers, music, movies, climate control, pillows, blankets, and sanitizing towelettes or splashes of refreshing lemon-scented cologne with which travelers wipe their ears, faces, and necks in a manner similar to the ritual ablutions they perform before entering a mosque. Buses make regular stops *en route* at bus stations and special centers known as *tesis-s* ("facilities") normally housing restrooms, stores, mosques, and sometimes cafeterias and hotels. All buses have at least

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<sup>108</sup> For instance, Yeni Konya, one of the more modestly sized bus companies based in Konya provides services to the western part of the country; its logo features a dervish whirling on a green map of Turkey and the globe. Meanwhile, Sema Turizm, another company with Mevlevi references, travels between İstanbul, the Black Sea region, and eastern Anatolia, though curiously it does not have routes to Konya.

one steward who assists the driver and passengers and manages most travel details including ticketing.

Though overnight bus trips are by far the most popular form of long-distance travel, buses leave regularly, sometimes every half hour, for the most remote corners of the country as well as many major destinations in Europe and the Middle East, with large cities seeing hundreds if not thousands of departures and arrivals daily. Moreover, buses are customarily filled to capacity. Given the great demand, most cities have recently constructed larger bus stations outside their main centers. Konya's new *otogar*, for instance, supplants the *eski garaj* ("old bus station"), which is located one kilometer south of the Mevlana Museum and now provides service only to nearby villages.

Konya's large *yeni otogar* is architecturally quite striking. Intercity buses arrive at the back of the station, docking at one of thirty-eight *peron-s* ("platforms") curving around the red structure and its distinctive central waiting hall, which resembles the dome of a mosque (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Side View Konya *Otogar*  
(Konya, November 14, 2004)

Inside, shops and bus company booths and offices encircle the large seating area. Two sets of spiral staircases lead down to luggage storage and restrooms—male on the right, female on the left—and up to the *çay bahçe* (literally, “tea garden”). Toward the front entrance of the building, the ceiling is decorated with large Selçuk style squares containing green tiles forming circle and spiral motifs, which can also be found on the sidewalks in the city center. Meanwhile, the cavernous central dome just ahead depicts a five-pointed star and is lit by natural sunlight (Figure 13).



Figure 13: Dome Interior, Konya *Otogar*  
(Konya, May 12, 2005)

The overall shape of the *otogar* is that of a crescent moon and star, which, although an overtly nationalist symbol taking after the flag of the Turkish Republic, is unequivocally a religious symbol, according to many of my contacts in İstanbul and İzmir, by simple virtue of it being located in Konya.

On the way out and on the right, a small electronic kiosk, also found downtown and similar in appearance to a game in a video arcade, provides city visitors with extensive information on numerous topics including tourism, hotels, local history, economy, and the Mevlana. Outside, shops selling Mevlevi merchandise (Figure 14) and white Konyan candy (sometimes called Mevlana *şekeri* or “Mevlana sugar”) outline the crescent shape of the *otogar*, culminating on the right at a small, busy mosque (*mescit*).



Figure 14: Whirling Dervish Coffee Mug and Other Trinkets, Konya *Otogar* (Konya, November 14, 2004)

As in all Turkish cities, Konya’s major transit hub is the *otogar*, and not the airport or train station. Half a dozen forms of public transportation—cars, taxis, city buses, *dolmuş*-s (“minibuses”), *servis*-s (“bus company shuttles”), and the *tramvay* (“tram”)—swarm about waiting to connect tourists, pilgrims, and businessmen with “Mevlana,” their large signs bearing the mystic’s name instead of the usual “*şehir merkezi*” (“city center”).

## Global Movement and the World of Islam

Globalization is a defining feature of modern life, which every day seems to take on a more peripatetic, even nomadic, quality. As a term, however, globalization is not easy to pinpoint as it has a multitude of varying definitions, connotations, and implications that vary by perspective.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, the literature on the subject and its impact is voluminous.<sup>110</sup> I define globalization plainly as a social process characterized by the worldwide movement of peoples, ideas, values, products, services, and capital. This process has intensified notably during the twentieth century with increased technological development, particularly in the areas of transportation and mass media, including radio, television, and the Internet. The relative ease and speed of worldwide travel and communication has had profound impact on all social institutions around the globe, especially on politics and economics, as well as on how people conceive of themselves and construct their identities.

Increased mobility and contact has also initiated greater cultural flow between countries, this latest phase of globalization occasionally differentiated as internationalism or even transnationalism. Arjun Appadurai identifies the key agents of this cross-national exchange as “tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest-workers, and other moving

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<sup>109</sup> See for example Akbar S. Ahmed and Hastings Donnan, eds., *Islam, Globalization, and Postmodernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); Peter Mandaville *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001). Mandaville (15) finds the term “analytically meaningless” on account of it having acquired “so much ideological and sensationalist baggage in recent years.”

<sup>110</sup> For some of the most significant sources see John Beynon and David Dunkerley, eds., *Globalization: The Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Mike Featherstone, ed., *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London: Sage, 1990); Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson eds., *Global Modernities* (London: Sage, 1995); Marshall McLuhan and Bruce R. Powers, *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992); Roland Robertson and J. A. Chirico, “Humanity, Globalization and Worldwide Religious Resurgence: A Theoretical Exploration,” *Sociological Analysis* 46, No. 3 (1985): 219-42.

groups and persons,” who comprise the “shifting world” in which we live and who he collectively terms an *ethnoscape*.<sup>111</sup> Diaspora communities and other *ethnoscapes* with complex, liminal identities have emerged in all corners of the planet,<sup>112</sup> inviting some to proclaim the imminent demise of the nation-state, a concept exported globally from Europe beginning in the eighteenth century. In tandem with this transnationalism has been the widespread fear that globalization will ultimately lead to a world order characterized by cultural homogeneity, or “greyout,” and dominated by Western cultural hegemony and its neo-colonialist interests.<sup>113</sup>

Such prognoses, however, may be premature, as the final outcome of globalization remains unpredictable. China, India, and the fundamentalist Islamic movement all have their own global aspirations that are only now beginning to emerge. Furthermore, in Turkey, which is situated on the crossroads of east and west and is one of the more critical areas where Western-influenced globalization is being tested, there are few indications of either a dwindling of nationalism or a desire for total homogenization with a universal global culture.<sup>114</sup> To the contrary, nationalist sentiment is stronger than ever in Turkey and it remains a powerful galvanizing social force (Figure 15).<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Arjun Appadurai, “Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology,” in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, ed. Richard Fox, School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series, ed. Douglas W. Schwartz (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1991): 192. See also, Appadurai, 1990, 1-24.

<sup>112</sup> Hall, 1990.

<sup>113</sup> See for instance, Eric Gans, *The End of Culture: Towards A Generative Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985); Krister Malm, “The Music Industry,” in *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*, ed. Helen Myers (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992): 349-64; Ziauddin Sardar, *Postmodernism and the Other: The New Imperialism of Western Culture* (Chicago: Pluto Press, 1998).

<sup>114</sup> See Yıldız Atasoy, *Turkey, Islamists and Democracy: Transition and Globalization in a Muslim State* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005); Marvine Howe, *Turkey Today: A Nation Divided over Islam's Revival* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000); Emin Fuat Keyman, *Globalization and Turkey: Economy,*



Figure 15: Turkish Flags Adorn the Çeşme Town Center  
(Çeşme, April 23, 2005)

Moreover, a late-2006 poll reported on by the British Broadcasting Corporation showed that Turks have soured to their proposed, and much protracted, entry into the European Union, with only one third of those polled in favor, as opposed to some sixty percent in 2004.<sup>116</sup> Hence, for Turks globalization has paradoxically cemented national identity even while providing greater opportunities for mobility and communication both inside

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*Society and Culture* (San Domenico di Fiesole, Italy: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre, 2001).

<sup>115</sup> Among most segments of Turkish society, national identity far outweighs and is confused with ethnicity. On separate occasions, two of my informants, despite being of mixed Macedonian/Persian and Tatar stock and telling me that only an estimated 7% of the population is of pure ethnic Turkish origin, proudly asserted their Turkish identity. Such patriotism is fueled by the ubiquitous phrase, “Ne mutlu Türk’üm diyene” (“How happy is he who says ‘I am a Turk’”), which is chanted by school children every morning and carved onto mountainsides. Similar ultranationalist sentiments have also spawned the DTO movement, which may have originated in İzmir and stands for the phrase “Dünya Türk olsun” (“Let the world be Turkish”).

<sup>116</sup> William Horsley, “Turks Cool Towards ‘Unfaithful’ Europe,” November 6, 2006, accessed November 6, 2006 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6121106.stm>>.

and outside the country. Such cultural, economic, and political complexities are characteristic of globalization everywhere in the world today.<sup>117</sup>

Although the issue of globalization has consumed much of modern scholarship over the last few decades, it is an ancient feature of the Muslim world as Islam has been a powerful globalizing force since its foundation.<sup>118</sup> In the year 622, the Prophet Muhammad, faced with opposition from the local political and economic establishment, was forced to flee from Mecca to Medina. Known as the *hijra* (“migration”), this event marked the beginning of the Islamic calendar and the first stage of expansion of the faith. Using military and missionary means, Muhammad united most of the tribes on the Arabian Peninsula, forged the Muslim *ummah* (“community”), and conquered Mecca. After his death in 632, Muhammad’s successors quickly spread Islam into the Levant and beyond. Within a century and a half, the Muslim Arab empires of the Umayyads and Abbasids ruled the vast majority of the known world from the Iberian Peninsula, across North and East Africa, and into India and Central Asia.

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<sup>117</sup> For a consideration of the globalization’s impact on Turkish music see especially Chapter Six. Although ethnomusicology has always been concerned with the study of music in global context, several key monographs are noteworthy, see: George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism, and the Poetics of Place* (London: Verso, 1994); Peter Manuel, *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993); Timothy Taylor, *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>118</sup> See Thomas W. Simons, Jr., *Islam in a Globalizing World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori, 1990. For studies of contemporary issues in globalization and Islam see also Ahmed and Donnan, 1994; Shana Cohen and Larabi Jaidi, *Morocco: Globalization and its Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, ed., *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Azza Karam, ed., *Transnational Political Islam: Religion, Ideology and Power* (London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2004); Mandaville, 2001; Johan Meuleman, ed., *Islam in the Era of Globalization: Muslim Attitudes towards Modernity and Identity* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2002); Ali Mohammadi, ed., *Islam Encountering Globalization* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2002); Richard N. Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, eds., *No More States? Globalization, National Self-determination, and Terrorism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006); Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Birgit Schaebler and Leif Stenberg, eds., *Globalization and the Muslim World: Culture, Religion, and Modernity* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004).

Indeed, global socio-political systems are nothing new. Even prior to the Islamic Caliphates, large parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa were united several times under vast empires, first in the sixth century B.C.E. by the Persian Emperor Cyrus and later by Alexander the Great, the Romans, and the Byzantines. The Persians and Romans in particular were noteworthy for their extensive road projects, which facilitated imperial governance and encouraged rapid mobility both inside and outside their territories. These roads complemented the nautical travel that developed naturally along the Nile River, the Persian Gulf, and the Mediterranean and Red Seas. By the early centuries of the Common Era, as Germanic invaders displaced Roman citizens and Christian preachers took their Mission on the road, long-distance travel was the reality of existence. For the Christians of late antiquity, travel became a metaphor for Christian life, and, as Maribel Dietz explains, they traveled for a great many reasons, including “escape from hostility, escape from social pressures, escape from the mundane, and the urge to commune with holy men and women, both living and dead.”<sup>119</sup>

Commerce too was an important motivation for travel, and in this perhaps none were better suited than the nomadic Arabs and Turks. The Prophet Muhammad himself came from a merchant family, and, as Islam spread, Muslim traders quickly replaced the agoras of the Greeks with extensive outdoor *sug-s* and bazaars. Undoubtedly the largest and best known of these is the Kapalı Çarşısı (“Covered Bazaar”) in İstanbul (Figure 16). Built by Sultan Mehmet II shortly after his conquest of the city in 1453, it comprised some eight hundred shops and was the economic hub of the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>119</sup> Dietz, 2.



Figure 16: The Kapalı Çarşısı (“Covered Bazaar”)  
(İstanbul, June 24, 2002)

Justin McCarthy summarizes its history and complexity:

From the fifteenth century on, the market expanded and the number of shops continued to grow. There were so many shops, indeed, that no one was able to count them accurately. By 1701, there were approximately 3,000 shops.... In addition to shops, the covered bazaar contained a communal bath, a mosque and a number of smaller prayer halls (mescids), fountains, a school, a number of warehouses, coffee houses, and restaurants. The market was entered by 18 gates, and it contained 61 streets. Most of the streets were small and many were very narrow. It was a vast warren of little shops whose goods spilled out into the streets, watched over by thousands of rug-sellers, cloth-sellers, and other merchants. Losing oneself in the covered market was not unusual.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1997): 254.

Today, commerce remains one of the most vital features of Islamic culture and continues to serve an important globalizing function. Trade around the Kapalı Çarşısı spills out even further, west to the Beyazıt II and Süleymaniye *külliyе-s* (“mosque complexes”) and northeast as far as the Mısır Çarşısı (“Egyptian Bazaar”) and the Golden Horn, encompassing the greater part of the old city and drawing shoppers from all over the world as it did in centuries past. Similar, albeit less extensive, shopping districts, malls, and department stores can be found throughout İstanbul and in every city in the Muslim Near East (Figure 17).



Figure 17: Pedestrians Shopping in Karşıyaka (İzmir, March 26, 2005)

Even in the least commercial areas, one is sure to stumble upon a street vendor from a distant town selling passersby everything from socks and snacks to cheap radios and bootleg CDs.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> In Turkey, sidewalks cannot really be used by pedestrians as they are normally occupied by vendors' carts, store displays, and parked cars. Not surprisingly, most people are comfortable walking on the streets and gravitate toward them out of convention, even when sidewalks are clear.

The impulse to travel long distances for purposes of trade and work is in part traceable to verse iv: 34 of the Koran, which has been traditionally interpreted as placing the onus of a family's financial stability on the male head of the household. If no work is available to him locally, he is expected to emigrate, without his family if need be. Since the 1950s, economic pressures in Turkey and throughout the Middle East have made it necessary for men and even whole families to move from their villages to larger cities, resulting in untamed urbanization in all of Turkey's major urban centers, or abroad to Europe or the petroleum-rich states of the Persian Gulf. One is hard-pressed to find someone in Turkey today who has not been affected by this economic upheaval, as many have families living and working in Germany and elsewhere or are (or have been) migrant workers themselves.<sup>122</sup>

Within this troika of Islamic globalization—conquest, faith, and trade—the role of the Sufi has largely been that of missionary. As roaming mendicants, dervishes quickly spread Islamic principles and the populist Sufi doctrines of tolerance and transcendence to the fringes of the Dar-al-Islam (“abode” or “world of Islam”), and they continue to gain converts even further afield today; it is perhaps no great surprise that Sufism thrives not so much in Arab West Asia as in Turkey, South and Southeast Asia, North Africa, and the West. Both Franklin Lewis and Bente Nikolaisen have suggested that the *sema* performance tours the Mevlevi have made in Europe and the U.S. since in the 1970s (see

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<sup>122</sup> An interesting indicator of this massive migration is the common custom, particularly evident in Turkish bus stations, of pouring a cup or bucket of water on the ground as a vehicle departs for a distant journey. The gesture, which I suggest may have agrarian origins, is done both to symbolize a clean path before the traveler as well as to urge their timely return, for the evaporating water will inevitably come back as rain, like a gift from Allah above.

Chapter One) function very much along these lines and have contributed greatly to the transnationalization of the *tarikāt*, a topic I develop further in Chapter Seven.<sup>123</sup>

### **Theoretical Wanderings on Pilgrimage and Tourism**

In addition to travel that is broadly connected to globalization, both pilgrimage and tourism also play a critical role in understanding the music of the cult of the Mevlana as it exists today. Any consideration of the anthropology or ethnomusicology of either pilgrimage or tourism must first contend with the pioneering work of Victor and Edith Turner. Their *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, although limited to Christian forms of pilgrimage, provides the earliest comprehensive framework of sacred travel in anthropology and has broad applications for the study of pilgrimage practices worldwide.<sup>124</sup> Regarding it as “a kinetic ritual” and drawing on van Gennep’s notions of ritual separation, liminality, and reincorporation, the Turners present a theory of pilgrimage that emphasizes transcendence, *communitas*, and the “search for roots of ancient, almost vanishing virtues.”<sup>125</sup> Their assertion is that pilgrimage in the modern world functions as a kind of rite of passage, a critical form of social ritual that they believe the West has otherwise abandoned in its march toward modernity. As they so

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<sup>123</sup> Lewis, 2000; Nikolaisen, 92.

<sup>124</sup> Turner and Turner, 1978. See also Victor Turner, “Pilgrimages as Social Processes,” in *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii, 2-3, and 38. On the kinetic features of pilgrimage see also Linda Lehrhaupt, “Processional Aspects of Irish Pilgrimage,” *The Drama Review* 29, No. 3 (1985): 48-64; Kay Kaufman Shelemay, “Seged: A Falasha Pilgrimage Festival,” *Musica Judaica* 14 (1999): 65-83.

neatly summarize, “If mysticism is an interior pilgrimage, pilgrimage is exteriorized mysticism.”<sup>126</sup>

This focus on the holy, transformative, and otherwise extraordinary features of pilgrimage travel, however, has had a number of unintended, adverse consequences in the academic world. Firstly, as Morinis points out, pilgrimage is viewed as exceptional behavior and therefore has been largely overlooked in anthropological literature, which tends instead to document normative, habitual behavior;<sup>127</sup> the case is no less true in ethnomusicology.<sup>128</sup> Secondly, the Turnerian approach, which develops from and perpetuates the Western secular/sacred dialectic, has led to the unfortunate dissociation of pilgrimage from tourism, even though the Turners themselves specifically recognize commerce and tourism as integral components of the total pilgrimage experience.<sup>129</sup> Despite a number of more recent publications in anthropology<sup>130</sup> and ethnomusicology<sup>131</sup> attempting to further bridge the divide, pilgrimage and tourism are still commonly perceived as contradictory; pilgrimage being sacred, spiritual, and communal, whereas tourism is secular, material, and hedonistic.

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<sup>126</sup> Turner and Turner, 7.

<sup>127</sup> E. Alan Morinis, *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992): 2.

<sup>128</sup> For a few recent exceptions see Philip V. Bohlman, “Pilgrimage, Politics, and the Musical Remapping of the New Europe,” *Ethnomusicology* 40, No. 3 (1996): 375-412; Paul D. Greene, “Sound Engineering in a Tamil Village: Playing Audio Cassettes as Devotional Performance,” *Ethnomusicology* 43, No. 3 (1999): 459-489; “Ordering a Sacred Terrain: Melodic Pathways of Himalayan Flute Pilgrimage,” *Ethnomusicology* 47, No. 2: 205-27.

<sup>129</sup> Turner and Turner, 35-38.

<sup>130</sup> Badone and Roseman, 2004; Coleman and Eade, 2004;

<sup>131</sup> Martin Stokes, “Music, Travel and Tourism: An Afterword,” *The World of Music* 41, No. 3 (1999): 141-55; Jeff Todd Titon, “‘The Real Thing’: Tourism, Authenticity, and Pilgrimage among the Old Regular Baptists at the 1997 Smithsonian Folklife Festival,” *The World of Music* 41, No. 3 (1999): 115-39.

Anthropological studies of tourism, for their part, have increased steadily since the international tourism boom of the 1970s,<sup>132</sup> and tourism has become a topic of considerable importance in ethnomusicology since the 1990s.<sup>133</sup> Like their counterparts writing on pilgrimage, scholars of tourism have sought to reconcile the secular with the sacred by describing tourist experiences as no less extraordinary, ritualistic, or even spiritually rejuvenating and transcendent than pilgrimage.<sup>134</sup> Martin Stokes, proposing the subdiscipline of “tourism ethnomusicology,” even calls for the nuanced study of “tourism as pilgrimage” and suggests that tourism may well be “a modern form of mass religion.”<sup>135</sup>

Perhaps in light of this interplay between tourism and pilgrimage, studies of Islamic pilgrimage, including this dissertation, often take an expansive approach that invites comparison with other forms of Muslim travel, both secular and sacred.<sup>136</sup> Such a methodology is not unfounded and emerges both from observations of the Muslim proclivity for mobility and the recognition that distinctions between sacred and secular

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<sup>132</sup> Dean MacCannel, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976); Valene L. Smith, ed., *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977); Urry, 1990.

<sup>133</sup> Timothy J. Cooley, “Folk Festival as Modern Ritual in the Polish Tatra Mountains,” *The World of Music* 41, No. 3 (1999): 31-55; Peter Dunbar-Hall, “Culture, Tourism, and Cultural Tourism: Boundaries and Frontiers in Performances of Balinese Music and Dance,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 22, No. 2 (2001): 173-87; Chris Gibson and John Connell, *Music and Tourism: On the Road Again* (Buffalo: Channel View Publications, 2005); Katherine J. Hagedorn, *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001); Margaret Sarkissian, *D’Albuquerque’s Children: Performing Tradition in Malaysia’s Portuguese Settlement* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000).

<sup>134</sup> See the summary by Badone and Roseman, 5-8 as well as Stokes, 1999, 148 and Nelson Graburn, “Tourism: The Sacred Journey,” in *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism.*, Valene L. Smith, ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977).

<sup>135</sup> Stokes, 1999, 141 and 148.

<sup>136</sup> Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori, 1990; Ian Richard Netton, ed., *Golden Roads: Migration, Pilgrimage, and Travel in Mediaeval and Modern Islam* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1993); Pnina Werbner, “Stamping the Earth with the Name of Allah: Zikr and the Sacralizing of Space among British Muslims,” *Cultural Anthropology* 11, No. 3 (1996): 309-38.

are not always evident in the Islamic world. Thus, one may conclude that the pilgrimage to Mecca is not unconditionally sacred and that Muslim travelers do not go on pilgrimage with only religious intentions in mind. Such a scenario is best illustrated by the case of Ibn Battuta who made the pilgrimage to Mecca from his native Tangier three times in the early fourteenth century, each time making “detours” to such far-flung locales as Constantinople, China, India, and Tanzania for purposes of both sight-seeing or work. That Ibn Battuta recorded his journeys in the form of a *rihla* further demonstrates the conflation of secular and sacred intentions, because the term designates both a general book of travels and the search for sacred knowledge.<sup>137</sup>

The Islamic understanding of pilgrimage, however, is rather more complex and nuanced, and it may be more accurate to suggest that other forms of travel have sacred aspects due to the importance placed on pilgrimage to Mecca than to say the opposite. Although such elements of tourism, trade, and wanderlust *are* connected to Muslim pilgrimage, the Islamic notion of *hajj* is quite strictly defined in sacred terms and should not be confused with the more open concept of pilgrimage espoused by Western scholars. Indeed, the term *hajj* refers exclusively to the great pilgrimage to Mecca and is distinguished even from other forms of Islamic sacred travel like *rihla* and *ziyara*, and even *umrah*. The distinction comes from that fact that the *hajj* is one of the five principal *arkān*-s (“pillars”) of the faith and that one entire chapter of the Koran, *Sura xxii (al-Hajj)*, is devoted expressly to it. All Muslims are compelled to perform the sacred rites at

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<sup>137</sup> In his study of Ibn Battuta’s travels, Netton explains *rihla* as comprising four broad forms of travel: the travel for religious reasons (shrine visitation, etc.), the search for knowledge, the search for power or recognition, and wanderlust. See his *Seek Knowledge: Thought and Travel in the House of Islam* (London: Curzon Press, 1996): 121.

least once in their lifetimes, provided they have the means, and thus travel is connected directly to spiritual devotion as a matter of religious obligation.

The Caliph Umar (r. 634-44), second successor to the Prophet Muhammad, sought to preserve the holiness of the *hajj* further by declaring Mecca *haram*, closed off to all non-Muslims. Despite this, a surprising number of writings on the *hajj*, some dating back to the sixteenth century, are available to the general reader.<sup>138</sup> The accounts written by earlier Western travelers, who either by chance or guile made the *hajj* to Mecca, have circulated quite widely and have proven to be particularly insightful. The most famous of these is the tale of Englishman Sir Robert Burton who, impersonating a Kadiri Sufi from Afghanistan, infiltrated both Mecca and Medina in 1853.<sup>139</sup> Burton's account is keen to highlight the physical aspects of the journey to the holy city,<sup>140</sup> as well as to describe in great detail the complex series of ritual movements and treks that

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<sup>138</sup> See Robert F. Burton's account as well as his reproductions of those by Ludovicus Vertomannus, Joseph Pitts, Giovanni Finati, and A. Sprenger in his *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Mecca*, in 2 vols., ed. Edith Burton (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1893/1964). For Muslim accounts of the *hajj*, see Barbara D. Metcalf, "The Pilgrimage Remembered: South Asian Accounts of the *Hajj*," in Eickelman and Piscatori, 1990. Other insightful recent studies include: Suraiya Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans: The Hajj and the Ottomans, 1517-1683* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1990); Francis E. Peters, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Gwyn Rowley, "The Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Centrality of Islam," in *Sacred Places, Sacred Spaces: The Geography of Pilgrimage*, ed. Robert H. Stoddard and Alan Morinis (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Geoscience Publications, 1997): 141-59.

<sup>139</sup> Burton, 1893/1964.

<sup>140</sup> Early pilgrims to Mecca rarely traveled alone; rather, horse and camel caravans were preferred because they offered protection from bandits and allowed for a more intensely communal experience. In 1908, the Ottomans built the Hijaz railway from Damascus to Medina in order to expedite the long trip and to further guarantee the safety of the pilgrims, though it was in operation only briefly because it was partially destroyed during the Arab revolt against the Ottomans in 1916. Today, *hajj* travel is normally done by air flight to Jeddah and by means of organized pilgrimage tours, the modern day version of the old caravans. The Saudi government, unable to cope with growing influx of pilgrims—an estimated two million in 2006—has recently had to impose quotas by country and requires a pilgrimage visa, for which some nations have lotteries. For additional recent data see Rowley, 1997.

comprise the sacred rite and to point out the mandala-like layout of the great al-Haram Mosque.<sup>141</sup>

The basic *hajj* itinerary follows a circuitous route over five days. Pilgrims begin on the eighth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in Mecca, where they don sandals and two pieces of white cloth (*ihram*) symbolizing a state of purity and equality before traveling to nearby Mina to spend the night. The next morning, pilgrims proceed to the Valley of Mount Arafat for a day of prayer and reflection, this less physically active period being the central purpose of the *hajj*. In the evening, they journey back west to Muzdalifah, where they make preparations for the following day and spend the night. The third day of the pilgrimage is marked by the return to Mina and Mecca to perform three key rituals. In Mina, pilgrims throw seven stones at pillars to symbolize their repudiation of evil and then perform an animal sacrifice. Upon their return to Mecca in the afternoon, pilgrims visit the al-Haram Mosque to circumambulate counterclockwise seven times around the Kaaba, a cube-shaped black structure containing a black meteorite stone, and run back and forth seven times between Mounts Safa and Marwah. These two rituals (*tawaf* and *sa'i*, respectively) and the casting of stones in Mina are repeated on the fourth and fifth days of the *hajj*. The pilgrimage officially ends at sunset on the fifth day.

This series of travels and rituals is referred to as *hajj* (or *hajj al-akbar*) only during the propitious month of Dhu al-Hijjah. Those who perform it at other times of the year do not receive the honorific of *hajji* and can only claim to have made the *umrah* (“lesser *hajj*”).<sup>142</sup> In addition, the common practice of extending the pilgrimage to an

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<sup>141</sup> See especially Akkach, 179-95.

<sup>142</sup> Those who complete the *hajj* journey and rites acquire the title *hajji* or *hajja* (honorable pilgrim), which commands considerable respect and an elevation in social status.

optional sixth day for travel to Medina to visit the shrine and mosque of the Prophet Muhammad is technically not part of the *hajj*. This is more appropriately called *ziyara* (Turkish *ziyaret*) a term also used for travels to other historically important mosques, to the tombs of saints (*pir-s*), and to notable living religious figures, such as a sheikh (*seyh*).

It is this form of “pilgrimage” and not the *hajj* that I explore in more depth throughout this dissertation. *Ziyaret-s* can be made at any time of the year and are often performed in conjunction with the *hajj*, but those to places and people that are of considerable spiritual significance, such as that to the shrine of the Mevlana Rumi, are most frequently performed as sacred journeys in and of themselves. Such journeys may develop all the accoutrements of tourism travel and even share many characteristics of the *hajj*. Especially for Sufis and those who cannot afford to travel all the way to Mecca, and even for those who can, a *ziyaret* is regarded as a fair substitute for the *hajj*. Like the *hajj*, a *ziyaret* is often an intense period of religious transformation marked by similar experiences of *communitas* and spiritual rejuvenation. As Pnina Werbner explains in her study of Pakistani Sufis, *ziyaret-s* performed at specific times, such on the anniversary of a saint’s death (Şeb-i ‘urs), may become occasions for “joint transnational ritual celebration” and may have the same spiritual impact as the *hajj* to Mecca.<sup>143</sup> She observes of the Sufi processions and convoys making the *ziyaret*,

the convoy of vehicles... carries people hundreds of miles from their towns, factories and villages to attend the annual three-day ritual at the central lodge. In both processions and convoys disciples chant the *zikr* as they traverse through space. In doing so they inscribe the earth with the name of Allah.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Pnina Werbner, *Pilgrims of Love: The Anthropology of a Global Sufi Cult* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indian University Press, 2003): 5.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

## Music, Trance, and the Inner Journey

It may seem paradoxical that those seeking to abandon the terrestrial plane of existence would expend so much time and effort wandering through it, but for Sufis the somatic movements of *hajj*, *ziyaret*, and mendicancy are important external reflections of the perpetual internal journey toward Allah.<sup>145</sup> The romantic notion of the itinerant dervish, however, has resulted in an inappropriate overemphasis in the popular imagination on physical forms of Sufi travel.<sup>146</sup> To the contrary, it is the inner journey that defines Sufi gnosis,<sup>147</sup> and dervishes by and large have been living settled, contemplative existences akin to those of Christian monks since the twelfth century, as the increase of Sufi architecture and writing at the time suggests.<sup>148</sup> The excess of flittering, imprecise vocabulary describing spiritual movement in particular bespeaks the Sufi preoccupation with the internal, not external, voyage. Such terms as *wajd* (“ecstasy,” “emotion,” “rapture,” “trance”), *ḥāl* (“state,” “transience”), *waqt* (“instant,”

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<sup>145</sup> This is evident in countless writings on Sufi doctrine that inevitably use metaphors of travel to discuss the ineffable. This listing is by no means exhaustive: Reshad Feild, *The Invisible Way: A Journey into Conscious Loving and Dying* (Great Barrington, MA: Floris, 2003); Fadhlalla Haeri, *The Journey of the Self: A Sufi Guide to Personality* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1989); ‘Abd al-Karim ibn Ibrahim Jili ibn al-‘Arabi, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, ed. ‘Abd al-Karim ibn Ibrahim Jili (New York: Inner Traditions International, 1981); Osho, *Journey toward the Heart: Discourses on the Sufi Way* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1976/1979); Idries Shah, *Caravan of Dreams* (London: Octagon Press, 1968); Husayni Tihriani, Muhammad Husayn, et. al., *Kernel of the Kernel: Concerning the Wayfaring and Spiritual Journey of the People of Intellect (Risāla-yi Lubb al-lubāb dar sayr wa sulūk-i ulu’l-albāb)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003).

<sup>146</sup> In Turkey, Sufis, particularly the Mevlevi, are intimately connected to physical forms of travel. For instance, in addition to the Sema Turizm bus company I referred to in footnote 108, I also observed in the Aegean town of Ayvalık, a boat named “Derviş” and in the touristy Kale district of Antalya a travel agency named for the Mevlana.

<sup>147</sup> Sufis recognize either four or five stages of mystical journey including *nāsūt* (“human”), *malakūt* (“psychic substance”), *jabarūt* (“spiritual existence”), *lāhūt* (“divinity”), and “*Hā*” (a mystical term that defies translation, but refers to “breath,” “spirit,” and “Allah”). See Pacholczyk, *Sufyana Musiqi*, 30.

<sup>148</sup> Ira M. Lapidus, “Sufism and Ottoman Islamic Society,” in *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey*, ed. Raymond Lifchez, trans. M. E. Quigley-Pınar (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992): 25-27.

“moment,” “state”), *baka* (“sublimation”) and *fana* (“annihilation”), among many others, are used by Sufi writers to express the spiritual progression toward the Divinity and what in Western languages is generally subsumed under the concepts of trance and/or ecstasy.<sup>149</sup>

Even in English, the word “trance” has its share of ambiguity and controversy. Gilbert Rouget attempts to correct this in his exhaustive monograph on the relationship between music and trance.<sup>150</sup> He casts a wide net, approaching trance as a virtually universal phenomenon and defining it broadly as a state of consciousness resulting from sensory overstimulation and characterized by physical movement. Following Rouget, the general tendency in modern scholarship is to apply the term to an array of varying behaviors and states of consciousness ranging from daydreaming to spirit possession, and including religious worship, divination, healing, madness, music making, and dancing.<sup>151</sup> Although music and dance are not always present in such trance experiences, there is the inclination to treat all auditory stimuli and any related trance activity as such and thereby employ musicological and choreometric theories and methodologies to study them.

Rouget’s greatest contribution to the ethnography of music and trance, however, is the understanding that although any kind of music can be used to induce a trance state,

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<sup>149</sup> The word *wajd* (Turkish *vecd*) has its origins in the Arabic verb *wajada* (“to find,” “discover,” or “attain”), while *hāl* can be traced to the root *hwl* (“to change,” “to be transformed,” “to shift”). For an analysis of some of these terms, see Kenneth Avery, *A Psychology of Early Sufi Sama’: Listening and Altered States* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004): 55-79.

<sup>150</sup> Gilbert Rouget, *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession*. trans. Brunhilde Biebuyck (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1985): 3-11.

<sup>151</sup> Steven M. Friedson, *Dancing Prophets: Musical Experience in Tumbuka Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Felicitas D. Goodman, *Speaking in Tongues: A Cross-Cultural Study of Glossolalia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972); *Ecstasy, Ritual, and Alternate Reality: Religion in a Pluralistic World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1992); Marina Roseman, “The Social Structuring of Sound: The Temiar of Peninsular Malaysia,” *Ethnomusicology* 28, No. 3 (1984): 132-67; John Sloboda, *Exploring the Musical Mind: Cognition, Emotion, Ability, and Function* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

there is nothing intrinsic or *sui generis* in music that causes trance universally. He argues convincingly that such musical elements as modality, rhythm, and repetition, which have long been suspected to be catalysts of trance, do not necessarily lead to it, and he suggests, rather, that the triggers are actually psychophysiological and cultural in nature; in other words, trance is “willed.”<sup>152</sup> Essentially, Rouget’s point is that made by Jean-Jacques Rousseau nearly two hundred years prior in his reflection on the Italian practice of using music to cure tarantula bites. Rousseau, who is generally regarded as the first modern philosopher to write on the subject of music and trance, argued that it was cultural expectations about music, and not the music itself, that explained the apparent medical success of tarantella music and elicited the frenzy associated with it. In an oft-quoted passage, he writes,

Neither absolute sounds nor the same tunes are required to cure all those stung by this insect, for each needs the airs of a melody known to him and phrases that he understands. The Italian must have Italian tunes, the Turk would need Turkish tunes. Each is only affected by accents familiar to him; one’s nerves will respond only to the degree to which one’s mind prepares them for it: he must understand the language spoken to him before what he is being told sets him in motion. Bernier’s Cantatas are said to have healed a French musician’s fever; they would have caused it in a musician of any other nation.<sup>153</sup>

While Rouget’s (and Rousseau’s) observations on the intentionality and cultural specificity of trance open new avenues for the study of musical behavior, they also pose a potential point of conflict between what the ethnographer sees and what an informant may believe. Rouget himself highlights that among Sufis the deliberateness of trance is

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 319.

<sup>153</sup> Quoted and translated in Ibid., 167-68.

in dispute.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, he argues, through a virtuosic rereading of classical sources, that the power of music in the Phrygian mode to induced trance was not automatic among the ancient Greeks, and he consequently labels this belief, which was widely held throughout Europe in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, as “aberrant.”<sup>155</sup> However, early Sufi writers likewise maintained that musical modality had the ability to alter one’s mental and physical state, since each *maqam* had specific attributes, though there was often disagreement as to which mode cured which illness.<sup>156</sup>

Such misconceptions and misappropriations of ancient Greek trance, despite Rouget’s attempt to correct them, remain important in both Western and Sufi understandings of the phenomenon. For instance, the word “ecstasy,” which Rouget argues is semantically contradictory to “trance,” is nevertheless commonly used as a synonym for it and is the term most universally applied to Sufi trance rituals. The Greek word *ekstasis*, meaning the “action of moving through space, displacement, [and] deviation,” was in later centuries fused with Plato’s theory of the movements (*kineseis*) of the soul (*psyche*), and thus came to describe, instead, the harmonic alignment of the self with the Universe, or in the Sufi context, communion with Allah.<sup>157</sup>

Judith Becker’s approach to trance phenomena, outlined in her recent book, comes the closest of any Western study to approximating Sufi notions of ecstasy. Like Rouget, Becker finds trance to be “socially constructed and personally experienced within a particular religious cosmology which encourages some kinds of feelings and

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 309.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 226 and 236.

<sup>156</sup> Pacholezyk, *Sufyana Musiqi*, 109 and 118.

<sup>157</sup> Quoted in Rouget., 7. See also 202-06.

some kinds of bodily attitudes, and constrains others.”<sup>158</sup> However, she replaces the term “trance” with the concepts of “trancing” and “deep listening” and shifts the emphasis to emotion, finding it to be the critical link between music and trance behavior; trancing, therefore, is a profound emotional experience brought on by listening to music. This has obvious parallels with *samā’*, the ritualized Sufi state of “audition” in which ecstasy may result from focused listening to the mystical attributes of music.

Becker also promotes an approach that is at once biological and cultural, and, above all, active. Borrowing from the fields of cognition, semiotics, psychology, biology, and neurology, she argues that, “Deep listening and trancing, as processes, are simultaneously physical *and* psychological, somatic *and* cognitive.”<sup>159</sup> She rejects the idea of a trance as a “state,” preferring instead the terms trancing and deep listening because they are “always active.” As she explains,

Trances are always processual; one is either entering, continuing, or coming out of a trance. The temporal movement of both trancing and musicking from onset to conclusion can easily be followed. Trances tend to be of rather limited time duration, typically lasting from a minute or two to an hour or two; trances may reach a climax followed by collapse. As thinking is a process, as musicking is a process, so trancing is a process and not a ‘state.’<sup>160</sup>

Significantly, both Becker and Rouget use Muslim musical practices, namely *tarab* and *samā’*, to illustrate their points, and their approaches to these ecstatic styles support my own observations of devotional music for the Mevlana. *Tarab*, a term deriving from the verb *tariba* (“to be moved,” “agitated”), is simultaneously a genre of

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<sup>158</sup> Judith Becker, *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion, and Trancing* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004): 27.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 and 38.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

music, a synonym for music, and a profound emotion caused by music that may result in such behavior as weeping, fainting, and tearing of clothing.<sup>161</sup> *Tarab*, as Rouget points out, is essentially equivalent to *wajd* and typifies the visceral connections Sufis make between music, motion, and transcendence, although he also refers to *tarab* as a form of “secular trance,” a distinction that I suggested in my previous discussion of pilgrimage and tourism and will contend again in chapters five and six is unnecessary. Becker, after al-Ghazali and Crow,<sup>162</sup> makes the similar point as Rouget regarding the interconnectivity of music, trancing, and the inner voyage in her discussion of the Sufi *samāʿ*:

In the Muslim tradition, hearing is the most highly valued sense, the ear the way to spirituality and gnosis....<sup>163</sup> Sufis are concerned to bring about a transformation of ordinary consciousness to make receiving spiritual knowledge possible. Attentive listening is the path. One does not oneself play music that will aid in this transformation, one listens.... The tunes are vehicles for all the important texts.... Sufis are waiting expectantly for that one verse that speaks to their condition, that affirms the importance of their presence at *samaʿ* and that may lead them to a richer, fuller spirituality. The spiritual process of the listener is inseparable from what he hears and how he hears.<sup>164</sup>

In short, the Sufi quest for transcendence seizes upon the moment during trance when music, listening, motion, and emotion coincide, propelling the worshiper spiritually closer toward Allah.

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<sup>161</sup> See Rouget, 281-82; as well as Becker, 2; Farmer, 51; and especially Racy, 2003.

<sup>162</sup> Douglas Karim Crow, “Samaʿ: The Art of Listening in Islam,” in *Maqam: Music of the Islamic World and Its Influences*, ed. Robert Browning (New York: Alternative Museum, Athens Printing Company, 1984): 33.

<sup>163</sup> During my research in Turkey, my informants often used physical gestures to differentiate between Christianity and Islam. Whereas tracing a cross in the air or the left palm with the right index finger referred to Christianity, placing both open hands behind the ears in a gesture of full, attentive listening represented Islam.

<sup>164</sup> Becker, 2004, 81-82.

## Dance, Musical Motion, and Structured Movement Systems

The last mode of motion I consider in depth in this chapter because of its usefulness for understanding the devotional musics for the Mevlana is what might generally be called “dance.” Anthropologists of dance, or ethnochoreologists, have long wrestled with this term.<sup>165</sup> As with music, a culture may have no such a concept as dance, or, if it does, it may be quite different from what is meant by dance in the West. Moreover, the labeling of something as dance may vary depending on context and function. Most scholars define dance similarly to Anya Peterson Royce as “the human body making movements in time and space.”<sup>166</sup>

Adrienne Kaeppler, however, rejects the analytical value of the term altogether, arguing, “The concept ‘dance’ appears to be an unsatisfactory category imposed from a Western point of view because it tends to group together diverse activities that should be culturally separated.”<sup>167</sup> Indeed, the tendency is to brand any series of physical motions or gestures as “dance” or “dance-like,” even when doing so may be culturally inappropriate. Such is the case of the Mevlevi *sema*, which is typically described as a “whirling dance,” despite that dervishes consider it more properly a ritual. Other gestures performed during the *zikr* are similarly not dance. Nevertheless the physical, embodied movements of both *sema* and *zikr* are connected directly with music and their analysis remains necessary.

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<sup>165</sup> For a more thorough consideration of this and other terminology see Judith Lynne Hanna, *To Dance Is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

<sup>166</sup> Anya Peterson Royce, *The Anthropology of Dance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977): 3.

<sup>167</sup> Adrienne Kaeppler, 1985, 93.

Kaepler proposes that, instead of dance, ethnochoreologists focus on what she terms structured movement systems. Her notion not only eliminates the problems of terminology, but also shifts the emphasis to issues of cultural patterning and order. Specifically, Kaepler suggests that scholars observe all the various physical gestures, movements, and positions that constitute a given activity, not only to determine what distinguishes one set of actions from another, but also to ascertain cultural meanings, values, and, ultimately, deep social structure.<sup>168</sup> Thus Kaepler rearticulates Alan Merriam's theory, similar to that in ethnomusicology of "music as culture," that "dance is culture and culture is dance,"<sup>169</sup> but she does so in a way that elicits a more specific and detailed ethnography of movement.

One of the greatest dilemmas of this more comprehensive approach, however, is how to best visually reproduce the large quantity of motivic data that constitutes a structured movement system for purposes of both analysis and publication. Of the numerous dance notation systems that have arisen since the fifteenth century, perhaps the most suited to meet Kaepler's call is Kinetography Laban, or more simply Labanotation, which is named after its creator Rudolf Laban.<sup>170</sup> The Laban method, however, is very complex and time consuming, not to mention that notated examples generally occupy a substantial amount of space. In this dissertation, I adopt the more common and practical method of presenting my analyses by means of written descriptions and photography.

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<sup>168</sup> Adrienne Kaepler, "Dance Ethnology and the Anthropology of Dance," *Dance Research Journal* 32, No. 1 (2000): 117.

<sup>169</sup> Alan P. Merriam, "Anthropology and the Dance," in *New Dimensions in Dance Research: Anthropology and Dance (The American Indian)*, ed. Tamara Comstock (New York: Committee on Research in Dance, 1974): 17. See also Theresa J. Buckland, ed., *Dance in the Field: Theory, Methods, and Issues in Dance Ethnography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

<sup>170</sup> Ann Hutchinson Guest, *Labanotation Or Kinetography Laban: The System of Analyzing and Recording Movement*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Dance Books, 1996).

Perhaps owing to such difficulties of theory and methodology, scholarship of Middle Eastern dance and structured movement systems is very much in shortage.<sup>171</sup> Belly dance, perhaps one of the most characteristic genres of the region, tends to receive the lion's share of scholarly attention.<sup>172</sup> *Sema* is perhaps the next best documented, though, as far as I am aware, no detailed study of it as either a structured movement system or "dance" exists. What is written of the *sema* does not go much further than the tourist literature published by the Konya Ministry of Culture and Tourism; *sema* gestures are described within the poetic rhetoric of Sufi spirituality and cosmology almost exclusively as symbols. This passage by Shems Friedlander is typical,

All the dervishes unfold and whirl as the musicians play and the chorus chants. The turners extend their arms; the right palm faces up and the left down. The energy from above enters through the right palm, passes through the body, which is a visible channel, and, as this grace is universal, it passes through the left palm into the earth. With extended arms, the dervishes embrace God.<sup>173</sup>

Richard Burton, though waxing less poetically than is typical, summarizes the other basic characterization of the whirling motion, "Its conjectural significance is an imitation of the procession of the heavenly bodies, the motions of the spheres, and the dances of the angels."<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> See Shiloah, 1995, 137-53; Issam el-Mallah, "Dance as a Component Part of Music Genres in the Countries of the Arabian Gulf," *Revista de Musicología* 16, No. 4: 2043-54.

<sup>172</sup> This genre is known by a variety of names including *göbek dansı* (Turkish "belly dance") *raqs sharqī* ("oriental dance"/"eastern dance," Turkish *oryantal dansı*), *raqs baladī* ("native dance"/"folk dance", *raqs arabī* ("Arabic dance"), *raqs masrī* ("Egyptian dance"), and the French *danse du ventre* ("belly dance"). See Leona Wood, "Danse du ventre: A Fresh Appraisal," *Dance Research Journal* 8, No. 2 (1976): 18-30; Kathleen Fraser, "Aesthetic Explorations of the Egyptian Oriental Dance among Egyptian Canadians," *UCLA Journal of Dance Ethnology* 17 (1993): 58-66; Cassandra Lorus, "Oh Boy, You Salt of the Earth": Outwitting Patriarchy in Raqs Baladi," *Popular Music* 15, No. 3 (1996): 285-98.

<sup>173</sup> Shems Friedlander, *Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes* (New York: Parabola Books, 2003): 88.

<sup>174</sup> Burton, 165.

The movement motifs of *zikir*, with its somewhat more limited vocabulary of gestures, are often described in little more depth than “rocking” or “swaying.” Only occasionally are references made to clapping and beating of the breast. Many modern day accounts of the *zikir* do not vary substantially from that of Bertrandon de la Broquière, a diplomatic envoy from Philip the Good of Burgundy to the Ottoman Empire, who wrote this brief description in 1433, over half a millennium ago.

I sometimes heard them say their prayers in song, at nightfall; and they seated themselves in a circle and shook their bodies and heads and sang wildly in their manner of doing it.<sup>175</sup>

The theoretical framework provided by Kaepler, Merriam, and other anthropologists of dance and kinesics allows for more detailed descriptions and in-depth cultural analyses of these movement systems than has been previously available. What I am particularly interested in is the argument that movement systems are interrelated and mutually influential; how elements of one movement system migrate to or are manifest in another. I have hinted at this occasionally in this dissertation, but in the following chapters, I devote more time to how features specific to the *sema*, *zikir*, and other forms of *namaz* have parallels with, and may have even influenced other common cultural gestures and behaviors. My concern is not limited to only the revolving motions of the *sema* or the rocking movements of the *zikir*, but extends also to the positioning and placement of the body during ceremonies, as well as the physicality of singing and performing musical instruments, what might be termed the ergonomics of performance.

In a paper on the performance of the Persian modal complex of *dastgah segah*, Laudan Nooshin explores this concept of ergonomics in great detail.<sup>176</sup> Through

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<sup>175</sup> Bertrandon de la Broquière, “Le Voyage d’Outremer,” trans. Robert Martin, *Turkish Music Quarterly* 2, Nos. 2-3 (1989): 5.

considerable analysis of the *gushe* Zabol (the second main piece in the *segah* mode), Nooshin was able to draw direct parallels between the melodic motifs of the repertory and the physical motifs necessary for playing the *tar*, a plucked three-stringed long-necked Persian lute. She discovered that, owing to the morphology of the instrument, the *tar* repertory is characterized by descending melodic motifs and, therefore, “a general tendency for movement away from the body.” She compared this with the normally ascending melodic motifs that characterize the Persian santur (plucked zither) repertory, which are likewise created by motion away from the body.

Asserting “a dynamic relationship between aesthetics and ergonomics,” Nooshin extrapolates from her analysis a “broad aesthetic matrix” that includes “instrument structure, socio-cultural factors, and aesthetic values.” She suggests that the musical proclivity for limited two-note melodic motifs may stem from the same “propensity for small, detailed patterns and the constant exploration of a limited area, producing a visually ‘dense’ texture” in the visual arts, although she fails to draw any conclusions regarding motivic and performance directionality and does not arrive at the same religious explanations I do in my analysis of the ergonomics of musical instruments in the following chapter.

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<sup>176</sup> Laudan Nooshin, “Instrument Logic, Body Logic: The Aesthetics of Motivic Structure in *Dastgah Segah*,” *European Seminar in Ethnomusicology* (Oxford, 1994), April 21, 2005, accessed December 19, 2006 <<http://www.music.ed.ac.uk/colloquia/conferences/esem/lau.html>>.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IN PERFECT PROPORTION: THE SACRED SOUNDS OF A SECULAR STATE

In this chapter I explore the revitalization of Mevlana culture by focusing on the recent wave of interest in the historical musical repertory of the Mevlevi Order. This thriving scene is set against the backdrop of changing Turkish nationalist politics, the rapid growth of Turkey's tourist industry, and the increased popularity of *ziyaret* to Konya during the Mevlana's Şeb-i 'urs in December. I discuss these trends after giving a short ethnographic description of the Mevlana Cultural Center in Konya, a new state-sponsored edifice designed specifically for official performances of the classical Mevlevi repertory. In the third section of the chapter, I provide a historical outline of this music, delineating its principal attributes including formal features, instrumentation, and current performance practice. The subsequent section gives a detailed ethnographic account of a public *sema* ceremony in which such music is heard. The performance was held at the Mevlana Cultural Center during the 2004 Mevlana Festival, and I use it as a basis for the concluding section of the chapter in which I give an in depth musical analysis of the main composition that was performed, the *Şedaraban ayin-i şerif* by the nineteenth-century Mevlevi composer Mustafa Nakşi Dede. As this chapter reveals, the concept of motion is a defining characteristic of Mevlevi classical music, evident in the most basic compositional and performative elements of the tradition as well as in the broader social context.

## Reviving Rumi: The Mevlana Cultural Center

December 10, 2004 Konya

The call to prayer echoes through the air as I explore the area east of the Mevlana Museum, just beyond the edge of my map of central Konya. Past the expansive Üçler Cemetery the city appears fairly dead, but in the near distance a sign depicting the shrine of the Mevlana Rumi proclaims the revitalization of the Mevlana district: “The tissue of history is being reanimated.” Beneath it is a curious patch of white and purple winter cabbages that the Konya Metropolitan Municipality has neatly arranged into various designs including the national emblem of the star and crescent moon and a whirling dervish (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Image of a Whirling Dervish Made of Cabbages  
(Konya, December 10, 2004)

A little further ahead, about one kilometer from the Mevlana's shrine, I hear the sound of machinery and clanging steel coming from the nearly completed Mevlana Cultural Center (Figure 19). The 2004 weeklong Mevlana Festival begins today and the 731<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Mevlana's union with Allah is being celebrated with the grand opening of this large new building. I have come to attend the 11:00 a.m. viewing of something ambiguously labeled in my festival program as the "Mevlana Collection," but from the sound of it, it seems like things are not quite ready. As I approach, I see bulldozers and dump trucks lumbering about in the parking lot and workers walking around in no particular rush to finish the construction.



Figure 19: The Mevlana Cultural Center  
(Konya, June 18, 2005)

Still, the building is almost done and I assume, like with most things in Turkey, that it will all somehow magically come together at the last minute, in this case by the time of tonight's sold out *sema* performance. Actually, the building will only be

officially inaugurated on Sunday, and most of the work has been carried out at an astonishing rate. According to city publications, the entire project, “with the love of the Mevlana,” has taken a team of only seven hundred and fifty workers a mere ninety days to complete.

Once finished, the Mevlana Cultural Center will serve as a sort of headquarters for the lucrative Mevlana pilgrimage and tourism industry and will function as the principal venue for nearly all officially sanctioned Mevlana-related activities in the city. The tourist literature I have in my backpack already touts it as the premiere place for academic symposia and colloquia on the Mevlana as well as for exhibitions of traditional and modern art inspired by the Mevlana and his devotees, including calligraphy, miniature painting, and photography. Above all, the center is designed to provide a more proper setting for public performances of Mevlevi music and the whirling *sema* than was possible in the past in Konya. Up until now, authorized performances have been relegated to the city’s next largest enclosed area, the old basketball court of the Konya Sports Center with its dismal lighting and abominable acoustics.

Though it is somewhat institutional in appearance and while nationalist symbols are present everywhere, the new complex also has a decidedly more mystical, perhaps even sacred, construction. Some of the literature even goes so far as to describe the Mevlana Cultural Center as a modern *tekke*. It has two distinctive mosque-like octagonal domes, one larger than the other, as well as a *mescid* and several meditative gardens and courtyards. Moreover, it is comprised of eight main units labeled with letters in a spiraling counterclockwise sequence from A through H (Figure 20).



Figure 20: Map of the Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 10, 2004)

Crossing the unfinished parking lot, I encounter the first of these, the A Blok, immediately. Built below ground level and sloping down into earth, it is a large open-air amphitheater, circular in shape and with a seating capacity of three thousand. It is conceived explicitly for outdoor performances of *sema* and has an open central space for the *semazen*-s (“whirlers”) and a built-in alcove for the musicians. Curving along the perimeter is an elevated concrete ring bearing one of the Mevlana’s most famous verses

in a dozen languages—Arabic, English, Farsi, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish: “Either seem as you are or be as you seem.” This ring symbolizes the Sufi doctrines of tolerance, inclusion, and universality. Draped from the ring and billowing in the wind are the flags of the Turkish Republic and the European Union, as well as of those various countries participating in this year’s new Mystical Music Festival: Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, France, Iran, and Pakistan (Figure 21).



Figure 21: Detail over Open-Air *Sema* Amphitheater, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 10, 2004)

From the amphitheater, I attempt to follow the complex’s spiral layout and make my way diagonally to the B Blok which houses several exhibition rooms and the Sultan Veled Conference Hall where that enigmatic collection of Mevlana artifacts is supposedly on display. That its doors are chained shut, however, is not a good sign. Undeterred, I enter the complex from the central H Blok and encounter a frenzied scene clouded thick with powdery white marble dust and filled with the noise of construction

workers moving debris and inspectors shouting over blueprints. Public safety apparently not a huge concern, I wander around freely without anyone even taking notice. Despite that the central foyer houses such curiosities as a cafeteria and a post office, my attention is drawn to those elements characteristic of Islamic sacred architecture: the small octagonal dome above, the elegant spiral staircases, and especially the prominent octagonal water fountain at the heart of the whole complex.

After exploring several of the other units of the Mevlana Cultural Center and discovering a library and the administrative offices, I can still find no trace of that exhibit and, with so much still unfinished, I begin to doubt that the building will even open next year, let alone tonight. I return to the central foyer to inquire about the schedule of activities from the workers and learn more about the complex. Although they know nothing about the exhibit, speculating that it may start at noon, they guarantee that the doors will open for the evening *sema*.

Encouraged by their certitude and giving up on the elusive exhibit altogether, I head straight to the D Blok at the far end of the building to explore the hall where tonight's ceremony will be held. The *semahane*, decorated with bright red Turkish flags at even distances all along its curving walls, is a cavernous chamber with seating for around three thousand, though the light brown seating softens the atmosphere somewhat. The enormous eight-side dome above is likewise made more intimate by concentric festoons of lights that conceal its vastness while at the same time creating the impression of the starry firmament.

Below, everyone is slowly preparing for the 8:00 p.m. show (see Figure 22). On the circular hardwood floor, where the *semazen*-s will turn, a man with a floor waxer

plods ahead in a straight line while colorful lights and shapes dance about him; the lighting director is testing his array of spirals, five-pointed stars, triangles, and quadrangles. The sound engineer is also testing his equipment, filling the air with squawks and cracks and making it hard to hear the group of musicians that is beginning to assemble for the dress rehearsal. I sit for a while listening to an ud player work out a *taksim* over the hum of the floor waxer.



Figure 22: Dress Rehearsal and Preparations for Opening Night,  
Mevlana Cultural Center  
(Konya, December 10, 2004)

Taking in all the sound and activity, I recall the sign above the cabbage patch I found on the way here; this building is not only reanimating history, it is in effect reviving the cult of the Mevlana Rumi, and I find this scene of a staunchly secular government working so hard to bring about the grandiose restoration of a religious tradition it is supposed to outlaw supremely ironic.

## **The Political Economy of the Soul: The Mevlana in Politics, Tourism, and *Ziyaret***

Since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Mevlevi and their classical repertory of music have had a capricious, fluctuating, and ultimately ironic role in Turkish nationalist politics. For Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, father of the Turkish Republic, Turkish nationalism was synonymous with modernization, Westernization, and secularism, and he took severe measures to eliminate everything that did not exhibit these principles and that he perceived to be a political and ideological threat to his fledgling nation. In March 1924 he neutralized the religious authority of the Ottoman sultan by abolishing the Caliphate, and in December 1925 he banned all Sufi *tarikat*-s under Law 677, which went into effect just days before the 652<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mevlana's Şeb-i 'urs.<sup>177</sup>

Actually, Atatürk's policies had earlier precedents. Sultan Murad IV (r. 1623-40), himself a composer, banned the Mevlevi during his reign, and the orthodox clergy outlawed the *ayin*, the principal body of Mevlevi liturgical music, during the reign of

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<sup>177</sup> Turkish Law 677 dated December 13, 1925 is cited in full by various authors. I reproduce here the translation given in Friedlander, 2003, 123:

Clause 1. All the tekkes (dervish lodges) and zaviyes (central dervish lodges) in the Turkish Republic, either in the form of wakf (religious foundations) or under the personal property of its sheikh or established in any other way, are closed. The right of property and possession of their owners continue. Those used as mosques and mescits (small mosques) may be retained as such.

All of the orders using descriptions as sheikh, dervish, disciple, dedelik (a kind of sheikh of an order) chelebilik (title of the leader of the Mevlevi order), seyyitlik (a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad), babalik (elder of Bektaşî order, a kind of sheikh), emirlik (descendant of the Prophet Muhammad), nakiplik (warden of religious order), halifelik (deputy sheikh), faldjilik (fortune teller), buyudjuluk (witchcraft), ufurukchuluk (a person who claims to cure by means of the breath), divining, and giving written charms in order to make someone reach their desire: service to these titles, and the wearing of dervish costume, are prohibited. The tombs of the sultans, the tombs of the dervish orders are closed, and the profession of tomb-keeping is abolished. Those who open the closed tekkes (dervish lodges) or zaviyes (central dervish lodges), or the tombs, and those who re-establish them or those who give temporary places to the orders of people who are called by any of the mystical names mentioned above or those who serve them, will be sentenced to at least three months in prison and will be fined at least fifty Turkish liras.

Clause 2. This law is effective immediately.

Clause 3. The cabinet is charged with its implementation.

Sultan Mehmet IV (r. 1648-87) from 1666 to 1684.<sup>178</sup> With respect to modernization, many of the Ottoman sultans had initiated reforms based on European models long before Atatürk, beginning especially with the reign of the Mevlevi sultan Selim III (r. 1789-1807).<sup>179</sup> The Mevlevi were also important supporters of Westernization in the Tanzimat Era, which Sultan Abdülmecid I (r. 1839-61) ushered in with his Imperial Rescript (Hatt-i Şerif) of Gülhane in 1839.<sup>180</sup> Nevertheless, the Mevlevi were outlawed in 1925 along with all other Sufi groups and their *tekke*-s were forcibly shut down;<sup>181</sup> the dramatic closing of the Üsküdar *tekke* in İstanbul by military police during a *sema* ceremony, for instance, is poetically described by Shems Friedlander.<sup>182</sup>

Yet the Mevlevi remained a special case in the early Republican Era. They managed to retain some measure of political influence, at least temporarily, and were able to secure certain concessions. Notably, the Grand Çelebi of the *tarikât*, Abdülhalim Çelebi Efendi, served briefly before his death in 1925 as the first vice president of the new parliament. Two years later, Atatürk made an exemption to his ban and reopened, with state funding, the Asitane in Konya, albeit as a museum. Over the next generation, while the Mevlevi struggled to maintain their traditions covertly, the Mevlana remained popular both publicly as a great poet and privately as a saint, fueling significant changes

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 118 and Walter Feldman, “Music in Performance: Who Are the Whirling Dervishes?” in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Volume 6, *The Middle East*, ed. Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2002): 108.

<sup>179</sup> For an overview of the turbulent history of Ottoman reform see McCarthy, 285-325.

<sup>180</sup> Feldman, 2002, 108.

<sup>181</sup> Although at the center of virtually every single city, town, and village in Turkey has at least one prominent statue to Atatürk honoring the founding the Republic, conspicuously, there is none in Konya; instead there is a garish abstract monument commemorating the spot where the Mevlana supposedly first met Şams Tabrizi.

<sup>182</sup> Friedlander, 2003, 118.

during the 1950s when Atatürk's Republican People's Party was defeated by the Democrat Party.

In 1953, Sadettin Heper, *küdumbaşı* ("head kûdum player") of the Mevlevi *tekke* at Yenikapı in Istanbul, and *neyzen* Halil Can were given permission by the mayor of Konya to give the first public performance of *sema* since the 1925 ban. Although the event was held in a movie theater and officially recognized as an irreligious celebration of Mevlana the poet, Heper sought to put on as much of a sacred ceremony as possible, recruiting only dervishes to perform and insisting that the Koran be recited during the presentation. Heper enlisted the great singer and Koran reciter Kani Karaca and formed a small ensemble comprising himself on kûdum and Halil Can and Ulvi Ergüner on ney to accompany *semazen-s* Hulki Amil Çelebi and Abdul Baki, who performed the *sema* in street clothing.

Annual *sema* performances were not only permitted on December 17<sup>th</sup> in the following years, they were promoted by the Ministry of Tourism and were greatly expanded. Within two years, the Sultan Veled Procession was reintroduced into the ceremony and all participants were authorized to wear appropriate Mevlevi attire. The accompanying ensemble also grew to include a frame drum and rebab, and musicians were brought to Konya from as far as İstanbul, Samsun, Afyon, and Ankara.<sup>183</sup> Even Celaleddin Çelebi, then Grand Çelebi of the *tarikât*, was allowed to participate in the 1955 ceremony as the *semazenbaşı* (head of the *semazen-s*), while Resuhi Baykara served as the *postnişin* (officiating *şeyh*). The annual commemorations were expanded further in 1956 to include *sema* performances in both Konya and Ankara, and by 1960 the

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<sup>183</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, who was in attendance at the first advertised performance in 1954, noted this instrumentation. See her brief account in *I Am Wind, You Are Fire: The Life and Work of Rumi* (Boston: Shambhala, 1992): 195-96.

performing forces had increased to as many as nine *semazen*-s and a large musical ensemble comprising multiple players on most Turkish classical instruments.<sup>184</sup>

The Mevlevi had taken full advantage of the opportunity to reestablish their sacred rites, even while the government attempted to desacralize the events entirely. There were in fact several exchanges in these early years between the Mevlevi and the police in which the dervishes were forced to explain away their obvious religious activity for the sake of continuing the performances. That officials readily accepted rationalizations that were less than compelling suggests their sympathy for the *tarikât*, so long as it maintained a low profile.<sup>185</sup>

As the audiences for the public *sema* shows grew over the next decade and the Mevlevi attracted a more international following, the performances in Konya were moved from the movie theater to a library and then to a huge gymnasium, further perpetuating the secular/sacred tensions. By 1967 public *sema* performances had taken the form of large tourist spectacles complete with journalists and paparazzi. This development so distressed traditionalists like Resuhi Baykara that a schism in the *tarikât* emerged that year when the *şeyh* shouted at one of the photographers who had followed him onto the floor during the ceremony. The Ministry of Tourism barred Baykara from participating in subsequent years for suggesting that the *sema* presentations might be anything more than tourist shows. Declaring the public *sema*-s inauthentic, Baykara, with a number of key Mevlevi in tow, broke away from the Konya festival organizers, and later created his

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<sup>184</sup> For a detailed account of the 1960 Şeb-i ‘urs see Hellmut Ritter, “Die Mevlanafeier in Konya vom 11.-17. Dezember 1960,” *Oriens* 15 (1962): 249-70.

<sup>185</sup> On one such occasion, Heper ensured a police officer that the up and down motions he had caught an old dervish making with his mouth during *sema* were not those of prayer but were caused by the fact that the old man had no teeth. The Mevlevi also placated police concerns about the inclusion of child whirlers in the performances by explaining they were only teaching them the movements of the dance and not attempting to propagate the religion. See Friedlander, 2003, 119-20.

own dervish group in London. Henceforth, the question of authenticity would loom large over all state sponsored Mevlevi performances, especially as accretions to the Şeb-i ‘urs continued.<sup>186</sup>

The 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mevlana’s death in 1973 was celebrated on December 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> with an International Mevlana Seminar in Konya and Ankara, and ever since then the Şeb-i ‘urs has been a multi-day festival encompassing numerous attractions and multiple performances of *sema*. In 2004 and 2005, as well as in the years prior, the festival took place from December 10<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, with the 2004 program including poetry readings, art and photography exhibits, theatrical presentations, symposia on mystic literature, the ney, and the Mevlana, a cross-country race, various concerts and recitals, the new Mystical Music Festival, and twelve official *sema* performances in the Mevlana Cultural Center. In 2006, the Mevlana Festival grew from eight to ten days in anticipation of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mevlana’s birth.

Ironically, though perhaps not surprisingly given its constant development since the 1950s, the Mevlana Festival has become an important nationalist endeavor in Turkey. Tourism and the practice of *ziyaret* now further complicate the political rhetoric surrounding the Mevlevi tradition, which in turn fuels debates regarding the authenticity of the public *sema* performances. The Mevlana’s Şeb-i ‘urs provides the government with the perfect opportunity to promote Turkish heritage, tolerance, and progressiveness to tourists and pilgrims alike, and the resulting association of the Mevlevi with Turkishness has been far-reaching. Images of the Mevlana and the whirling dervishes

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<sup>186</sup> For brief, though quite subjective, accounts of this incident, see *ibid.*, 120; Metin And, “The Mevlana Ceremony,” *The Drama Review* 21, No. 3 (1977): 84; and Kudsi Ergüner, *Journeys of a Sufi Musician*, trans. Annette Courtney Mayers (London: SAQI, 2005): 47-48.

have become iconic of the Turkish Republic, appearing almost anywhere in conjunction with the other nationalist symbols (Figure 23).<sup>187</sup>



Figure 23: Detail from the Hood of a Tourist Minivan  
(Near Aksaray, June 05, 2002)

The Mevlana and the Mevlevi now also play a substantial role in the debate over Turkey's admittance into the European Union, with the government frequently and proudly citing the Mevlana tradition as an example of Turkish openness and moderation (see Chapter Eight).

Such increased promotion of Mevlevism has accelerated the rapid growth in the number of both foreign and domestic visitors attending the Mevlana Festival each year and corresponds with an overall boom in tourist and pilgrimage travel in Turkey. Even

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<sup>187</sup> In 2003 the Turkish network agency dDf International (Dream Design Factory) created a series of television advertisements for the Turkish Tourism Promotion Program that circulated widely in Europe, the U.S., and on the Internet via the official website of the Turkish Ministry of Tourism. The commercial entitled *I Dream of Turkey* was released in a number of versions, nearly all of which featured dervishes whirling, and sometimes breathing fire and playing musical instruments, in a variety of iconic Turkish settings including on Mt. Nemrut by the bust of Zeus-Oromasdes, on the "fairy chimneys" of Kapadokya, on the minaret of the İsak Paşa Saray in Doğubeyazıt, on a craggy Mediterranean island, on the Byzantine mosaic of Jesus in the Aya Sofia in İstanbul, on the minarets of the Sultan Ahmet Mosque in İstanbul, in Turkish baths, and on the travertine lakes of Pumakkale. The sound track varied, but typically featured the ney, the emblematic instrument of the Mevlevi order. The commercials won first prize in the category of Best Advertising Film and Advertising Spot at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual International Festival of Tourist Films, which took place in Poznań, Poland at the 2003 TOUR SALON fair. See Anna Olszewska-Marcinkiewicz and Ewa Zawitaj, eds., *Poznań Fair Magazine* 275 (2004): 3, accessed October 15, 2006 <[www.mtp.pl/biuletyn/Tour\\_Salon.pdf](http://www.mtp.pl/biuletyn/Tour_Salon.pdf)>.

with such regional problems as the Second Intifada, the Iraq War, and the intermittent terrorist bombings of tourist areas in İstanbul, Kuşadası, and Antalya, the Middle East as a whole and Turkey in particular have experienced unprecedented growth in tourism between 1999 and 2005, surpassing even the most ambitious projections; see Figure 24 for a comparison of Turkey and Egypt, the two most developed tourist markets in the region. According to reports from the United Nations World Tourism Organization, Turkey ranks eighth among the world’s most productive tourism markets and is, overall, the twelfth most popular tourist destination in the world.<sup>188</sup>

### TOURIST ARRIVALS

	2001	2005
Turkey	10.4 million	21.2 million
Egypt	4.6 million	8.6 million

### REVENUE FROM TOURISM

	1999	2005
Turkey	5.2 billion USD	18.2 billion USD
Egypt	3.2 billion USD	6.8 billion USD

Figure 24: Tourist Arrivals and Revenue in Turkey and Egypt, 1999-2005<sup>189</sup>

<sup>188</sup> “World Tourism Rankings,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, modified May 15, 2007, accessed May 27, 2007 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\\_Tourism\\_Rankings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Tourism_Rankings)>.

<sup>189</sup> For statistics on Turkey see: “Tourism in Turkey,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, modified May 27, 2007, accessed May 27, 2007 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism\\_in\\_Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_Turkey)>; İstanbul Convention and Visitors Bureau, “Morgan Stanley: Turkey’s Tourism Sector Breaks New Records,” *İstanbul Bulletin*, September 2005, accessed May 27, 2007 <<http://www.icvbbulletin.org/trnews18.htm>>; “2005 Turizm Geliri 18.2 Milyar Dolar,” *Hürriyet*, January 27, 2006, accessed May 27, 2007 <<http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=3852067>>. For information on Egypt see: “30 % Rise in Arab Tourism Last Year,” *Arabic News.com*, January 3, 2002, accessed May 27, 2007 <<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/020103/2002010345.html>>; Amira Salah-Ahmed, “Welcome Back in Egypt: The Ministry of Tourism Kicks Off a Public Awareness Campaign,” *Egypt Today: The Magazine of Egypt*, June 2006, accessed May 27, 2007 <<http://www.egypttoday.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=6793>>; “\$3.2 Billion in Egyptian Tourism Last Year,” *Arabic News.com*, September 17, 1999, accessed May 27, 2007 <<http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/990917/1999091741.html>>.

Despite attempts to diversify its tourism industry further,<sup>190</sup> Turkey continues to prioritize cultural tourism, especially religious-based tourism, called “faith tourism” by the Ministry of Tourism and “eso-tourism” by Mevlevi *neyzen* Kudsi Ergüner.<sup>191</sup> This robust segment of the industry focuses on excursions to Turkey’s multitude of early Christian sites and *ziyaret* pilgrimages to Muslim holy shrines, the most important of which is the tomb of the Mevlana Rumi. Internet websites today claim that a million visitors come to Konya every year for the Mevlana’s Şeb-i ‘urs, a dramatic (and likely exaggerated) rise from the fifty thousand Franklin Lewis cites for the late 1990s.<sup>192</sup> The combined number of year-round domestic and foreign visitors to the Mevlana Museum has also risen exponentially from nearly six hundred thousand in 1985 to 1.5 million in 2004 and two million in 2006.<sup>193</sup> It is worth mentioning that this last figure equals the estimated number of *hajj* pilgrims to Mecca for the same year.

The Mevlana tourism boom has been somewhat of a double-edged sword for the *tarikât*, however. While the Mevlevi once again wield considerable presence in a system that is legally hostile to them, the explosion of whirling dervish merchandise among other circumstances have led to the perception that they have been completely co-opted by the secular government and possess little in the way of *tasavvuf*. In other words, despite considerable advances, the charge of inauthenticity rings as loudly today as it did after the 1967 incident, if not more so.

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<sup>190</sup> Recent steps have been taken to expand business tourism in İstanbul and to develop special activities (adventure) tourism in the Eastern Anatolia.

<sup>191</sup> Ergüner, 50.

<sup>192</sup> Lewis, 466.

<sup>193</sup> This remarkable increase is all the more significant given an overall 7.2% decrease in tourism for 2006, which slumped to 18.8 million visitors and 16.85 billion dollars in revenue due to the outbreak of avian influenza and an increase in terrorist bombings in the country.

This authenticity debate centers on secular/sacred and tourist/pilgrim dichotomies that are evident almost everywhere. An assaulting array of whirling dervish trinkets, Mevlana postcards, and other Mevlevi knick-knacks are on sale all over Konya and in the bazaars of İstanbul (Figure 25). At the shrine of the Mevlana, devout pilgrims typically compete for prayer space with camera-clicking tourists. Even the public performances of the *sema* ceremony are widely referred to as “whirling shows,” and they are just as regularly performed at such respectable venues as the new Mevlana Cultural Center and the restored Galata Mevlevihane in İstanbul, as they are in restaurants, basketball courts, museums, caravanserais, castles, and carpet shops; regular performances are even staged in İstanbul’s evocative Şirkeci train station, endpoint of the famous Orient Express.



Figure 25: Mevlevi Figurines, Store Window Display  
(Konya, November 14, 2004)

The Mevlana Festival is organized to coincide with the Mevlana’s Şeb-i ‘urs on December 17<sup>th</sup>, when pilgrimage to the Mevlana’s mausoleum is most intense, though thousands of pilgrims also come to Konya for the purposes of *ziyaret* throughout the year. Pilgrims usually begin the *ziyaret* with a stop at the mosque and shrine of the Mevlana’s

spiritual guide Şams Tabrizi, before visiting the tombs of the Mevlana, his family, and the early Mevlevi in the Mevlana Museum. Often the *ziyaret* includes a side trip to the town of Karaman, some one hundred fifty kilometers east of Konya, for prayer at the tombs of the Mevlana's mother and Yunus Emre, Turkey's other celebrated thirteenth century Sufi poet. Witnessing a *sema* performance in Konya, whether public or private, is usually the highlight of the pilgrimage.

As with the *hajj* to Mecca, the Mevlana *ziyaret* is typically made by way of an organized tour arranged by a travel agency. One Sufi group based in The Hague, for example, offers a one-week trip to Konya in December for around 450 euros, or a two-week package deal that includes a stay in İstanbul for a little more. The itinerary the organizers advertised on the Internet for the 2003 Şeb-i 'urs is typical and involves several opportunities for the pilgrim to witness and perform the *sema* and *zikr* rites at the *tekke*-s of various *tarik*at-s (see Figure 26). However, the organizers are wary of tourists and warn, "Attention: Pilgrimage is dangerous and strictly forbidden for tourists, beware side-effects!" A number of poems composed by Rumi "for travellers on the path" are also posted on the website, including one in which the Mevlana criticizes those who have gone all the way to Mecca on the *hajj* but have failed to realize that Allah resides within.

Oh you who have gone on pilgrimage - where are you, where, oh where?  
Here, here is the Beloved! Oh come now, come, oh come!  
Our friend, he is your neighbour, he is next to your wall -  
You, erring in the desert [*sic*] - what air of love is this?  
If you should see the beloved's form without any form -  
You are the house, you are the master, you are the Ka'aba, you!...  
Where is a bunch of roses, if you would be this garden?  
Where, one soul's pearly essence when you are the Sea of God?  
That is true, and yet your troubles may turn to treasures rich.  
How sad that you yourself veil the treasure that is your own!

## Pilgrimage to the Konya of Shams and Rumi, December 2003.

Attention: Pilgrimage is dangerous and strictly forbidden for tourists, beware side-effects!

**Two main options: 1. two weeks Istanbul and Konya, 2. one week Konya.**

### Flight:

**1. Friday 5<sup>th</sup> Dec.** flight OHY 298 to Istanbul; Schiphol dep. 11.00 arr. Ist.15.15;  
Flights Onur Air to Istanbul on Tuesday 11u., Friday 11u. and Sunday 18.40u.;  
To travel by night-train (or bus) to Konya on Tuesday night 9<sup>th</sup> Dec.

**2. Friday 12<sup>th</sup> Dec.** flight OHY 632 to Ankara; Schiphol dep.21.20u. arr.~01.30u.  
Flights Onur Air to Ankara on Tuesday and Friday;  
Check-in 2 hours in advance, flight 3 hours +/- 1 hour time difference Turkey.

**1-2.Friday 19<sup>th</sup> Dec.** return flight OHY 631 via Ankara to Schiph.dep.06.50 ar.09.50;  
Check-in 2 hours in advance, return flight is to acknowledge.

**Tickets:** cheapest flight Onur-Air to Istanbul and back Ankara Eu.200.- (Ist.Eu.160.-);  
Is two way ticket incl.app.tax. For each reservation Eu.20., so better combine.

**Do enroll soon and pay me after consultation.** Or arrange flights yourself via:  
**Travel agency Midas** Bilderdijkstraat 11 Amsterdam, tel. 020/685 5704.

### Stay:

Stay in Istanbul will be booked combined with flight, simple hotel in Sultanahmed.

Stay in Konya preferably in friendly Ani Oteli, Sems Caddesi 10 /42050 Konya,  
(or Hotel of your choice after consultation)

**Expenses:** estimated for (hotel+food)pp.pd.+(flight+ap.tax)+visa+transfers/travel.

2 weeks: 12 nights x (20+15)+200+10+80+60 = ~Eu. 770.-;

1 week : 5 nights x (20+15)+200+10+50+25 = ~Eu. 460.-;

minimal expenses pp.double room, no extra s;

Rate Turkish Lira: 1 million T.L.= ~Eu. 0,70; 1 Eu. = ~1.500.000,- Turkish Lira;

**Devotional day-program idee:** by your own wish and longing and endurance:

5-12 Fri.1.incheck 9hr.,arr.~16.30 Hotel Istanbul, night Yaya Efendi for blessing;

6-12 Sa. morning Eyup Sultan, afternoon Ummi Sinan?, n. Jerrahi Halveti-Ilahir/Zikr;

7-12 Su. m. KarachaAhmed or Shakulu-Bektashi,aft. Galata Mevlevi Sema? Yaya?;

8-12 Mo. Blue Mosque, Aya Sofia, night Jerrari Halveti Zikr and Sema.

9-12 Tu. Kucuck Aya Sofia, Mehmed Pasha Mosque, Grand-Bazaar,  
night train 19.00 or 21.15 hour or night bus to Konya, ~9.30 Hotel Konya;

10-12 We. a. visit Turbe Shams, Rumi, Haci Baba and stay Tekke Ali Baba-meal/zikr.

11-12 Thu. town, one of these days Sema in sporting hall, night Tekke (surprise?)

12-12 Fri. meetings and more visits, every night in Tekke Sama, Sema and Zikr.

**for 2, one week Konya:** incheck A'dam 19.20u. dep.21.20u. arr. Ankara 01.30u.

13-12 Sa. transfer&bus arr.Konya ~9.30u afternoon Shams-Rumi, night Tekke;

14-12 Su. Town, Sema in sporting Hall one of these days, night Tekke (surprise?);

15-12 Mo. Karaman, Turbe Mumine Hatun,Yunus Emre, weather permitted-Tekke.

16-12 Tu. Meram, Turbes and Ali Baba home tea, night vuslat evening in Tekke.

17-12 We. aft. Dua at Maulana's Turbe, night Sama meeting and Vuslat in Tekke;

18-12 Tu. free day for goodbye, evening in Tekke, night bus Konya-Ankara ~ 00.hr

19-12 Fri. **1+2**, flight 6.50 Ankara-Amsterdam arr. 9.30 hr. goodbye, farewell home.

Program to be set after consultation and according the situation.

See also useful addresses in Istanbul and Konya for Sufi Seekers, SufiLab.



Figure 26: "Pilgrimage to the Konya of Shams & Rumi"<sup>194</sup>

Despite such attempts to keep the Mevlana *ziyaret* from becoming a tourist event, in Konya the line between pilgrimage and tourism is quite blurred; as I have argued, the blending of piety and tourism is all too common in the Muslim world (see Chapter 3).

Discerning busloads of tourists from busloads of pilgrims or even foreigners from locals

<sup>194</sup> "Pelgrimage naar het Konya van Shams en Rumi," *Sufi-Lab*, accessed October 15, 2006  
<<http://www.xs4all.nl/~sufilab/sufilabactivities.html>>.

is no easy feat. National, racial, and ethnic differences go only so far in a globally diffuse religion like Islam and contradict the tenets of tolerance and coexistence so central to Sufism. Moreover, tourist and pilgrim behaviors are not reliable indicators of religious intention. Pilgrims are just as likely to speed through their prayers to take pictures of the Mevlana's *türbe* on their camera phones as budget backpackers are to sit in contemplation and take no pictures at all.<sup>195</sup>

Nor has religious pilgrimage ever been divorced from the practicalities of business. The last day of the *hajj* to Mecca usually gives way to an unbridled shopping spree at the local bazaars.<sup>196</sup> Along similar lines, the Mevlana and whirling dervish trinkets available at the Konya bus station and elsewhere are not simply tacky souvenirs insinuating the commercial exploitation of yet another world religion.<sup>197</sup> Instead, they are rooted deeply in Islamic tradition in which pilgrims buy such items as tangible proof of their submission to the mandate of Allah for spiritual travel. At home, these souvenirs are displayed on walls or placed next to the Koran as indicators of personal faith and spirituality.<sup>198</sup> These items may even have ritual functions, as I observed in the case of a

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<sup>195</sup> Even at mosques, the distinction between tourist and worshiper is not always evident. On one occasion at the Afyon Mevlevi Mosque, an historic Mevlevi center built on the grounds of a thirteenth-century Sufi settlement, I observed a rather comic episode in which this was very much the case. I had been alone in the mosque until two young women came in to pray. After a short time, I left the central prayer hall to explore the main side room. Thinking I had left the mosque entirely, the women abruptly ended their prayers and scurried about, posing and taking pictures before they ran off.

<sup>196</sup> It is perhaps in this vein that a supermarket and shopping mall were constructed beneath the Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara, one of the biggest mosques the world; commerce is quite literally its foundation.

<sup>197</sup> See, for instance, John Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica: Music, Politics, and the Culture Industry* (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2000): 94. Hutnyk argues that "The spiritual souvenir...is just another example of the flexibility of market appropriation and the ongoing subsumption of all things in all corners of the globe—the capacity to find in even the most esoteric aural or spiritual realms for profit, material to enhance the sale of commodities."

<sup>198</sup> Islamic tradition maintains that the Koran be the highest placed item in the house. The practice of putting Sufi knick-knacks, which usually bear the likeness of a saint, on a par with the Koran, is highly problematic for orthodox Muslims who generally condemn the adoration of icons.

popular frame drum decorated with a kitschy image of a whirling dervish; in one instance the bendir was used to induce ecstasy in a *zikr* ceremony, while in another it served as the centerpiece in a makeshift altar to the Shiite saint Ali at a concert of mystical music (see Chapter Seven).

In general, Mevlana tourism and *ziyaret* cannot be properly understood from dichotomous expectations of tourists and pilgrims. Just as it is almost entirely pilgrims and not sightseers who buy the souvenirs, tourists attending Mevlana events are not so ignorant of Mevlevi traditions as might be assumed by religious traditionalists or cultural polemicists like John Hutnyk who condemns Western religious tourists for being guilty of no less than spiritual theft.<sup>199</sup> On the whole, attendees at the whirling shows are generally well informed in the traditions of Sufism by either printed programs available at the performances or their guidebooks. Tourist programs and travel guides such as *Fodor's* and the budget backpacker bibles *Lonely Planet* and *Let's Go* explain, sometimes in surprisingly accurate detail, not only Islamic beliefs, history, customs, and etiquette, but also Sufi ritual procedure and symbolism.<sup>200</sup> The *Lonely Planet* even enters the fray surrounding the authenticity of the whirlers at the shows with an essay that weighs negatively against their spirituality, but endorses their artistic talents.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Hutnyk, 92-93, describes Western religious tourists suffering from what he labels the “middle-class affliction” as being deprived of spirituality in their own lives.

<sup>200</sup> See Pat Yale, et. al., *Lonely Planet: Turkey*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications, 2003): 27.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 485. In a section entitled “When is a Whirling Dervish Not a Whirling Dervish,” the authors write, “The question is, are any of these dervishes really what they seem?... The dervishes you see whirling in Meşale in İstanbul, those you see perform near Göreme, even those you see in Konya’s Mevlevi Sofrası are all very talented professional dancers. What they are not is truly religious dervishes. To see dervishes who are whirling out of true religious conviction you need to visit one of the twice-monthly performances at the Galata Mevlevihanesi in İstanbul....”

Actually, the Mevlevi *sema* has been associated with tourism and public spectacle at least since Ottoman times, as several scholars have pointed out. Walter Feldman explains that while *sema* may be a religious ritual, traditionally it was not restricted to women and non-Muslims, and many *semahane*-s were in fact constructed with galleries specially designed for such non-performing witnesses.<sup>202</sup> Feldman also indicates that for European travelers since the seventeenth century, attending a *sema* performance at one of these Mevlevihane-s “was a touristic must comparable to the pyramids of Egypt or the Acropolis in Athens,” with such figures as Pietro Della Valle, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Carsten Niebuhr having written accounts of the ceremony in their travelogues.<sup>203</sup> Metin And further points out that such performances had fixed fees, as they do today, and regarding mass presentations of *sema*, he cites a well known sixteenth-century miniature painting depicting a *semazen* turning at the Hippodrome in Istanbul for the public spectacles celebrating the circumcision of the sons of Sultan Süleyman I (the Magnificent). Of the event And writes,

It seems that the Mevlevi dervish did not mind at all performing in the open air before a vast audience of more than ten thousand onlookers, or performing next to a professional dancing boy, a member of a profession that was reputed to have unsavory connections and extreme lasciviousness.<sup>204</sup>

These accounts clearly illustrate that the current tendency to frame *sema* performance within such binaries as secular and sacred or insider and outsider is not supported by Mevlevi tradition and does not reflect broader Middle Eastern Islamic concepts. Jonathan Shannon, writing on recent whirling show tours given by the Aleppo

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<sup>202</sup> Feldman, 1996, 190-91.

<sup>203</sup> Feldman, 2002, 107.

<sup>204</sup> And, 84.

Mevlevis, rightly explains that such distinctions are Western imports;<sup>205</sup> ones I would argue have slowly trickled into the Mevlevi tradition over the long Ottoman and Republican Era push to reform Turkish society in a European vein.

The politics of Turkish nationalism and secularism have had a long and complicated relationship with the Mevlevi tradition, whereby the sacred *sema* ceremony has become a thriving emblem of the Turkish state, even while its interpreters are forbidden from promoting it as a living religious tradition. As the secular government strives to improve both its economy and international political standing by attracting pilgrims as well as tourists to Mevlana-related events, it creates a situation in which it sponsors that which it outlaws and in which tourism in particular ironically plays a critical role in the spiritual revitalization of the Mevlevi religion. Such incongruities, however, are byproducts of secularism and ought not be understood as problematic for Mevlevism, which inherently does not recognize such contradictions; they are ironic only from a perspective influenced by Western secularism.

### **The Ottoman-Classical Musical Tradition of the Mevlevi**

The public presentation of the Mevlevi *sema* ceremony has been one of the principal catalysts of both the Mevlana tourism boom and the overall revitalization of Mevlevism.<sup>206</sup> As Franklin Lewis observes in his appraisal of the Şeb-i 'urs festivities, “The Turkish government’s relaxation of restrictions on the performance of *samâ*’ [have] helped to reinvigorate the Mevlevi order and [have] contributed to its spread around the

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<sup>205</sup> Jonathan H. Shannon, “Sultans of Spin: Syrian Sacred Music on the World Stage” in *Ethnomusicology: A Contemporary Reader*, edited by Jennifer C. Post (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>206</sup> Walter Feldman, for example, twice acknowledges the importance of tourism in maintaining “the prestige of Mevlevî music and musicians in Turkey in recent decades.” See Feldman, 2002, 109 and 119.

world.”<sup>207</sup> Central to these performances is the traditional Mevlevi musical repertory, whose role in the rehabilitation of Mevlevism should also not be underestimated. Of particular importance is the fact that the music is drawn wholly from a now somewhat closed corpus of Mevlevi music dating to Ottoman times. The historicity of the music not only contributes to the authenticity of the public *sema* performances, but it also helps to legitimize the entire Mevlevi renaissance. Meanwhile in the West, where audio recordings and live performances of this music have become increasingly available, the Mevlana movement is as much musical as it is spiritual.

The traditional Mevlevi musical repertory is typically classified within the broader typology of so-called *Türk Tasavvuf Müziği* (Turkish Sufi music), of which it provides the best-known examples. However, Mevlevi music is also directly related to and is often confused with the secular court music of the Ottoman period, alternatively referred to today as *Klasik Türk Müziği* (classical Turkish music) or *Türk Sanat Müziği* (Turkish art music). As Walter Feldman notes, despite some important differences, the two traditions are so closely connected that both in Turkey and in the West, Ottoman court music is sometimes defined as Sufi or Mevlevi.<sup>208</sup> The marriage of the *tekke* and court repertoires is evident in their shared history and in their common compositional and performance conventions, as well as in the fact that most of the great imperial court composers and musicians were either Mevlevi or were trained in the Mevlevi *tekke*-s of İstanbul.

The affiliation of Mevlevi musicians with the Ottoman court reflects the tendency of the Mevlana’s followers to seek patronage from the royal and aristocratic classes.

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<sup>207</sup> Lewis, 466.

<sup>208</sup> Walter Feldman, 2002, 109.

With the fall of the Selçuks and the eventual rise of the Ottomans, the hub of Mevlevi musical activity gradually shifted to İstanbul, even though the Grand Çelebi continued to preside in Konya. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Mevlevi were well entrenched within the Ottoman ruling system and would continue to dominate court affairs, particularly palace musical life, until the fall of the empire after the First World War. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who believed that music was one the most important vehicles for social change and who was himself a lover of opera and Western music, banned all Turkish classical music in 1923, the same year he founded the Turkish Republic. The court repertory was reinstated the following year with severe alterations resulting from a process of “modernization” (i.e., Europeanization) that would continue for many years to come. Though the Mevlevi repertory was not outlawed until 1925, when all the Sufi *tarikāt*-s were disbanded, it would likewise be reconstituted in the same mold as Turkish classical music when performances were again permitted in 1946.

In addition to following this general line of historical development, which I will expand on more fully over the course of this discussion, both Mevlevi and Ottoman court repertories also share the same basic theory governing musical composition. This generative system is similar to that used throughout most of the Muslim world, although considerable variation can be found from Morocco to Central Asia. At its core are three concepts: modality (*makam*), rhythmic cyclicality (*usul*), and the unification of various genres of music into a compound structure (*fasıl, ayin*).

### The Concept of Makam

In the Turkish *tekke* and palace traditions, a piece of music is conceived monophonically within a complex modal scheme known as a *makam*. The term derives from the similar Arab modal practice of *maqām* and was evidently also widely adopted by the Turkic peoples of Central Asia; similar melodic modal systems are dubbed *mugham* in Azerbaijan, *maqom* in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and *muqam* by the Uighurs of Xinjiang Province, China. Today the ubiquitous term also generally connotes the classical art music of these and other West and Central Asia nations.<sup>209</sup> Of all these classical modal repertoires, that of Turkey has received a more practical rather than speculative treatment in music theory treatises, with some even using musical notation to illustrate and document actual musical practice. Such accounts, especially those of Ottoman royal captive Prince Dmitri Cantemir of Moldavia (1673-1723)<sup>210</sup> and Mevlevi *neyzen* Rauf Yekta Bey (1871-1935),<sup>211</sup> have gained widespread currency and have gone a long way to regularize Turkish modal practice.

The standardized Turkish *makam* system consists of scales and melodic formulae which may use microtones. Most *makam*-s are conceptualized within the range of an eight-note scale comprising of an overlapping tetrachord and pentachord, though the full *ambitus* can vary significantly as some *makam*-s extend above and below the octave. Modern theorists classify *makam*-s in three categories: simple or basic (*basit*), compound

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<sup>209</sup> Additionally, the term *maqām* refers more generally to either a point of rest (“place,” “spot,” “domicile,” “staying,” “halting,” “sojourn,” “dwelling,” and “station”) or to status (“office,” “rank,” “dignity,” “esteem,” “consideration,” and “court,” as in that of a sovereign). In Turkish, the word *makam* can likewise mean “office,” “post,” or “position.”

<sup>210</sup> Wright, 1992.

<sup>211</sup> Yekta, 1922.

(*birleşik* or *mürekkep*), and transposed (*göçürülmüş*, *şed*, or *şet*).<sup>212</sup> Between thirteen and seventeen simple *makam*-s are recognized today. These often serve as the basis for the compound *makam*-s, which are formed by grafting together either two simpler *makam*-s or an assortment of tetrachords and pentachords. The starting pitch of any basic or compound *makam* can be moved to any of the other twenty-three pitches constituting the standard Turkish octave to create new transposed *makam*-s. With such flexibility, as many as nine hundred *makam*-s have been posited, though only about a third of this number can be found in the repertory. Every known *makam* is identified by a distinctive, often evocative name, and in the past many were also ascribed certain symbolic and extramusical associations that are no longer retained today.<sup>213</sup>

The subtleties and nuances of the many Turkish *makams*-s have given rise to an enormous quantity of music. Virtually every piece of music created in the Ottoman period, whether composed or improvised, vocal or instrumental, was crafted in this modal system. Thus, beyond the courtly *fasıl* and classical Sufi repertories (*ayin*, *ilahi*, *tevşih*, *durak*, *nat*), military music (*mehter*) and so-called “mosque music,” including Koran recitation (*tecvit*) and the call to prayer (*ezan*), were also governed by the principles of *makam*, and the phenomenon remains prominent today.<sup>214</sup> The whole corpus of extant compositions numbers perhaps around twenty-eight thousand,<sup>215</sup> with most of these works titled and organized according to their initial *makam*.

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<sup>212</sup> See Signell, 1977.

<sup>213</sup> See Pacholczyk, *Sufyana Musiqi*, 108-09 and 116-18.

<sup>214</sup> Feldman, 1996, 22.

<sup>215</sup> Yılmaz Öztuna, *Büyük Türk Musikisi Ansiklopedisi* [*The Great Encyclopedia of Turkish Music*], 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2 vols. (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1990): II, 16.

### The Concept of Usul

In addition to modality, a piece of music, if it is metrical (i.e., composed and not improvised), also comprises at least one rhythmic cycle (*usul* in Turkey, *īqā*, *wazn*, or *mīzān* in the Arabic-speaking world, and *tala* in South Asia). An *usul* consists of a fixed pattern of up to 120 beats per cycle (*devr*) and is normally conceptualized in modern Turkish practice within the framework of the Western measure. As many as fifty rhythmic modes are in common use today, each identified by a specific name.

Generally speaking, *usul*-s in vocal genres tend to be connected to the poetic meter of the text as well as to the overall structure of the composition; shorter genres employ numerous iterations of short *usul*-s, longer forms are set to rhythmic cycles that are so long that they may not need to repeat. Beginning as early as the seventeenth century, however, the rhythmic modes, melodic modes, and poetic meters all gradually became disassociated. The most dramatic changes came in the nineteenth century when the *usul*-s were subjected to a process of retardation in which their values were doubled, allowing them to be performed at a pace perhaps as much as five times slower than normal. Presumably, this was done so as to allow for greater melodic elaboration. In order to compensate for the slower speed, extra drum strokes called *velvele* (“clamor,” “tumult,” “noise”) were inserted into the gaps of the ever-expanding *usul*-s. The result was a four- or five-fold increase in rhythmic density by comparison with seventeenth century practice.<sup>216</sup>

It is typical of modern performance practice, therefore, not only to retain the quicker tempi of the seventeenth century, but also to intensify them with heightened

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<sup>216</sup> For a more detailed overview see Walter Feldman, “Ottoman Turkish Music: Genre and Form,” in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Volume 6, *The Middle East*, ed. Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2002): 122-26. See also Wright, 1988.

rhythmic activity and movement. Even more striking, however, is the tendency to change the tempo abruptly when moving between *usul*-s. This is especially obvious in performances of compositions calling for more than one rhythmic mode as well as in *attacca* renderings of pieces of different *usul*-s. Such a treatment of the tempo reveals a fundamental difference in approach between rhythmic movement and melodic motion. Subtle, discrete transitions between *usul*-s are not deliberately written out as they are between *makam*-s in the melodic notation; indeed, the rhythmic patterns are rarely notated and usually appear only by name on the printed page. Yet the performance custom is to interpret these points of change as opportunities to not only vary the tempo, but to do so suddenly rather than incrementally.

### *The Concept of Suite*

The third basic feature of the Near Eastern compositional system has to do with broad-scale musical organization. In the classical *maqām* traditions of the Islamic Near East, a musical composition or improvisation is typically conceived of and performed as one work within a larger suite or cycle of pieces in the same or related mode.

Confusingly, this concept is also known as *maqām*, but is referred to by a multitude of different names in different countries. Such a collection of pieces is called *nuba* or *nawba* in Morocco, *ṣan‘ah* in Algeria, *mā‘lūf* in Tunisia, *waṣlah* in Egypt and Syria, *faṣl* in Iraq, and *dastgah* in Iran. In Turkey, the term *faṣl* is used for the secular palace repertory, while *ayin* refers to the Mevlevi sacred suite.

The Turkish *faṣl* is a flexible collection of courtly pieces drawn from a variety of genres loosely based around a single *makam*. In the Ottoman period, *faṣl* performances

were of three types: instrumental (*fasıl-i sazende*), vocal (*fasıl-i hanende*), or combined (*fasıl-i hanende vü sazende ma'an*). The shorter instrumental *fasıl* contained all the main instrumental Ottoman genres. These were the *taksim*, an improvised, non-metrical instrumental solo; the *peşrev*, a pre-composed, metered ensemble prelude; and the *saz semai*, a pre-composed, metered ensemble postlude. The longer and more typical combined *fasıl* included a series of vocal settings of poetry between the *peşrev* and the *saz semai* of the instrumental *fasıl*, most notably the *beste*, the *kâr*, the *semai*, including its offshoots the *ağır semai* and the *yürük semai*, and the *şarkı* (Figure 27).

The Fasil in the Late 17 <sup>th</sup> Century	The Fasil in the 18 <sup>th</sup> Century and After
<i>Taksim</i> (instrumental)	<i>Taksim</i> (instrumental)
<i>Peşrev</i>	<i>Peşrev</i>
(Optional second <i>peşrev</i> )	? <i>Taksim</i> (vocal)
<i>Taksim</i> (vocal)	First <i>beste</i> or <i>kâr</i>
<i>Beste</i>	Second <i>beste</i>
<i>Nakş</i>	<i>Ağır semai</i>
<i>Kâr</i>	<i>Takım</i> (suite of <i>şarkı</i> -s)
<i>Semai</i> (vocal)	<i>Yürük semai</i>
<i>Semai</i> (instrumental)	<i>Saz semai</i> (instrumental <i>semai</i> )
<i>Taksim</i> (vocal)	? <i>Taksim</i> (vocal)

Figure 27: Formal Outline of the Ottoman *Fasıl*<sup>217</sup>

Feldman suggests that these *fasıl* sequences may have derived from, or at least developed in conjunction with, the other great cyclic masterwork of the Ottoman period: the Mevlevi *ayin-i şerif*, which operates on a similar level of broad-scale organization but in a liturgical rather than courtly context. Most likely, the two forms began to influence one another in the mid-seventeenth century when the *ulema* (Islamic clergy) started

<sup>217</sup> Adapted from Feldman, 1996, 180, and 183.

merging the secular and sacred musical worlds by supporting secular art music.<sup>218</sup> In kind, the court became more receptive to sacred music, particularly that of the Mevlevi. As the *ayin* and other Mevlevi musical forms gained wider influence so did Mevlevi musicians, who eventually came to dominate both secular and secular music in the Ottoman world. By the nineteenth century, most court composers were trained in both *fasıl* and *ayin*, whether they were Mevlevi or not. Thus, the *ayin* and *fasıl* developed concurrently, though evidently the Mevlevi resisted a total fusion of the two suite traditions.<sup>219</sup> Ultimately, the *ayin* would be the only musical suite form available to the broader populace as the *tekke-s* readily attracted a wide audience for *sema*, while *fasıl* concerts were typically closed courtly affairs.<sup>220</sup>

Like the *fasıl*, the *ayin* consists of a series of movements in different, though usually related *makam-s* and *usul-s*. Unlike the more flexible court suite, however, the *ayin-i şerif* in its strictest sense is a closed set of exactly four movements drawn only from the Mevlevi *selam* (“salutation”) genre. The *selam* is a combined instrumental and vocal setting of texts taken mainly from the spiritual writings of the Mevlana Rumi. The four *selam-s* of an *ayin* are composed as a group and, unlike the movements of the *fasıl*, are not interchangeable with those of other *ayin-s*. Each *selam*, in addition to being conceived of as a series of modal and rhythmic progressions, is also accompanied by the whirling movements of the *semazen-s* during the *sema* ceremony and has specific symbolic associations relating to the mystical journey to Allah (*süluk*), making the *ayin-i şerif* as a whole a musical and spiritual form of travel.

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 1996, 23.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 2002, 118.

The first *selam* (*Birinci Selam* or *Selam-i Evvel*) typically sets between four and eight stanzas of poetry in *usul devr-i revan* (“walking cycle” in 14/8) or, less often, in *usul diyyek* (“one-two” in 8/4). Spiritually, this *selam* denotes the initial step on the path to enlightenment, the understanding of God as Unitary Being and Creator. The second *selam* (*İkinci Selam* or *Selam-i Sani*) is associated with the feeling of transcendence resulting from witnessing the act of creation. It is short, only one stanza long, and is set in *usul evfer* (9/4).

The third *selam* (*Üçüncü Selam* or *Selam-i Salis*) is liturgically the most important and musically the most compelling of the *ayin-i şerif*. The concept of *fana* (“annihilation in the One God”) prevails in this movement, as love (*aşk*) overcomes intellect (*akıl*) and the *mutrib-s* (“musicians”) and *semazen-s* join in spiritual union. It is the longest of the four *selam-s*, usually with more stanzas than the first, and it often features three different *usul-s*, each performed at an increasingly faster pace. Beginning in *usul devr-i kebir* (“great cycle” in 28/4) it moves to *usul aksak sema’i* (10/8) and ends in *usul sema’i* (6/8). Dervishes interpret the quickening tempo and the increasingly shorter rhythmic cycles as a musical “spiraling to the end” that helps to intensify the trance experience.

The last *selam* (*Dördüncü Selam* or *Selam-i Rabai’*) in *usul evfer* (9/4) functions musically and ritually as a period of attenuation. It is performed abruptly slower than the third *selam* and is short like the second *selam*, consisting of a single stanza or perhaps just a couple of lines of poetry, sometimes the same ones as in the second *selam*. Whereas the third *selam* represents the ascent to Allah, the fourth signals the conclusion of the divine journey, the descent to the physical world, and the return to a state of subservience.

Although the *ayin-i şerif* is the focal point of the *sema* ceremony, numerous other genres of music are performed both before and after it as a matter of ritual necessity. This circumstance allows the concept of suite to be extended to the ceremony as a whole. Thus, while the *ayin-i şerif* alone may not appear to have so much in common with the courtly *fasıl*, in ritual context the parallels become more evident. In fact, two of the musical accretions, namely the *peşrev* and *sema’i*, are drawn directly from secular, non-Mevlevi sources by way of the *fasıl*. The usual musical sequence of the full *sema* ritual used today has remained fairly constant since the late eighteenth century (Figure 28).

	<b>Usul</b>	<b>Makam</b>
<i>Nat-i şerif</i>	non-metrical	<i>Rast</i>
<i>Taksim</i>	non-metrical	same as first <i>selam</i>
<i>Peşrev</i>	<i>muza ‘af devr-i kebir</i> (56/4) or <i>devr-i kebir</i> (28/4)	same as first <i>selam</i>
<i>Ayin-i Şerif</i>		
<i>Selam-i Evvel</i>	<i>devr-i revan</i> (14/8) or <i>düyek</i> (8/4)	principal <i>makam</i>
<i>Selam-i Sani</i>	<i>evfer</i> (9/4)	varies
<i>Selam-i Salis</i>	<i>devr-i kebir</i> (28/4), <i>aksak sema’i</i> (10/8), and <i>sema’i</i> (6/8)	varies
<i>Selam-i Rabai’</i>	<i>evfer</i> (9/4)	varies
<i>Son Peşrev</i>	<i>düyek</i> (8/4)	varies, may be same as last <i>selam</i>
<i>Son Yürük Semai</i>	<i>sema’i</i> (6/8)	varies, may be same as <i>son peşrev</i>
<i>Ara taksim</i>	non-metrical	same as <i>niyaz ilahi</i>
<i>Niyaz ilahi</i>	varies	varies
<i>Son taksim</i>	non-metrical	same as <i>kuran-ı kerim</i>
<i>Kuran-ı kerim</i>	non-metrical	varies
<i>Post duası</i>	non-metrical	

Figure 28: Formal Outline of the Mevlevi *Sema* Ceremony

The ceremony begins with the *nat-i şerif* (sometimes *nat-i Mevlana*), a free meter chant praising the Mevlana Rumi, the Prophet Muhammad, and Şams Tabrizi. Typically, the *nat* in *makam Rast* composed by Mustafa Buhurizade Itri (ca. 1640 – ca. 1711) is

used, though usually not in its entirety. Immediately following, drum strokes on the kûdum kettledrums are played to symbolize the Arabic verb *kun* (“to be”) and recall chapter xxxvi: verse 82 of the Koran, “Verily, when He intends a thing, His Command is ‘Be,’ and it is!” The act of creation is then musically represented by a solo non-metrical improvised *taksim* played on the ney. To the Mevlevi, the reed flute and its breathy timbre embody the concept of *nefes*, the breath and soul of God in act of creation. This segment of the ceremony can sometimes be quite jarring, as the *taksim* is always rendered in the initial *makam* of the first *selam*, and, no matter how remote from the *Rast* of the *nat*, often there is no preparatory modulation. On occasions when ney players do transition from *Rast* to the principal *makam* of the *ayin*, the transformative passages are said to invoke the Archangel Israfil’s trumpet on the day of the Resurrection, again connecting the music to notions of both movement and creation (or rebirth).

The ney improvisation slowly gives way to a *peşrev* in the same *makam*. In modern practice, every *ayin-i şerif* is paired with a specific *peşrev* in the *makam* of the opening *selam*. Yet, while the modes of these works correspond, often the names of the composers do not, as many *ayin*-s were not originally conceived as forming a set with a *peşrev*. Apparently, the Mevlevi concept of the musical suite was initially limited to the four *selam*-s and perhaps the extemporized *taksim*. The *peşrev* is undoubtedly a later addition to the *sema* ceremony resulting from Mevlevi exposure to the *fasıl*; Feldman traces the Mevlevi adoption of the *peşrev* to the eighteenth century.<sup>221</sup> Despite its probable secular origins, the Mevlevi *peşrev* nevertheless plays a rather important role in the *sema* ritual today; meaning “come before” in Farsi, the *peşrev* signals the beginning of the most active part of the ceremony and accompanies the whirling dervishes as they

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 1996, 97.

enter the *semahane*. It also corresponds to another ritual in the *sema* ceremony called the *devri veledi* (“Saint’s Walk” or “Sultan Veled Procession”) in which nine *semazen*-s and the *postnişin*, representing the solar system, enact a thrice-repeating series of circular movements. Thus, the *peşrev* is also associated with cosmic motion by way of its ritual context.

In modern practice, the Mevlevi *ayin* suite has also been extended to include, in addition to the *peşrev*, the *son peşrev* and *son yürük sema’i* movements following the fourth *selam*. As in the case of the *peşrev*, the composer of these pieces is often not the same as that of the *selams*-s; in fact, they may be the work of yet a third composer. Unlike the *peşrev*, though, these two short instrumental postludes are not in the principal mode of the *ayin*. Significantly, the *makam* that dominates the early portions of the *sema* ceremony often disappears entirely before the end of the first *selam*. Rarely do any of the other three *selam*-s make use of it, and it is intentionally never used to conclude either the *son yürük sema’i* or any of the later movements of the ceremony. This indicates the Mevlevi concept of a musical suite is not based on the cyclical return of modality, as the overriding aesthetic for perpetual change of *makam* makes such a scheme awkward if not impossible. Actually, unlike some other Near Eastern musical traditions, *makam* plays only a nominal role in establishing the Mevlevi suite concept.

The ending segments of the *sema* ceremony instead point to other factors like ritual function and genre type as constituting structural cyclicality and unity. For instance, in current practice, the whirling of the *semazen*-s does not occur only during the *selam*-s comprising the central core of the *sema* ritual, as might be expected. Rather, the whirling continues through the *son peşrev* and *son yürük sema’i* and concludes only at the end of

the succeeding *taksim*, which, unlike the first *ney taksim*, may be performed on any instrument. This reinforces the modern suite format that includes the instrumental postludes and makes the case also for the addition of yet another movement, the last *taksim*, as integral to the suite.

The activities of the *postnişin* (“officiating *şeyh*”) not only confirm this layout, they also suggest a sort of symmetry indicative of the overall structure of the ceremony. Unlike the *semazen-s*, the *postnişin* does not whirl during the vocal *selam-s* of the *ayin-i şerif*; instead he turns only in the Sultan Veled Procession during the *peşrev* and at the end through the *son yürük sema’i* and final *son taksim*. In other words, the *postnişin* is active really only during the purely instrumental sections of the ceremony and remains essentially stationary otherwise. With the *ara taksim* (“interlude improvisation”) and *niyaz ilahi* (hymn) rarely performed today, the *postnişin* returns to his position immediately after whirling to conclude the ceremony by reciting from the Koran (*Kuran-ı kerim*) and intoning the litany of praise (*post duası*).

Ultimately, the entire ceremony, and not only the *ayin-i şerif*, is governed by the suite concept prevalent in the Turkish *fasıl* and the other Near Eastern and Central Asian art music forms. The full ceremony as it is currently executed today consists of four broad genre types (chant, *taksim*, instrumental ensemble music, and *selam*) performed over the course of seven parts (see Figure 29). The overall structure is that of a perfect palindrome in which the music becomes increasingly more rhythmic, quick, and dense in terms of performing forces, before returning to its initial state.

Free rhythm chant	<i>Nat-i şerif</i>
Free rhythm instrumental improvisation	<i>Taksim</i>
Composed instrumental music	<i>Peşrev</i>
Composed vocal and instrumental music	<i>Ayin-i Şerif</i>
Composed instrumental music	<i>Son peşrev and Son yürük sema'i</i>
Free rhythm instrumental improvisation	<i>Taksim</i>
Free rhythm chant	<i>Kuran-ı kerim and Post duası</i>

Figure 29: Outline of Genre Types in Use in the Modern *Sema* Ceremony

This standardized *sema* ceremony represents the public face of the Mevlevi order and is the means by which the Turkish government most willingly accepts open performances of Mevlevi music. Notably, the genres are mostly all classical with their ties to the historical past emphasized and the state of their present vitality minimized, though considerable allowances have also been made for the inclusion of such overtly religious forms as the concluding recitation from the Koran and the *post duası*. In this more liberal environment, other forms are now also slowly gaining wider acceptance, particularly the *ilahi* (hymn), which interestingly is not usually presented in the context of the full *sema* ceremony, but rather in concert format reminiscent of a *sama*' ("mystical audition") recital. These performances feature a series of *ilahi*-s, anywhere between three and twelve, often in conjunction with *taksim*-s and other sacred vocal forms, such as the *kaside* ("ode") and *mersiye*, sometimes also in a loose suite-like format. Most commonly, a short program of such works precedes the *sema* ceremony and is separated from it by an intermission. Despite this development, however, the main emphasis remains on the *ayin-i şerif* and the surrounding historical genres, which are most readily accessible at whirling shows and on recordings, often without the religious chants.

### Performing Forces and Performance Practice

In addition to the *makam*, *usul*, and suite principles, two further points of similarity between the classical Mevlevi repertory and Turkish art music concern the performing forces and the performance practice. Historically the music of both the Mevlevi *ayin* and the Ottoman *fasıl* were performed by a flexible assortment of instruments and voices, and to some extent this remains true today. However, since the musical reforms of the early Republican Era, the performing forces of both traditions have become more regularized. The monophonic Mevlevi compositions are rendered in heterophony now by a sizeable chorus of singers and a standardized instrumental ensemble of comparable proportion made up of many of the instruments also used in secular art music. The most common instrumentation includes the ney, bendir (or tef), halile, küdum, ud, tanbur, kanun, and kemençe. Interestingly, Friedlander also lists the sound of the whirling movements of the *semazen*-s, which he connects to the ancient Greek music of the spheres, as part of the instrumentation of Mevlevi music.<sup>222</sup>

With respect to the vocal performing forces, the *sema* ceremony, as we have seen, consists of several sections that are rendered in a purely vocal manner. These segments are performed as solos by males in a generally high vocal range with a tense timber typical of most Middle Eastern music. The *nat-ı şerif* is chanted by a vocal soloist sitting in the ensemble, while the Koran passages are recited from the main floor by the *postnişin*, who also intones the *post duası*. Despite the importance of these movements and the privileged position of the voice in Islamic culture, however, Mevlevi tradition, since its inception, has prized both vocal and instrumental music equally. Thus, the *sema* ceremony also comprises solo instrumental *taksim*-s and such orchestral pieces as the

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<sup>222</sup> Friedlander, 2003, 142.

*peşrev*, the *son peşrev*, and the *son yürük sema'i*. The centerpiece of the ceremony, the *ayin-i şerif*, unites both voices and instruments as the choir of as many as twelve to fifteen *ayinhan*-s (“*ayin* singers”) is accompanied by the full Mevlevi ensemble.

Of all the instruments currently used by the Mevlevi, undoubtedly the most important is the ney. While this end-blown reed flute is also used in Turkish art music, it is so iconic of the Mevlevi that its mere presence tends to connote the sacred. The sound of the ney is believed to be the closest to that of the human voice, and the fact that pitches are produced by blowing the mystical syllable “Hu” (“He”) into it has not left it short of theological and symbolic meaning. Perforated with a number of holes (six in Turkey, five in Iran) associated with cyclic and spiraling movement, the body of the flute also resembles the *alif*, the Arabic symbol representing the number one, the first letter of the alphabet, and Allah, the one God. The reed is considered dead and immobile until the mystical breath of creation (*ruh*) is blown through it, and it is a matter of both technical and symbolic significance that the instrument can only produce a tone when it is blown diagonally at a more or less forty-five degree angle to the right. This diagonal slant represents the position of the head in the state of death, either its tilting lifelessness or the angle of the motion by which it is severed from the body. The ney player, symbolically dead to the physical world, is thus a vessel by which the divine breath of God can be transmitted from above.<sup>223</sup> As many as four or even six ney-s may be used in a large ensemble, further contributing to the numerological symbolism of the performance (see Chapter Two).

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<sup>223</sup> To continue this further, it is also worth noting that the word *taksim*, which denotes the genre most immediately associated with the ney, also means “division” and “diagonal” in Turkish.

Many of the other traditional Mevlevi instruments are likewise endowed with mystical and symbolic attributes. Prime among these, after the ney, are the percussive timekeeping instruments that are all directly associated with the key mystical shapes of the circle and the spiral. Each is circular in shape and has the main functions of playing the *usul* rhythmic cycles and controlling the “spiraling” tempi of the music. The oldest of these instruments is the tef (or daf), a handheld tambourine with five cymbals. The Mevlana himself seems to have had special regard for it, and carved into his shrine in the Mevlana Museum is a passage from one of his *gazel*-s reading, “Do not visit my tomb without a daf.”<sup>224</sup> Therefore, also in the Mevlana Museum is a large display case in the *semahane* prominently exhibiting a tef as well as a set of eight ney-s and a number of other Ottoman period instruments formerly used by the Mevlevi. The display resembles a sort of altar with the tef and the ney-s occupying a central position (Figure 30).



Figure 30: Instruments on Display, Mevlevi Museum (Konya, June 9, 2002)

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<sup>224</sup> See *ibid.*, 67.

Today the tef has been replaced by the bendir, a circular single-headed frame drum similar in shape to the tef, but instead of having the five cymbals it is ringed along the inside rim with snares. This instrument is common among many Sufi groups and its ubiquity may be part of the reason it has displaced the tef in the Mevlevi tradition.

In larger ensembles today, the bendir may be doubled or joined by other traditional Mevlevi percussion instruments to form a subsection of the whole ensemble. Standard in this group is the kûdum, a pair of small, copper kettledrums with camel or sheepskin heads tuned in fourths and commonly featured also in Turkish art music. As with the ney and bendir, the kûdum is often doubled for numerological reasons, with as many as three or even four pairs of kûdum being used. The halile, a pair of hand cymbals exclusive to sacred music, are also typical of larger ensembles. The full percussion section, contrary to Western orchestral arrangement, is usually placed in the front row of the ensemble, often in the center, while the ney-s and other instruments are located behind them. Sometimes the ney and percussion sections are placed on opposite ends of the front row with the slanting ney-s almost always on the left so that their sound projects out to the audience.

After the voice, ney, and percussion, stringed instruments play the next greatest role in the classical Mevlevi repertory. The Mevlana himself is said to have played the rebab, a bowed, spiked fiddle common across the Islamic Near East in a number of variants. According to Şams ed-Din al-Aflaki's *Manâqeb al-'arefîn (Acts of the Gnostics*, ca. 1353), an important early source for Mevlevi legends, the Mevlana may himself have helped to create one of these variants when he ordered his disciples,

...to make the *rabâb* as a six *khâna* instrument. Because, the Arabic *rabâb* consisted heretofore of four *khâna*. Mevlânâ said that the purpose

of a *rabāb* with six *khāna* is to explain the six sides of the world (*‘ālam*) and the *alif* like strings show that the spirits are in union with the *alif* in the name of God.<sup>225</sup>

The rebab was commonly used by the Mevlevi prior to the Ottoman period. However, its role faded greatly after undergoing further modifications in the early twentieth century, despite the fact that the Mevlana considered it of equal or greater importance to the ney. At issue is the fact that the traditional animal-hair strings have been replaced with metal ones, resulting in a metallic timbre the Mevlevi consider unsuitable for ritual purposes.

Such developments and transformations to the rebab are endemic of almost all stringed instruments used by the Mevlevi, with this organological category seeing tremendous activity in the past few centuries. The ud, the short-neck pear-shaped lute, for instance, was originally a four-string instrument popularized in the Muslim world by the early Sufi theorists who saw in it the proportions of the cosmos (see Chapter Two). Over time, the single course of four strings was doubled to the equally symbolic number of eight. The ud today has an additional large single string, which, although extending the range of the instrument downward, is located at the top of the descending course of strings. The single string is of course symbolic of Allah, while the descending size of the strings corresponds to the arc of descent, and the nine total strings represent the solar system.

The ud, however, seems to have been eclipsed by the tanbur for quite some time during the Ottoman period. The long-neck plucked lute, with its forty-eight moveable frets and eight strings in four double courses, even replaced the ud as the main instrument

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<sup>225</sup> Translated in İlker Evrim Binbaş “Music and Samā‘ of the Mavlaviyya in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: Origins, Ritual and Formation,” in *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and Middle East*, Papers Read at a Conference Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, November 27-27, 1997, ed. Anders Hammarlund, Tord Olsson, and Elisabeth Özdalga (Istanbul: Svenska Forskningsinstitutet; Richmond, England: Curzon, 2001): 73.

for illustrating the tenets of *makam* in music theory treatises. According to Cantemir, the eighteenth-century Moldavian prince, Ottoman music theorist, and tanbur player, “The instrument called tanbûr is the most perfect and complete of all instruments which we know or have seen because it performs completely and without fault all the sounds and melodies which appear by means of the breath of man.”<sup>226</sup> Thus, it was the dominant string instrument in the Ottoman court and it was also common in the Mevlevi *tekke*-s. When the ud was repopularized at the beginning of the twentieth century, it did not replace the tanbur, and both lutes now enjoy equal status in the Mevlevi ensemble.

The history of the other string instruments used for the performance of Mevlevi music is even more complicated. Having been introduced either from the imperial court or Europe, none of them is originally Mevlevi or even Sufi, so their place in the Mevlevi tradition is often transitory and few have accrued any symbolic meaning. Thus, the kanun, a seventy-four- to eighty-one-string plucked zither, was displaced by the santur during the Ottoman period only to make a comeback and eclipse the santur at the turn of the twentieth century. At around the same time, the keman (violin) and the sine keman (viola d’amore), which had been first used in the Ottoman court in the eighteenth century and were quite popular, were replaced in the Mevlevi tradition by the kemençe or kemençe al-Rumi (Greek lira), a short-neck, three-string bowed lute of Greek origin. Other experiments with European instruments in *sema* performances include the use of the piano at the Galata Mevlevihane in the early nineteenth century and the violonsel (violoncello) in Konya in the 1970s.<sup>227</sup> While the piano was deemed unacceptable for the purposes of *sema* because it could not play the microtones of the *makam*-s, the cello was

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<sup>226</sup> Translated in Feldman, 1996, 143.

<sup>227</sup> Friedlander, 2003, 142.

quite successful and the instrument remains standard in the Turkish art music world, though it seems to have disappeared from Mevlevi performances for the time being.

Other European influences on Turkish classical and Mevlevi music have been more in the field of performance practice. The use of large choruses and the expansion of the instrumental ensemble to almost orchestral proportions is one such example, as is the exploitation of multiple instruments of the same type, particularly the ney and küdüm. The occasional use of conductors in *ilahi* performances is yet another example of the influence of European performance practice. A slew of other Western concert conventions evident at *sema* whirling shows include the use of printed programs, increased attention to the details of staging, the control of lighting, and the inhibiting of audience reaction. When compared to historical accounts of *sema* performances and to modern private *sema* performances held during *zikr* in *tekke*-s, these changes in performance practice are quite dramatic, even contradictory to the ecstatic sentiment of the ceremony (see Chapter Five).<sup>228</sup>

#### *Mevlevi Composers and the History of the Ayin-i Şerif*

As mentioned previously, the similarities between Mevlevi *tekke* and Ottoman court music in terms of *makam*, *usul*, suite, and instrumentation is not simply a matter of shared music culture, but is a direct result of the gradual infiltration of the court by Mevlevi musicians and composers beginning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Especially by the nineteenth century, Mevlevi dominated palace musical life and oversaw the training of many of the court composers and musicians who were taught their crafts in both the *fasıl* and *ayin* repertoires.

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<sup>228</sup> See also Shannon, 2006.

Some of the secular repertory has been preserved to the present by the notations of the Polish and Moldavian royal slaves Ali Ufki Bey (ca. 1650) and Dmitri Cantemir (ca. 1700).<sup>229</sup> Other collections were compiled in the 1920s during the period of state musical reform, especially by the Mevlevi musicologist and *neyzen* Rauf Yekta Bey.<sup>230</sup> Yekta also published the first collection of Mevlevi *ayin*-s, which he wrote down from oral tradition in this period when the Mevlevi were most severely restricted.<sup>231</sup> Sadettin Heper, who in 1953 arranged for the first public *ayin* performance since the 1925 ban, republished Yekta's anthology with two new *ayin*-s in 1979.<sup>232</sup> A handful of other *ayin*-s have been located in a variety of miscellaneous sources.<sup>233</sup> These *ayin* editions effectively comprise the canon of Mevlevi classical music, which is now being made available on the Internet.<sup>234</sup> The complete classical *ayin-i şerif* repertory comprises of around sixty-five works, though another sixteen are known to have existed, but were never notated.

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<sup>229</sup> Bobowski's *Mecmu'a-i Saz ü Söz (Collection of Instrumental and Vocal Works)* survives in two manuscript sources at the Bibliothèque Nationale as F-Pn MS Turc 292 and at the British Museum under GB-Lbl MS Sloane 3114. The manuscript for Cantemir's *Kitab-i 'ilmü 'lmuziki (Book on the Science of Music)* is housed in the Istanbul University Library as Tr-Iü Türkiyat Enstitüsü 2768 and has been made into a modern edition, see Wright, 1992 and 2000.

<sup>230</sup> Rauf Yekta, *Dârülelhân Külliyyâti* (Istanbul: Belediye Konservatuari, 1924-30).

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 1923-39.

<sup>232</sup> Heper, 1979.

<sup>233</sup> See Walter Feldman, "Structure and Evolution of the Mevlevî Ayîn: The Case of the Third Selam," in *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and Middle East*, Papers Read at a Conference Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, November 27-27, 1997, ed. Anders Hammarlund, Tord Olsson, and Elisabeth Özdalga (Istanbul: Svenska Forskningsinstitutet; Richmond, England: Curzon, 2001): 50.

<sup>234</sup> See especially Semazen.NET, *Semazen.NET*, copyright 2005, accessed October 15, 2006 <[www.semazen.net](http://www.semazen.net)>.

The earliest known pieces of music associated with the Mevlevi are attributed in the oral tradition to the Mevlana's son, Sultan Veled.<sup>235</sup> These include an instrumental *sema'i* in *makam Rehavi* preserved in the Cantemir collection, with a pencil note reading "Sultan Veled" in the margin of the manuscript source,<sup>236</sup> and three anonymous *ayin*-s collectively known as the "ancient compositions" (*beste-i kadimler*). Although the Mevlevi *ayin* (also referred to as *mukabbele*) was perhaps established in the fifteenth century by Pir Adil Çelebi (1421-60),<sup>237</sup> these pieces likely date to the sixteenth century at the earliest.<sup>238</sup> Of the three *ayin*-s, only the one in *makam Pençgah* is complete with all four *selam*-s. The *ayin-i şerif* in *makam Dügah* (i.e., *makam Uşşak*) is missing the last *selam*, while the one in *makam Hüseyini* survives with only one *selam*.

A fourth anonymous *ayin* in *makam Beyati* has been attributed to Köçek Mustafa Dede (d. 1683).<sup>239</sup> Also known as Derviş Mustafa, he evidently began his career as a *köçekçe* ("dancing boy") before becoming a Mevlevi mystic. He eventually rose to the position of *dede* ("elder") in the *tarikât*, the third highest rank in the spiritual hierarchy after the *halife* and *şeyh*, upon completing 1001 days of confinement in the cell of a *tekke*. Historical records reveal nothing about him as a composer of sacred music, however, and document only his career as a court composer of secular vocal music (*beste*-s) and

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<sup>235</sup> Gölpınarlı, 1953, 456.

<sup>236</sup> Wright, 2000, 504.

<sup>237</sup> See Binbaş, 67-68 and his source Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı *Mevlevî Adâb ve Erkânı* [*The Mevlevi Adab and Erkan*] (Istanbul: İnkılap ve Aka, 1963).

<sup>238</sup> Feldman, 1996, 188.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

instrumental works (*peşrev-s*), which have been largely forgotten.<sup>240</sup> His *ayin*, though, remains today the best known in the whole Mevlevi repertory.

The next great composer of both the courtly *fasıl* and the Mevlevi *ayin* is Mustafa Buhurizade Itri (ca. 1640 - ca. 1711). Much about him is in dispute, though he appears to have been a leading poet as well as a gardener and calligrapher. He was a student of the important court composer Mehmed Çelebi (ca. 1620-94), a Halveti dervish also known by the name of Hafiz Post. Itri was himself a member of the Yenikapı Mevlevihane in İstanbul, as well as a teacher at the palace music school. He is said to have composed some one thousand pieces of music, though only around forty are extant today. Among these is the *nat-ı şerif* in *makam Rast* used to begin the *sema* ceremony. An early extant *ayin-i şerif* in *makam Segah* is attributed to him.<sup>241</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century the Mevlevi were not only well established at the Ottoman court, they ruled over it in the figure of Sultan Selim III (1761-1808, r. 1789-1807). The Sultan was a dervish of the Galata Mevlevihane and close to its *şeyh*, the incomparable Galip (d. 1799) who was also one of the most celebrated poets of the entire Ottoman period. Selim III, who compiled his own *divan* of poetry under the *nom de plume* of İlhami, surrounded himself with the foremost talents of the Mevlevi *tekke-s* of İstanbul and became an important patron of music and the arts, as well as a musician and composer in his own right. A ney and tanbur player, he studied with the Mevlevi *neyzen* Abdülbaki Nasır Dede (1765-1821) and the Jewish tanbur player and composer İzak Fresko Romano (ca. 1745-1814), whom he greatly admired. From Abdülbaki, he

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 96.

commissioned a treatise on music and he encouraged his teacher and other composers of the court to devise a system for notating Ottoman music.

An important reformer working toward modernizing Ottoman society, Selim III was also interested in Western music and even invited an opera troupe to perform at his court. His reforms, however, would bring about his demise. In attempting to replace the powerful Janissary (Yeniçeri) military establishment with a corps of troops based on European models and faithful only to him, the Sultan invited court intrigue and was stabbed to death by men loyal to his Chief Black Eunuch. Legend holds that Selim went down defending himself from his assailants with his ney. He is survived today by over sixty pieces of music in both the secular and sacred repertoires. His best-known work is an *ayin* in *Suzidilara*, a *makam* of his own creation. Selim in fact developed thirteen *makam*-s, some of which became extremely popular in the Ottoman territories and are still in use today. The *ayin* was written down by Abdülbaki in his new notated system and is dated 1795, making it the first *ayin-i şerif* in the repertory that can be dated with any certainty.

Selim III's extensive network of relationships with various Mevlevi artists represents only a small segment of a long chain (*silsila*) of directly connected composers, musicians, and *şeyh*-s that stretches back to the early seventeenth century and continues unbroken into the twentieth century (see Figure 31). The *silsila* begins with Nayi Osman Dede (ca. 1652-1730), *şeyh* and *neyzenbaşı* ("head ney player") of the Galata Mevlevihane. He was a composer of sacred music and invented an alphabetical system for musical notation, which served as the basis for that of his great-grandson Abdülbaki.

Four *ayin*-s in *makam*-s *Rast*, *Çargah*, *Uşşak*, and *Hicaz* are ascribed to him, making them the chronological successors to the *ayin* of Mustafa Buhurizade Itri.

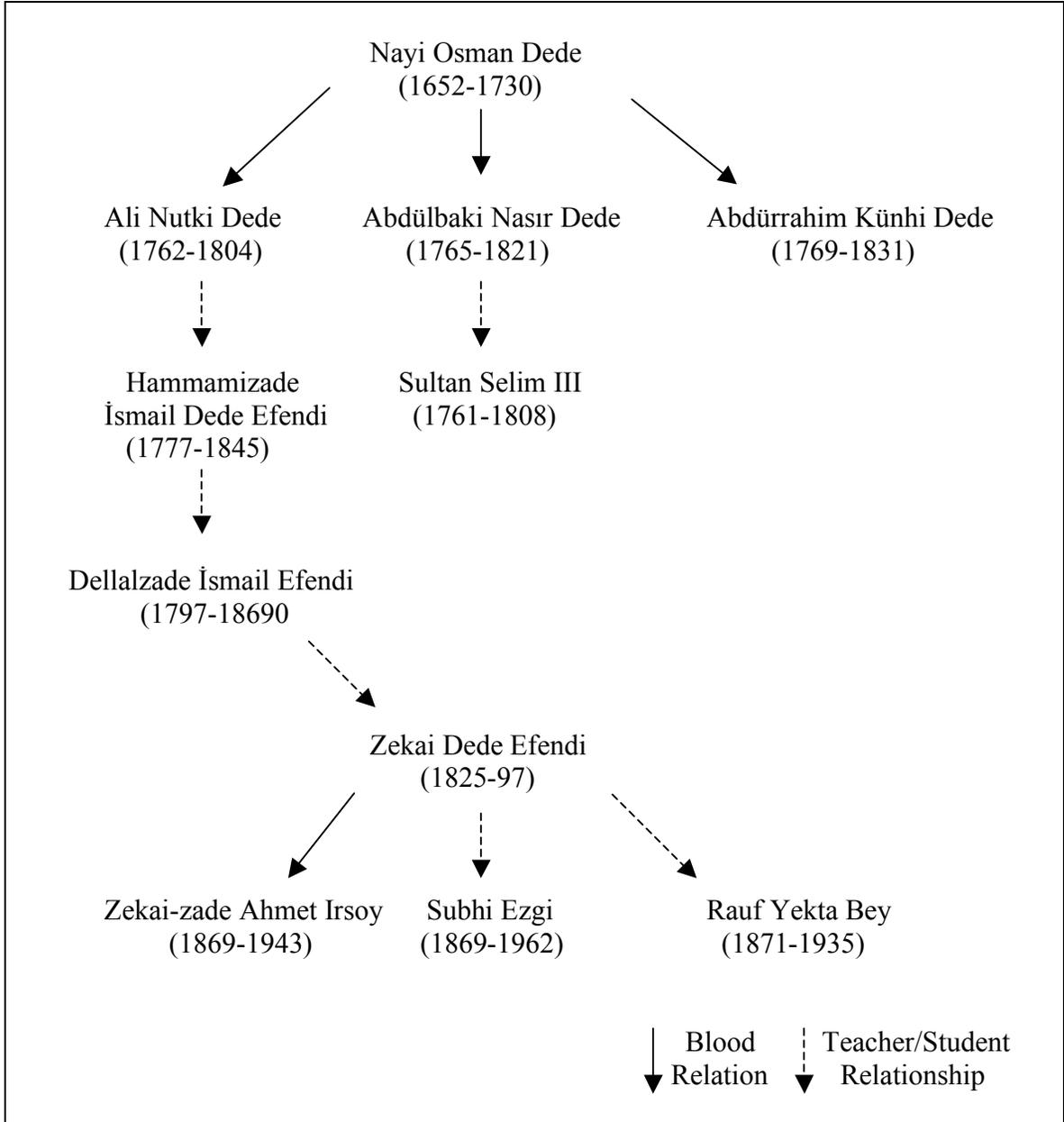


Figure 31: *Silsila* of Mevlevi Musicians and Composers

Osman Dede's two immediate generations of descendents were *şeyh*-s at both the Galata and Yenikapı Mevlevihane-s, and the succession of Mevlevi court composers continues with his three great-grandsons: Ali Nutki Dede, Abdülbaki Nasır Dede, and

Abdürrahim Künhi Dede, all three of whom were *şeyh*-s of the Yenikapı *tekke* and *ayin* composers associated with Selim's court. Abdülbaki, whom we have already met as the principal music teacher of the Sultan, composed an *ayin* in *Acem-Buselik*, one of the new *makam*-s created by Selim. His younger brother Abdürrahim Künhi Dede (1769-1831) also added to the expanding Mevlevi repertory with his *ayin-i şerif* in *makam Hicaz*, as did the elder Ali Nutki Dede (1762-1804) with his *ayin* in Selim's *makam Şevkutarab*.

It would be through Ali Nutki that the distinguished *silsila* of composers would continue, though not by blood relation. His greatest student was Hammamizade İsmail Dede Efendi (1777-1845), the son of a bathhouse owner. Dede Efendi learned ney from Ali Nutki at the Yenikapı Mevlevihane, where he became a *dede*, but he was also very active at the royal court, where he served as Selim III's official companion and was later made *müezzinbaşı* ("head of the call to prayer singers") by Sultan Mahmud II (1785-1839, r. 1808-39), himself a composer, musician, and calligrapher. Working in all major classical genres, Dede Effendi would become the most famous and prolific Mevlevi composer of the whole Ottoman period. He developed several of his own *makam*-s and has over two hundred and sixty surviving works, including six of seven known *ayin-i şerif*-s. He died in Mina during the pilgrimage to Mecca, where he is buried. Among his many students were the important Armenian composer and theorist Hamparsum Limonciyan (1768-1839), who developed a widely used notation system; Hacı Arif Bey (1831-85), the court composer of secular *şarkı*-s; and Dellalzade İsmail Efendi (1797-1869), the Mevlevi composer who served as a vocalist in the court in a number of posts including *hafız* ("Koran recite'r), *muezzin* ("call to prayer singer"), and *hanede* ("fasıl singer").

Dellalzade İsmail Efendi's own students included the Mevlevi *neyzan* and composer Hacı Faik Bey (d. 1890) and the prolific Mevlevi singer and composer Zekai Dede Efendi (1825-97), who in turn taught two of the founders of modern Turkish musicology: Rauf Yekta Bey (1871-1935) and Subhi Ezgi (1869-1962). Yekta played ney at both the Galata and Yenikapı *tekke*-s and was also a composer, though he left behind only a modest body of thirty sacred and secular works. His numerous theoretical and historical writings on Turkish music, as well as his compendium of Mevlevi *ayin*-s, however, make him one of the foremost figures of Turkish music since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile Subhi Ezgi, who worked for many years as a medical doctor, was also a very active composer, theorist, and teacher. *Ayin*-s continued to be composed into the Republican era, even after the ban of 1925, by such figures as Zekai-zade Ahmet Irsoy (1869-1943), son of Zekai Dede. Despite that *ayin* composition was revitalized in the late 1950s with the success of the *sema* performances in Konya, the canonization of the repertory in the 1930s has made the classical Mevlevi tradition a largely closed system.

### **Ethnography of a Whirling Show**

December 12, 2004 Konya

A loud explosion detonates outside the window of my hotel room. Worried, I rush to see what happened, nearly tripping over a chair. At first I hear only the faint strains of music, but suddenly I am struck by a dazzling fireworks display lighting up the night sky over my excellent view of the Mevlana Museum (Figure 32).



Figure 32: Fireworks over the Mevlana Museum  
(December 12, 2004)

Actually the festivities are coming from the Mevlana Cultural Center. Caught up with interviews, I had completely forgotten about the building's inauguration ceremony and the *sema* performance immediately following it.

I race over to the center just in time to hear the end of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speech officially announcing the grand opening of the new complex and waxing eloquently about the Mevlana and his message of tolerance. The atmosphere is almost carnivalesque as people line up to enter the building. Balloons and banners bandy about and the lights dancing in the cascading waterfalls around the amphitheater personify the bustling crowd. Prerecorded semi-sacred popular music fills the air and some begin to chant and perform *zikir*.

I am very lucky to have gotten a ticket for tonight. Of the twelve performances being held at the center and the various other official *sema*-s held elsewhere in the city during the festival, tonight's 8:00 p.m. ceremony was the most sought after because it marked the official opening of the building and because it was known that Erdoğan

would be in attendance; he typically only comes to see the *sema* on the evening of December 17<sup>th</sup>. I tried twice to secure a ticket, only to come away with Mevlana Festival posters and hopes that someone might cancel, finally succeeding on the third attempt.

After being knocked around a bit by the excited crowd and waiting patiently to get inside, I am disappointed to find that I could only manage a “nose bleed” seat with a poor view of the musicians, but it is a fair trade off for a clear view of the Prime Minister and an outstanding bird’s eye view of the *sema* floor. Also new to me is that under each seat is an orange bag decorated on one side with elaborate geometrical patterns around a picture of the Mevlana’s sepulcher and on the other with a montage of five *semazen*-s, a *neyzen*, and the green dome over the Mevlana’s tomb. My bag is full of programs and literature on the new building, and it even has a small white box of Mevlana *şekeri*. The octagonal candy box features a snapshot of the Mevlana Cultural Center and reminds me of a box of Mozartkugeln, the Viennese chocolate marzipan balls named after the composer. I had actually bought a huge tin of Mevlana *şekeri* decorated with a photograph of *semazen*-s and musicians in the garden of the Mevlana Museum earlier in the day at the supermarket. The candy pieces look a lot like after dinner mints, but they are more chalky than sweet; I have come to learn that they taste better if I let them dissolve in the warmth of my mouth, much like how the Mevlana describes melting candles or the soul burning in desire for God in his poetry.

My festival program is likewise loaded with Mevlevi symbols. It is folded in such a way as to form a pyramid with five steps, representing the stages of a dervish’s path to enlightenment. The top layer is in a golden color and lists the events for the first day of the festival. The program is turned clockwise to work through the various layers,

each step having its own color and dedicated to the events of a single day, adding up to the eight days of the festival. On the back, between the fourth and fifth days, is a reproduction on a green background of an old woodcut image depicting dervishes in various stages of performing *sema*. The spiraling program returns the festivalgoer back to the top of the golden pyramid on December 17<sup>th</sup>. The last event for today is this *sema* performance, which is virtually identical to all the other ones presented in the center this year. It consists of musical performances by two different groups separated by an intermission. The first half is essentially a semi-sacred *samā'* concert of spiritual music,<sup>242</sup> while the second half presents the Mevlevi *sema* ceremony in full, this year's being the setting in *makam Şedaraban* by Şeyh Mustafa Nakşi Dede.

Despite the occasion, tonight's program is mercifully free of lengthy speeches; the opening night ceremonies I attended on Friday included salutations and extended commentary from a variety of high-ranking officials, including both the governor and the mayor of Konya as well as the heads of the Konya Council of Tourism and the Music Conservatory of the Selçuk University. The paparazzi are also much reduced from the first night and are contained to the area immediately around the Prime Minister. Once Erdoğan, his wife, and their contingent of security guards and journalists take their seats across from the stage and the speaker's lectern, all attention is drawn to the circular *sema* floor on which a single pelt of wool lies saturated in a bright crimson light. The word "Sufi" is often said to derive from the Arabic word *şūf* meaning "wool" and supposedly refers to the clothing worn by ascetics renouncing the physical world. The red woolskin (*post*) is where the *şeyh* presiding over the ceremony, the *postnişin* ("skin sitter"), sits. It

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<sup>242</sup> In official rhetoric, Turkish *tasavvuf müziği* is often translated as "theosophical music" rather than "mystical music."

symbolizes his authority, as well as the sacrifice of Sufism and the Tabrizi sunset; I assume that the *post* down on the floor is correctly placed in the direction of Mecca.

Presently, the red spotlight dims and a bright white light shines on two announcers who welcome the Prime Minister and other distinguished guests and invoke an historical mood by quoting from a thirteenth century Selçuk sultan. In both Turkish and English, they praise the Mevlana as the greatest Sufi thinker and recite a poem incorrectly attributed to him that has become the virtual motto of the Konya Ministry of Tourism:

Come, come, whoever you are  
Wanderer, idolator,<sup>243</sup> worshipper of fire,<sup>244</sup> come  
Even though you have broken your vows a thousand times,  
    come, and come yet again  
Ours is not a caravan of despair

Musicians from the İstanbul Historical Turkish Music Assembly of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı İstanbul Tarihî Müziği Topluluğu) enter the stage, followed by their general director and vocal soloist Ahmet Özhan, who receives resounding applause from the audience. The performers are all dressed in black tuxedos and are surrounded on stage by an array of microphones and speakers. Özhan stands in front of the ensemble, facing the audience, and is himself surrounded by a semicircle of floor speakers, a microphone, and a music stand, which he largely ignores, only occasionally going to it during the performance to turn pages. Özhan thanks his adoring audience with raised hands, and a brief *ney taksim* wails above the applause. The *taksim* gives way to a sustained drone played chiefly by the *tanburi* as well as the *bendir* player, who produces a sustained tone by slowly rubbing the skin of the frame drum in

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<sup>243</sup> Here the reference is to pre-Islamic pagans and Christian who used icons and idols in religious worship.

<sup>244</sup> I.e., Zoroastrian.

small deliberate circles. After the name of the Mevlana is intoned over the drone, the first of three *ilahi*-s begins.

Ahmet Özhan is undoubtedly the star of the performance. He sings these hymns in a grandiloquent quasi-operatic style, using broad animated gestures to emphasize the text, often stretching his arms wide open, raising his hands up in the air, pointing to the audience, and placing his hands on his heart. Perhaps most strikingly, he conducts the ensemble while facing away from it, using expansive motions off to the side of his body. At one point of modulation in the first *ilahi*, he presses down in the air firmly and dramatically so as to quiet the ensemble. Later, he waves about wildly to speed up the tempo to the end, which he signals by thrusting his right hand in the air. Such gesticulations, though intended for the musicians, come off as being directed at the audience and appear a bit odd, even showy. Their aggressiveness contrasts sharply with the smoother, subtler movements of the *sema* everyone has come to see, and it is more characteristic of European symphonic music than of a Sufi hymn.

After welcoming the audience in the name of the Mevlana, Özhan signals the second *ilahi*, which he sings with as much gusto and passion, in what may perhaps be read by skeptics as staged religious fervor. I notice such ambiguity of piety all around me in the audience during the course of this performance. While some are busy taking flash photos or chatting, apparently restless, others listen more intently; during the third *ilahi*, a woman in a pretty flowered headscarf sitting across from me on the other end of the hall, apparently rather moved, performs *zikr* motions, bobbing her head and stomping her feet in time with the music. Despite whatever misgivings of religious authenticity

may linger in the audience, there is no doubt of Özhan's and the ensemble's superior musicality as evidenced by the eruption of applause at the end of their performance.

During the intermission, while I conducted interviews, Erdoğan evidently gives another speech outside, and upon his return to the *sema* hall, as he walks across the floor with his entourage, the audience claps enthusiastically; I was shocked, however, as only the *postnişin* is supposed to traverse the floor of the *semahane* in such a linear way. Once most have taken their seats, the emcees recite in both Turkish and English another famous poem attributed to the Mevlana, the one most often printed on Konya candy boxes:

In generosity and helping others be like a river  
In compassion and grace be like the sun  
In concealing the faults of others, be like the night  
In anger and fury be like the dead  
In modesty and humility be like the earth  
In tolerance be like the sea  
Either seem as you are or be as you seem

A short film in Turkish with English subtitles follows to give more background on the Mevlana and his followers, though I suspect it is also being shown to flaunt the building's new facilities. After the documentary, the lights remain dimmed, the festoons of faint lights above forming twelve dark bands representing the cosmos, while below the bright red spotlight shines again on the woolskin on the floor. The announcers proclaim,

Today there is *sema*. There is *sema* today. *Sema*.  
There is light today. Today there is light. ...  
It's time for the ceremony of *sema*, but before that we have some warnings. In order to enjoy the ceremony in peace, we kindly request that you please turn off your mobile phones and other recording equipment that might disturb the tranquility of the ceremony. Please do not take photographs with flash until after the first half of the *sema*. Please do not applaud during the *ayin-i şerif* ritual, and please do not leave your seats until the ceremony ends.

I am struck by how far the secular government has gone to promote the sacredness of this event.

With the lights still dimmed, members of a second official state music ensemble, the Konya Turkish Mystical Music Assembly of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Konya Türk Tasavvuf Müziği Topluluğu) under the direction of Yusuf Kayya, enter, bow toward the red woolskin (*post*), and take their seats on the stage. Unlike the previous group, they wear *hırka*-s, black shrouds, and *sikke*-s, tall conical felt caps (Figure 33).



Figure 33: Musicians of the Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Konya Türk Tasavvuf Müziği Topluluğu, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 10, 2004)

A group of nine similarly clad *semazen*-s follows suit, stopping at a bright white spotlight in front of the *mutrib*-s (musicians) at the edge of the circular wooden floor, where a number of white woolskins have been arranged in a semicircle. A frenzy of camera flashes light up the dark *semahane* as each dervish enters the white spotlight in turn and bows at the *post* before proceeding to the right around the floor toward the sheepskin.

Drenched in a red spotlight, the *postnişin*, the *şeyh* presiding over the ceremony and representing the Mevlana, makes his reverent entry. He walks slowly in a straight line to the red wool pelt at the other end of the hall in front of the Prime Minister. His path is along the *hattı istiva* (“line of evenness”), which points toward Mecca and divides the *semahane* into right and left halves, representing the arcs of ascent and descent respectively. He turns counterclockwise around the *post*, faces the musicians and ultimately Mecca, and with *semazen*-s mimicking his actions, bows, and prostrates on the ground fully, before sitting in statuesque repose (Figure 34).



Figure 34: The *Postnişin* Sitting in Contemplation, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 12, 2004)

Suddenly, a white spotlight darts across the hall toward the musicians, and the *nat-ı şerif* is intoned. The *postnişin*, the dervishes, and the musicians bow their heads at the mention of the name of the Mevlana, as well as of Şams Tabrizi and Mustafa, an honorific title referring to the Prophet Muhammad as the chosen receiver of the Koran (Figure 35).



Figure 35: Performing the *Nat-ı Şerif*, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 10, 2004)

A ney *taksim* soon follows, oddly though, the *küdum* drum strokes symbolizing the divine act of creation (*kun*, “to be”) are not sounded. The ney pierces through the hall as the celebrants continue to sit in sedate religious contemplation. Afterwards, the lights dim even further and all sit briefly in silence awaiting the main portion of the ceremony.

The full ensemble soon begins the *Şedaraban peşrev* composed by Gazi Giray Han, the piece that normally precedes Mustafa Nakşi Dede’s *ayin-i şerif*. The *peşrev* signals the Sultan Veled Procession, an elaborate series of movements carried out by the *postnişin* and the *semazen-s*. The *postnişin* stands up in the darkness while the *semazen-s* cue in line to his left, standing at the edge of the spotlight. The *postnişin* slowly walks to the right, turns clockwise one hundred and eighty degrees and faces the *semazenbaşı* (“head of the *semazen-s*”). After pausing and standing in the darkness on opposite sides of the red spotlight, they bow to one another; the other *semazen-s* also bow at this point. The *postnişin* then very slowly proceeds to walk in a semicircular path toward the center of the floor and the last *semazen*, while the *semazenbaşı* turns clockwise one hundred and eighty degrees ending up at the other end of the spotlight. The whole procedure repeats

and the *semazenbaşı* bows to the *semazen* behind him who has by now advanced to where he had been standing. Slowly, the *postnişin* and the nine *semazens* form a crescent arch, then a spiral, and finally, once all the *semazen*-s have bowed to each other, a complete circle (Figure 36).



Figure 36: The Sultan Veled Procession, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 12, 2004)

Following the halile clashes on beats 1, 2, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, and 25 of the 28 beat *usul* cycle, they step in unison, completing three full revolutions around the *post* before the end of the *peşrev*, representing the three stages of knowledge: knowing, seeing, becoming. As each dervish passes directly in front of the *post*, he bows and is mindful not to step on the *hattı istiva* out of respect. Toward the end of the *peşrev*, when the ensemble begins to slow down the tempo slightly, the dervishes perform their last circumambulation, slowly break the circle, and line up on the right side of the floor as a second group of *semazen*-s near the stage prepares to enter. Twenty-five new dervishes, including two child *semazen*-s, enter following the same sequence of gestures as the first group, which they now quickly join in a curving line along the edge of the floor facing

inward. The ensemble repeats the beginning of the *peşrev* as they file out and as the *postnişin*, again in a red spotlight, makes his way back to the *post*.

Once the last *semazen* and *postnişin* have arrived at their destinations, the *peşrev* abruptly ends and a second ney *taksim*, though very brief, is played before the full ensemble, this time joined by a large choir of over a dozen singers, collectively begins the first *selam* of the *ayin*. At this point, all dervishes on the floor bow and remove their black cloaks, revealing their white tunics underneath (Figure 37).



Figure 37: *Semazen-s* in *Niyaz* Posture, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 10, 2004)

This act symbolizes their transition from death and indicates their spiritual purity. Each dervish grabs his shoulders by crossing his arms, right arm over left, shaping his body into single column, symbolizing the conduit by which Allah is manifest in the physical world. This position is known as *niyaz* (or *muhur*) and it further represents the number one, the first letter of the alphabet, and the concept of *al-tawhīd* (“unity of Allah”), which the *semazen-s* emphasize by squeeze in together and touching shoulders. While the audience erupts in a frenzy of photography, the *postnişin* and *semazen-s* remain stationary. By the end of the first line of the first stanza of the first *selam*, the whilers are

ready to commence the *sema*. They bow on cue at a cadential point in the music in the second stanza and the *semazenbaşı*, still clad in black, moves toward the *post*. He bows before the *postnişin*, who whispers into his ear before he proceeds to the center of the floor.

At the end of the transitional section between the second and third verses of the first stanza the other white-clad dervishes bow together. At the beginning of the third verse, the dervishes line up in turn in front of the *postnişin* to receive his blessing, and follow the sequence first performed by the *semazenbaşı* (Figure 38).



Figure 38: Stages of *Sema Whirling*, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 12, 2004)

As they continue out onto the floor, the *semazen-s* begin to turn counterclockwise, using the vertical line between the left foot and the heart as an axis and the right foot to propel the body in spirals and in perfect concentric circles. Sooner or later they unfold their arms upward and outward in a gesture of embracing Allah; the right hand turns upwards in a gesture of receipt from God, while the left hand faces downward, as if transmitting divine grace to the earth. The head is tilted at a forty-five degree angle to the right,

representing death and separation from the physical world, while the tall felt cap symbolizes a tombstone (Figure 39).



Figure 39: *Semazen-s* Performing *Sema*, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 10, 2004)

A whirler's revolutions are believed to mirror the movement of the planets while the gradual spiraling of the whole group connotes the grand motion of the entire universe. The many changing colors and shapes of the lights add to the magnificence of the spectacle (Figures 40 and 41).



Figure 40: *Semazen-s* Performing *Sema*, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 12, 2004)



Figure 41: *Semazen-s* Performing *Sema*, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 12, 2004)

With so many *semazen-s*, it is not until the beginning of the third of the four stanzas before all can make it out onto the floor and begin spinning. Soon they begin to

cluster, only eventually spreading out further. Though no *semazen*-s ever collide, the *semazenbaşı*'s main function is to walk amidst them to ensure that everything is in order as they whirl to ecstasy. The *postnişin* meanwhile remains standing, stationary in the red spotlight.

As the final verse of the first *selam* draws to a close, the music slows down and the *semazen*-s gradually stop whirling. The second *selam* begins immediately, however, without waiting for the dervishes to reposition themselves. It is during the first stanza of the second *selam* that the *semazen*-s retract their arms back into the crossed position of *niyaz*, bow, and back up to the edge of the circular floor, where they form small groups of two to six. Each group stands at some distance from the next, but the *semazen*-s within each group stand physically touching shoulder, again testifying to *al-tawhīd*. They all bow together at an internal cadence in the first verse and prepare to repeat the entire *selam* sequence, which again is led by the *semazenbaşı*, this time starting on the second not third verse. By the time the last *semazen* begins turning, the *selam* is nearly finished and so they continue whirling through the *terennüm* ("instrumental passage"), which here functions as a kind of coda.

The third and fourth *selam*-s are performed in the exact same way with only a few variations, most notably in tempo. The pace of the third *selam* increases incrementally with each of the four *terennüme*-s as well as during the last verse of the fourth stanza. During the fifth stanza, the hall lights dim yet again leaving only the quickly flashing colored spotlights, which in conjunction with the fact that the musical settings of the fifth and six verses are very similar and repetitive, intensifies the overall perception of velocity. The *attacca* into the short fourth *selam* is jarringly slower and the tempo

remains stately throughout until the *küdü*m picks up the speed again slightly at a cadential point on the repeat of the *selam*, which the ensemble is forced to take on account of the fact that only half of the *semazen*-s had begun turning at the end of the final verse; in fact the last *semazen* barely begins to whirl even at the very end of the repeat.

The *semazen*-s continue turning through the subsequent *son peşrev* and *son yürük*, both *attacca* movements connected by *küdü*m strokes indicating changes in the *usul*-s. With eyes closed and basking now in white light, the *postnişin* joins the *semazen*-s at the start of the *son peşrev*, spiraling very slowly along the *hattı istiva* to the center of the *semahane* where he whirls elegantly and deliberately for some time (Figure 42).



Figure 42: The *Postnişin* and *Semazen*-s Whirling, Mevlana Cultural Center (Konya, December 12, 2004)

He does not remove his black cloak nor spread out his arms, but instead keeps his left arm down at his side and holds onto the right side of his cloak with his right thumb and index finger. All dervishes, save the *semazenbaşı*, continue to whirl through a final

*taksim* played on *tanbur*, which despite being nonmetrical is for some reason also introduced by the *küdü*m. Compared to the slow improvisations and modulations of the *tanbur* and the stately *postnişin*'s turning, the *semazen-s* appear to be whirling quite rapidly in the shifting shades of blue, yellow, and green light.

The instant the *postnişin* returns to the *post*, the *tanbur taksim* ends and a reading from Koran verse ii: 115 sounds out across the hall, "To God belong the East and West: wherever you turn, there is the face of God. For God is All-Pervading, All-Knowing." The *postnişin* prostrates on the floor and then sits on his *post*. The *semazen-s* all eventually cease whirling and bow. When they return to their stations along the edge of the circular floor, they put their black cloaks back on and wait until the last *semazen* has done the same, before they too prostrate and sit on their woolskins in contemplation. A second recitation from the Koran, specifically the first chapter *Fatiha*, follows. At the end of the *Kuran-ı kerim*, the *postnişin* followed by the *semazen-s*, prostrates once again, wipes his hands over his face to receive the blessings of the Koran, and stands up.

With his arms lifted up in the air, the *postnişin* initiates the concluding segment of the ceremony and recites a litany of praises and blessings in the name of the Prophet Muhammad, the Mevlana Rumi, Şams Tabrizi, Sultan Veled, the Çelebis, and a host of other figures of religious import, as well the Turkish Republic, to which all the *semazen-s* bow. One of the most striking moments of the ceremony immediately follows: everyone in attendance intones a long, profound, and out of tune "Hu," the mystical term often translated as "He" and referring specifically to God, the Divine Breath.

As he slowly processes out of the *semahane* along the *hattı istiva*. the *postnişin* in the crimson spotlight chants a series of salutations, to which a singer in the ensemble

responds. When he arrives at the white spotlight by the stage, he turns counterclockwise one last time and bows along with *semazen-s* and musicians at the *post*. He is followed out first by the *semazenbaşı* and then by the other *semazen-s*, a sequence that forms an arch as they double back on their egression. Upon approaching the white spotlight, each dervish turns toward the *post*, bows, and leaves in silence and peace. With the musicians having also taken their leave in the same manner, the emcees thank the audience for spending the evening with them during this “special time.” While most leave immediately to beat the rush, some stay to offer faint applause or to mediate on the woolskin in the red spotlight.

### **Musical Movement in Mustafa Nakşı Dede’s *Şedaraban Ayin-i Şerif***

In addition to being self evident in the ritual proceedings of the Mevlevi *sema* ceremony, the concept of motion is also fundamental to the aesthetics and compositional process of the accompanying music. Among Mevlevi musicians, composers, and theorists, musical movement is understood in both rhythmic and melodic terms. I have already written about the characteristic elements of rhythmic motion—namely, the cyclical repetition of rhythmic patterns and the tendency to change between these rhythmic modes by way of abrupt rather than gradual changes in tempo—in my earlier discussion of the *usul* principle. My focus here, therefore, is on melodic movement, which in Turkey is conceived of in terms of melodic progression (*seyir*) and modulation (*geçki*). I have limited my analysis here to the *Şedaraban ayin-i şerif* of Mustafa Nakşı Dede and the surrounding *peşrev*, *son peşrev*, and *son yürük sema’i* of the ceremony

described above, though these concepts are equally present in all of the *ayin*-s in the Mevlevi repertory.

Mustafa Nakşı Dede (d. 1854), not to be confused with Köçek Mustafa Dede (d. 1683), was *şeyh* of the Mevlevihane in Egypt. He was originally born in Edirne presumably in the 1790s; Öztuna suggests he died at the age of 60 in Cairo where he is buried in the cemetery of the Mevlevi *tekke*.<sup>245</sup> His early training included music, Arabic, Farsi, literature, and calligraphy, and it appears that he had rather strong Mevlevi connections early on in his life, for prior to 1825 he left Edirne for Konya,<sup>246</sup> staying at the Gelibolu (Gallipoli) and Afyon Mevlevihane-s along the way. In Konya, he established himself at the *dergah* of the Mevlana where became a *dede* and taught Arabic and Farsi to Hemdem Çelebi (d. 1859), Grand Çelebi of the *tarikât*. In 1825 Çelebi sent him to Egypt to take over as head *küdüm* player of the Cairo *tekke* and in 1838 he was appointed *şeyh* of the *tekke* on the death of Fikri Dede. A highly renowned calligrapher and a poet famous especially for his *rübai*-s (“quatrains”), Mustafa Nakşı Dede was also a virtuoso *ney* player and was considered one of the foremost composers of his era, though only the *Şedaraban ayin-i şerif*, an *Arabian peşrev* in *usul devr-i kebir*, and a *Şevkefza saz semai* are extant today.

Despite having his own *peşrev* in the very closely related *makam* of *Arabian*, Nakşı Dede’s *ayin* is today paired with one in *Şedaraban* attributed to Gazi Giray Han, the Tatar Khan of Crimea (r. 1554-1607). Although the khan was one of the most important composers of Ottoman music in the sixteenth century, even while he was not

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<sup>245</sup> Öztuna, II, 98-99.

<sup>246</sup> Ahmed Celaleddin Dede claimed Nakşı Dede went to Konya in 1824. See Heper, 544.

an Ottoman, this is undoubtedly a later misattribution,<sup>247</sup> for complex *makam*-s of such microtonal sophistication as that of the *peşrev* did not exist before the seventeenth century. In fact, *Şedaraban* is a compound *makam* dating from the eighteenth century and it is likely that our *peşrev* dates to the early nineteenth century.<sup>248</sup> Its longer *usul devr-i kebir*, which had doubled from 14/4 to 28/4 at the end of the eighteenth century, also indicates that Gazi Giray Han could not have been the composer of this *peşrev*.<sup>249</sup>

Also attached to Nakşi Dede's four *selam*-s are a *son peşrev* and *son yürük sema'i* by one Kul Mehmet, apparently a court slave (*kul*) of the *devşirme* (Janissary conscripts often taken from the conquered lands of Southeast Europe).<sup>250</sup> Öztuna suggests the possible death date of Kul Mehmet Ağa to have been around 1650.<sup>251</sup> However, this is also problematic, for Kul Mehmet, in addition to the *son peşrev* and *son yürük sema'i*, has also left us with three *peşrev*-s in *makam Hüseyini*. One of these is paired with the incomplete *Hüseyini ayin-i şerif*, one of the three ancient anonymous Mevlevi *ayin*-s (*beste-i kadimler*). As with the *Şedaraban peşrev*, the *Hüseyini peşrev* is also set in the longer 28/4 *usul devr-i kebir*, thus casting doubt on the authorship of anything attributed to Kul Mehmet. Our *son peşrev* and *son yürük sema'i* could have been composed by Kul Mehmet in the seventeenth century or could date from a considerably later period.

While *makam Şedaraban* is not the most popular *makam* in the Turkish repertory perhaps on account of its complexity, there are a number of other works in the classical

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<sup>247</sup> See Feldman, 1996, 28.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 515, note 125.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 2002, 123.

<sup>250</sup> For more on musicians of the *kul* see ibid., 1996, 63-65.

<sup>251</sup> Öztuna, II, 35.

Mevlevi repertory besides Mustafa Nakşı Dede's *ayin* in the same mode. Salih Dede (ca. 1818 – ca. 1880), *neyzenbaşı* at the Beşiktaş Mevlevihane in İstanbul, composed a *Şedaraban ayin-i şerif* in the generation after Nakşı Dede.<sup>252</sup> In the twentieth century, the prolific Hüseyin Sadettin Arel (1880-1955) brought the total of *Şedaraban ayin*-s to the impressive number of three and also wrote a *durak* (a non-metrical solo vocal work in Turkish used during *zikir*) and three *ilahi*-s in the same mode.<sup>253</sup>

Karl Signell describes *Şedaraban* as an example of a compound (*birleşik* or *mürekkep*) *makam* consisting of the “incestuous” “marriage of twin *makam*-s.”<sup>254</sup> In other words, *Şedaraban* (“transposed *Araban*”) is comprised of two versions of the same *makam*: *makam Araban* combined with its lower octave transposition. *Makam Araban*, which, as Signell indicates, “no longer exists outside of compounds,”<sup>255</sup> is itself a variant of *makam Hicaz* transposed to the pitch *neva* (d). Thus, *makam Şedaraban* begins on *neva* (d) and extends upward one octave to *tiz neva* (d') and downward one octave to the pitch *yegah* (D). The full *ambitus* of *Şedaraban* occupies two octaves of alternating *hicaz* pentachords and tetrachords. The basic *hicaz* subset is characterized by a large half tone (*küçük mücennep*) interval between the first and second scale degrees made up of five Pythagorean commas (*koma*-s) and an augmented second (*artık ikili*) interval between the second and third scale degrees made up of twelve commas. Often in *Şedaraban*, the intervals between the sixth, seventh, and eighth scale degrees of each

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid., II, 202.

<sup>253</sup> For a list of other works in this *makam*, see *ibid.*, II, 272.

<sup>254</sup> Signell, 1977, 110.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 109 and 112.

*Araban* scale can be altered, sometimes creating a *buselik* instead of a *hicaz* pentachord in the upper range of the *makam* (Figure 43).

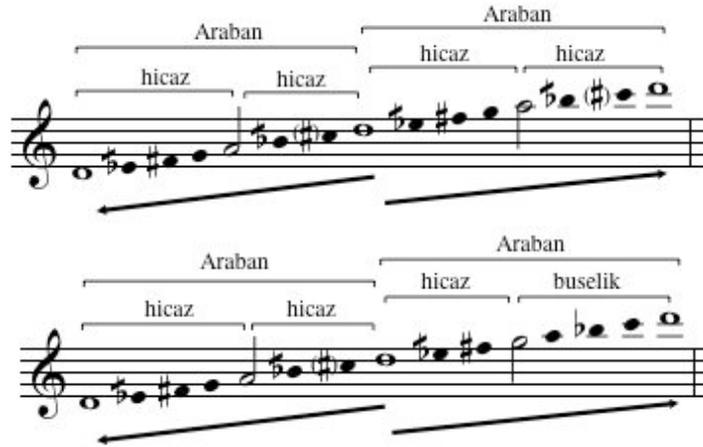


Figure 43: Şedaraban Scales

Figure 43 uses an adapted form of Western notation now standard in Turkey. As the Turkish modal system, especially *makam Şedaraban*, makes abundant use of microtones based on the Pythagorean comma system, a number of unfamiliar accidentals are required to indicate the proper intervals between two pitches. Figure 44 lists all the accidental symbols commonly found in Turkish musical notation.

♯	<i>koma diyezi</i> (raises one comma)	♭	<i>koma bemolü</i> (lowers one comma)
♯	<i>bakiye diyezi</i> (raises four commas)	♭	<i>bakiye bemolü</i> (lowers four commas)
♯	<i>küç-müc diyezi</i> (raises five commas)	♭	<i>küç-müc bemolü</i> (lowers five commas)

Figure 44: Accidentals Used in Turkish Musical Notation<sup>256</sup>

Thus, the *Hicaz* pentachords and tetrachords of *Şedaraban* require the accidental ♭ (*koma bemolü*) to lower the typical nine commas between the d and e of the Western scale by four commas and the ♯ (*bakiye diyezi*) to raise the Western f four commas to create a twelve comma interval with the previous e♭. Also particular to the notion system used in

<sup>256</sup> Adapted from *ibid.*, 24.

Figure 43 is the whole note indicating the tonics of the *makam*, and the half note, which signifies the dominants.

Aside from scales and patterns of characteristic intervals, *makam*-s are also identified by specific melodic formulae and movements called *seyir* (“path,” “progression”), which Signell calls the “life-giving force, the forward impetus” of any melody.<sup>257</sup> In essence, melodies are composed and improvised in a linear manner moving from the initial entry (*giriş*), which is often at or near the tonic of the *makam*, to the finalis (*karar*). As Signell explains, “once the progression begins, the melody cannot rest until the final cadence,” though it usually makes a series of temporary pauses at certain unstable tonal centers of the *makam*, including the dominant (*güçlü*) and other temporary stopping points (*muvaqqat kalışlar*), which only compel the melody to move forward. Depending on the *makam*, the forward momentum of a melody will occur in a ascending (*çıkıcı*), descending (*inici*), or ascending-descending (*inici-çıkıcı*) direction.<sup>258</sup> Whatever the direction, however, the *seyir* imparts an overall “tendency to create a continuous melody, without any repetition” or imitation, as Feldman points out.<sup>259</sup> Thus, Mustafa Nakşi Dede’s *ayin-i şerif* opens with a long unremitting melody that slowly descends from the upper tonic to the lower tonic, as is typical of all music in *makam Şedaraban* (Figure 45).

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>259</sup> Feldman, 1996, 338.

Figure 45: Opening of the First *Selam* of Nakşi Dede's *Şedaraban Ayin-i Şerif*

In addition to movement brought about by the gravitational pull of the tonic of a *makam*, musical motion is also rendered through modulation. The concept of modulation is understood in Turkish and Arabic music in the same way as in the West; that is, as a form of movement from one modality to another. Modern theorists refer to modulation in Turkish music as *geçki* (from *geçmek*, “to pass”)<sup>260</sup> and describe it as occurring on four levels: on the level of *makam* itself, as part of the *seyir* of a *makam*, in the formal structure of a piece of music, and in the relationship between movements of a suite.

The first type of modulation applies only to certain types of *makam*-s that by design are comprised of modulations.<sup>261</sup> Known as compound (*birleşik* or *mürekkep*) *makam*-s, they consist of two conjoined *makam*-s and require modulation in order for the two halves to be fully rendered. *Makam Şedaraban* is one such compound *makam*, though the transition between the two *Araban makam*-s that constitute the mode may be too subtle for Western ears, which may perceive the modulation from the one *Araban* to the other as a change in tessitura rather than outright modality. In the first *selam* of his *ayin*, Nakşi Dede sets the last two lines of the first stanza of text—that is, the passage

<sup>260</sup> See Öztuna, I, 302 and Marcus, 1992.

<sup>261</sup> Signell, 1977, 67.

immediately following the repeat in Figure 45—in the upper range of *Şedaraban*, creating a modulation in the process of exploring the full range of the *makam* (Figure 46).



Figure 46: Upper Range of *Makam Şedaraban*, Stanza I, Verses 3-4 of the First *Selam* of Nakşi Dede’s *Şedaraban Ayin-i Şerif*

The second form of modulation is that which occurs as part of the *seyir* of the *makam*.<sup>262</sup> Signell explains that this type of modulation can happen by way of either a “single note borrowing” or a “passing modulation,” perhaps as an expected part of the *seyir* or simply for purposes of avoiding monotony and adding color. Single note borrowings are generally made by introducing into the melody a pitch from a related *makam*. Such an example occurs at the end of the *teslim* (“refrain”) of the “Gazi Giray Han” *peşrev* in which a B<sup>♭</sup> is introduced into *Şedaraban* from *makam Rast* (Figure 47).



Figure 47: Ending of the *Teslim* of the *Şedaraban Peşrev* Attributed to Gazi Giray Han

Meanwhile, a passing modulation may bring in a full tetrachord or pentachord as in the transitional passage between the first and second stanzas of Nakşi Dede’s *ayin*, where *makam Şedaraban* gives way to the *Rast* tetrachord (Figure 48).

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 1977, 68 and 77-78.



Figure 48: Transitional Section between Stanzas I and II of Nakşi Dede's *Şedaraban Ayin-i Şerif*

The third modulation type involves broad-scale changes of *makam* over the course of an entire composition or improvisation.<sup>263</sup> Such modulations are normally built into the formal structure of the piece. Signell explains that the pattern of modulation in most Turkish music occurs within a generic ABA format. The first A section (*zemin*, “ground”) presents the principal *makam* in the manner of what Signell calls an “exposition.” The B section (*meyan* or *miyan*, “middle”) serves as a point of contrast in which either the upper range of the initial *makam* is explored or a new *makam* is presented. This “development” section then returns to the A section in a sort of “recapitulation.” Usually more complex forms will have multiple contrasting sections. With the *peşrev*, for instance, various *hane*-s (“sections”) alternate with a *teslim* (“refrain”) in an A (A) B (A) C (A), etc. format, with (A) representing the *teslim*. In the case of our *Şedaraban peşrev*, the shifts between *makam*-s *Şedaraban* and *Rast* (Figure 49) are rather straightforward (Figure 50).



Figure 49: Scale of *Makam Rast*

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 67 and 82.

	<b>Peşrev Section</b>	<b>Makam</b>
A	First <i>Hane</i>	<i>Şedaraban</i> (cadence in <i>Rast</i> )
(A)	<i>Teslim</i>	<i>Şedaraban</i>
B	Second <i>Hane</i>	<i>Rast</i>
(A)	<i>Teslim</i>	<i>Şedaraban</i>
C	Third <i>Hane</i>	<i>Şedaraban</i> (higher register with cadence in <i>Rast</i> )
(A)	<i>Teslim</i>	<i>Şedaraban</i>

Figure 50: Formal and Modal Layout of the *Şedaraban Peşrev* Attributed to Gazi Giray Han

The *selam* of the Mevlevi *ayin-i şerif*, however, does not follow the typical ABA pattern of modulation. It is in a sense more through composed with modulations occurring capriciously one after another, often not even in accordance with the poetic structure. Referring to this as the “wandering *makam* phenomenon,” Signell cites Mustafa Nakşi Dede’s *Şedaraban ayin* as a particularly extreme case.<sup>264</sup> Typically *makam Şedaraban* modulates to *Nihavend*, and such is the case in Nakşi Dede’s first *selam*, but the route by which this occurs is extraordinarily circuitous.

The first stanza of the first *selam* begins in *Şedaraban* but modulates to *makam Rast* and then *makam Hümayun* transposed to pitch *yegah* (D) before the second stanza even begins. The second stanza could be said to be in *Şedaraban*, but there are so many accidentals, borrowed notes, and unusual transposed tetrachords that such a label would not accurately describe the overall instability of the passage. The third stanza alternates between several permutations of two main melodic motives that, as far as I could determine, are not derived from a known *makam*; the first perhaps outlines a *çargah* pentachord on *dügah* (A), while the second, with a vacillating third scale degree, is of indeterminate modality (Figure 51).

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 120.



Figure 51: Melodic Motives from the Third Stanza of  
Nakşı Dede's *Şedaraban Ayin-i Şerif*

Modal stability returns only in the last line of the third stanza, which is clearly set in *Hüseyni*, a *makam* quite remote to *Şedaraban*. The first three lines of the final stanza continue in *Hüseyni*, and it is only in the last half of the stanza that the long anticipated *makam Nihavend* appears, though transposed to pitch *aşiran* (E). The *selam* concludes with an instrumental passage that finally modulates by way of sequences to *Nihavend* on *dügah* (A). In all at least five *makam*-s are used in this single movement of the *sema* ceremony (see Figure 52 for an overview of major modulations and the Appendix for a corresponding list of the *makam* scales).

The final type of modulation is that taking place over the course of an entire suite of pieces.<sup>265</sup> In the past, the concept of suite in Turkey and the Near East was limited to a collection of works all in the same mode. Modern Turkish performance practice, however, demonstrates a strong predilection for modal variety with suite performances consisting of an assortment of movements in many different *makam*-s. In the standard *fasıl* program, for instance, it is customary to begin with several movements in one *makam* and then move by way of connecting *taksim*-s to groups of pieces in other *makam*-s using up to four different *makam*-s in one concert. In other large-scale forms, modal changes are even more frequent, though none is more extreme or erratic than the

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 113-15.

Mevlevi *ayin*.<sup>266</sup> With many sections beginning in contrasting *makam*-s, the whole of the *sema* ceremony is a context for extensive modal exploration, involving as many as six to eight or more principal *makam*-s throughout. Modulation between these many *makam*-s also tends to be abrupt, for although many movements begin in one *makam* and end in another, they do not necessarily function like the connecting *taksim*-s of the *fasıl*.

The complete modal blueprint of the *sema* ceremony performed at the 2004 Mevlana Festival is given in Figure 52.

<b><i>Nat-ı Şerif</i></b>	<i>Rast</i>
<b><i>Taksim</i></b>	<i>Rast, Şedaraban</i>
<b><i>Peşrev</i></b>	<i>Şedaraban, Rast</i>
<b>First <i>Selam</i></b>	
Stanza I	<i>Şedaraban, Rast, Hümayun on yegah (D)</i>
II	? (perhaps <i>Şedaraban</i> )
III	?, <i>Hüseyni</i>
IV	<i>Hüseyni, Nihavend on aşiran (E)</i>
Coda	<i>Nihavend on düğah (A)</i>
<b>Second <i>Selam</i></b>	
Stanza I	<i>Nihavend on hüseyini (e) and düğah (A) to Rast</i>
<b>Third <i>Selam</i></b>	
Stanza I	<i>Uşşak</i>
II	<i>Nihavend on hüseyini (e)/ aşiran (E)</i>
III	<i>Nihavend on düğah (A)</i>
IV	<i>Nihavend on hüseyini (e), aşiran (E), and düğah (A)</i>
V	<i>Nihavend on aşiran (E)</i>
VI	<i>Nihavend on aşiran (E)</i>
<b>Fourth <i>Selam</i></b>	
Stanza I	<i>Nihavend on aşiran (E)</i>
<b><i>Son Peşrev</i></b>	<i>Hüseyni</i>
<b><i>Son Yürük Sema’i</i></b>	<i>Kürdi on aşiran (E), Nihavend on aşiran (E)</i>

Figure 52: Modal Layout of Nakşı Dede’s *Şedaraban Ayin-i Şerif* in Ritual Context

<sup>266</sup> Kusić demonstrates that in the overall sequence of movements of the *namaz*, there is “rather a [more] meaningful and deliberate choice of *makam*-s and modulations” than in the Mevlevi *ayin*. See Kusic, 1996, 315 and 329ff. On modulation over the course of the Mevlevi *ayin* see also Signell, 115-18.

As can be seen, the music moves through a total of six different principal initial *makam*-s. When this grand-scale modal activity is combined with the flurry of modulations taking place within individual movements as well as on the level of *makam* and *seyir*, the result is a sonic environment characterized by perpetual modal and melodic motion.

Thus, movement plays a vital and integral role in every dimension of the Mevlevi classical tradition. It is a fundamental precept of the faith that permeates even the most minute details of musical composition and performance. It is manifest also in specific ritual gestures, which as we have seen further help to create cohesion by uniting sundry pieces of music into a complete whole. Ultimately it inspires an elaborate semiotic system that influences everything from the ergonomics of instrument performance to the whirling of the *semazen*-s, and draws together tourists and heads of state, skeptics and pilgrims alike.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ARCS OF ASCENT AND DESCENT: MUSIC AND TRANCE IN *ZIKR* CEREMONY

The revitalization of Mevlana culture I described in the previous chapter, marked by public festivities organized by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the increasing prominence of the Mevlevi classical musical repertory, has occurred in tandem with a significant renaissance of private ceremonial life in the underground Sufi world of Anatolia. As waves of both tourists and pilgrims inundate the officially sanctioned events, an appreciable spillover flows into hidden *tekke*-s and the private homes of Sufi adherents, especially since the question of spiritual authenticity hovering over the public whirling shows leads the more intrepid to seek out more personal, furtive alternatives. What the seeker invariably finds at such clandestine gatherings are ecstatic trance ceremonies known as *zikr*-s, characterized by a wholly different repertory of music and structured movements.

My primary focus in this chapter is on the *zikr* ceremonies performed in honor of the Mevlana Rumi during the week of his Şeb-i ‘urs. While respect for the secrecy of the events prevents me from discussing the subject in too great a detail, my descriptions and analyses of music, trance, and movement nevertheless remain comprehensive. I present first a series of short ethnographic vignettes that explore the broader Sufi concept of *zikr*, which I define and analyze more systematically in the following section. Subsequently, I explain the interconnections between *zikr*, trance, and music and then give an ethnographic account of a *zikr* ceremony in the fourth section of the chapter. I conclude with a detailed analysis of this ceremony, exploring specifically the Sufi notion of the

arcs of ascent and descent by focusing on the intensification of volume, rhythm, and tempo over the course of the gathering.

### “Always Remember God”

October 4, 2004      Damascus

Even after a long, full day of exploring, I am still too excited about being in this very ancient yet vibrant city to just sit around tonight. With the feeling of wanderlust coursing through my veins, I decide to accompany some new friends on an evening stroll. As we make our way down a busy street not too far from where I am staying, a dull white reflection at the corner of my eye draws my attention. Curious, I make us double back to investigate. What we first take to be a water fountain, on closer inspection turns out to be rather more novel. Apparently there on the side of the road to relieve weary travelers, a simple public sink adorned with a marble slab reading in both Arabic and English “*Zikr* Allah, ALWAYS REMEMBER GOD” beckons (Figure 53).



Figure 53: Public Sink  
(Damascus, October 04, 2004)

Against my better judgment, but unable to resist the opportunity to re-hydrate after a hot, strenuous day, I fill the attached stainless steel cup with water from the tap and take a big gulp before we continue on our way.

October 5, 2004      Damascus

I wake up a bit late this morning not feeling very well at all. Still, this is my last day in Damascus and I have a full agenda ahead of me that includes morning visits to the famous Hijaz Railway Station in the heart of downtown and the nearby Taqiyya al-Suleimaniyya Mosque built by the prolific Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan. While trying to figure out how to get into the closed mosque, my stomach begins to stage a revolution and after a while, I can stand it no longer. Fortunately my hostel is not too far away and there are plenty of couches there on which I can rest. The hours slip by as I try to recover and figure out how I got sick. Catching up on writing my field notes, I suddenly recall the sink from last night and realize that the water must not have agreed with me. Doubled over in pain, I would come to remember God, and that sink, all day long....

July 22, 2005      Kütahya

The Dönenler Camii (Turner's Mosque) in Kütahya's city center is always completely packed during Friday prayer. None too eager to be swept up in the crowds though, I sit and take in the old fourteenth-century Mevlevihane as the worshipers slowly trickle out. The mosque is completely dominated by its circular prayer hall, where once *sema* was regularly performed. Studded all around the hall are columns decorated with paintings of Mevlevi *sikke*-s ("conical felt caps"). The small *mutribhane* ("musician's

balcony”) overlooking the *semahane* and opposite an alcove filled with Mevlevi tombs houses the electronic equipment used to broadcast the *ezan* (“call to prayer”) into the neighboring alleys and squares. As the last of the congregants leave, the custodians hurriedly strip back the thick green carpet at the center of the hall and open a trap door to a well hidden underneath the floor. A few congregants rush in to fill up empty water bottles and basins with the sacred waters. One of them offers me a drink before a custodian closes the mosque. According to local belief, those who drink from the well are headed for Paradise. Preferring to take my time getting there and recalling my experience with free dingy water sources in Damascus, I politely decline.

With a few hours to kill before catching the bus to back to İzmir, I decide to wander through the city one last time. Though distinguished by its long history of faience tile manufacturing and several streets of newly restored Ottoman houses, Kütahya is nevertheless a fairly typical Western Anatolian city in its proclivity toward modernization and Europeanization. In the raging debate over Turkey’s “ascension” into the European Union, I find places like Kütahya reminiscent of many towns in Europe. Still, there are moments when I am reminded that Turkey remains very much a distinctive entity. On my walk back to the *otogar*, I encounter a conspicuous farm tractor parked on the side of the road right there in the middle of the city. Attracted by the incongruity, I approach it and see on the side of the engine a simple bumper sticker that reads “Allah biliyor” (“God knows”). I am instantly reminded of several similar encounters I had on my travels throughout the Middle East and smile at the Muslim penchant for decorating virtually anything on wheels with religious symbols and the name of Allah.

June 2, 2005

Bornova, İzmir

Excited to be taking a day off and go to the beach with a group of friends, I arrive at our meeting point, the Bornova metro station, only to sit around for a while breathing in the exhaust fumes coming from the neighboring bus stop and busy highway; as usual, the gang is running late. By the time we are all finally gathered together, we realize that we are too far behind schedule to follow our original plan and devise an alternate, more flexible sequence of rides to get out to the waters of the Aegean Sea. Within moments, a *dolmuş* heading in our direction comes barreling down the road. Even before it has come to a full stop, passengers have already hopped off and a teenaged boy leans half way out the side door yelling out the various stops on the route. I shout “*otogar*” and he nods his head and waves us in.

Basically a minibus operating on a predetermined route, the *dolmuş* is the quintessentially Turkish mode of public transportation. Derived from the Turkish verb *dolmak* (“to become full”), *dolmuş*-s are almost always full and I am not at all surprised that there is no open seat when I get on, my friends having taken up the last ones. Actually, there is one seat available next to a middle-aged woman, but, as proper etiquette does not permit unrelated men and women to sit together in public, I am forced to stand. Fortunately, I do not have to suffer the bumpy ride for long standing up as the *dolmuş* stops frequently whenever and wherever someone wants out. I take an open seat next to an elderly gentleman wearing a skullcap and pay my fare by passing a tattered and taped one million Lira bill up to the front. My money travels from hand to hand against the blaring torrent of a pop song heavily influenced by Turkish folk music, which the driver has just turned up even louder as he races down the highway. My neighbor,

turning his *tespih* (“string of prayer beads”) in his right hand one bead at a time, sits with his head crooked to the right and stares blankly out the window. Suddenly, he draws a deep breath and blurts out “Allah Allah” as if he has just come to some realization or awoken from a daydream.

December 16, 2004 Konya

Having stood up for over an hour with my video camera glued to my face, my legs and right arm are starting to cramp up, but I am eager to record every second of this *zikir*, as I am not allowed to document similar ceremonies at the nearby lodge. Given the sacredness of these ritual gatherings and with the laws being as they are, the congregants’ apprehensiveness towards being filmed is quite understandable. My special dispensation comes from the fact that tonight’s *zikir* is being held in a carpet shop. This venue, with piles of carpets and faux-Ottoman paraphernalia lining the walls, is not particularly traditional, especially considering that this is the evening before the Mevlana’s Şeb-i ‘urs, but it is fitting given that most of the congregants are foreign pilgrims and some are even tourists.

This does not mean, however, that tonight’s ceremony is somehow inauthentic or lacking in *tasavvuf*. On the contrary, the *zikir*, performed by many of the same congregants attending the private *zikir*-s at the *dergah* this week, has actually been rather intense. With several *ilahi*-s played on the bağlama lute, the favorite instrument of Turkish folk music, about a dozen different *sema* whirlers, and over an hour of characteristic rhythmic chanting of the name of Allah, the conditions have been ideal for every devotee to achieve a state of ecstasy.

Presently, as the celebrants conclude the ceremony with *görüşmek* (“to meet” or “to converse”), a ritualized greeting in which worshipers arranged in a circular formation exchange a mystical sequence of gestures involving hand kissing and the touching of temples, they begin to engage in religious conversations and merrymaking. One worshiper, eager to try out the *küdüm*, bangs out a quick rhythmic pattern while a few others, parodying the *zikir*, start chanting the word *çay* (“tea”) in a quick, breathy manner. Soon, cups of tea and trays of dates, fruits, *lokum* (“Turkish delight”), and other sweets are passed around. Another congregant, turning a teaspoon in a large glass, comes up to me and says to the camera, “Now is the tea ceremony — tea *zikir*.” As he melts his sugar cubes in the rose tea he lifts his glass up and jokes,

This color of Turkish tea, it’s red. It is the color of love. Hot and red like love. You must come here to drink this tea in order to understand.

Appreciating his blending of enlightenment and tourism propaganda, we both intone the mystical syllable “Hu” and break into a fit of laughter.

### **Modes of Remembrance: On the Various Types of *Zikir***

The five field experiences I describe above, while at first seemingly unconnected, are all united by the practice of *zikir* Allah. A multifaceted concept, *zikir* (Arabic *dhikr*) is usually translated into English as “remembrance” though it refers more precisely to the act of being in continuous awareness of the presence of God. Muhammad Isa Waley’s translation of the term as “anamnesis” or “unforgetting”<sup>267</sup> is preferable, therefore, not only because it is more precise, but also because it is consistent with Sufi practice in

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<sup>267</sup> Muhammad Isa Waley, “Contemplative Disciplines in Early Persian Sufism” in *The Heritage of Sufism*, Vol. 1, *Classical Persian Sufism: From its Origins to Rumi*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999): 507.

Turkey, which, as Dane Kusić points out, makes a clear distinction between *unutmamak* (“to not forget”) and the more general *hatırlamak* (“to remember”) when defining *zikr*.<sup>268</sup> In addition to denoting memory and active consciousness, the concept of *zikr* also encompasses the verbalization of the name of Allah and thus it is also sometimes translated as “invocation” or “pronouncement.” Given the polysemy of the term, it is perhaps not surprising that the anamnesis and invocation of Allah are perpetuated in the Muslim world through a large array of means ranging from signs and bumper stickers to spoken expressions and more formalized rituals, as the ethnographic passages I provided earlier convey.

While some scholars suggest earlier Christian traditions as possible points of origin for the practice of *zikr*,<sup>269</sup> numerous injunctions from both the Koran and Hadith establish it as undeniably Islamic. The Koran in chapter xxi, verse 50 in fact refers to itself as a type of *zikr* (“And this is a blessed message [*zikr*] which We have sent down”) and it devotes many of its pages to stressing the importance of *zikr* in Muslim worship. Sura xvii, verse 44 describes the whole universe as alive with the anamnesis of Allah (“The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare His glory: there is not a thing but celebrates His praise”) and just as chapter xv, *al-Hijr*, describes all the angels in perpetual praise of Allah through *zikr*, so too does chapter xxxiii, verses 41-42 command the same of mankind, “Celebrate the praises of God, and do this often; and

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<sup>268</sup> Dane Kusić, “Discourse on Three *Teravah Namazi*-s in Istanbul” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Maryland Baltimore County, 1996): 53-54.

<sup>269</sup> Trimmingham puts forth a possible connection between the Sufi *zikr* and early Syriac Christianity while Netton draws parallels between Benedictine monasticism and certain rites of the Ni‘matullāhī and Naqshbandī *tarikāt*-s. See J. Spencer Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971): 194 and Ian Richard Netton, *Šūfī Ritual: The Parallel Universe* (London: Curzon Press, 2000), respectively.

glorify Him morning and evening.” Thus, *zikr* is an obligatory act of Muslim worship and devotion that involves both the reading of the Koran<sup>270</sup> and the praising of God.

There are two major types of *zikr* practiced in the Islamic world: *zikr khafi*, performed silently or in a low voice, and *zikr jali*, which is performed aloud. *Zikr khafi*, the “hidden” *zikr* of the heart, involves the silent recitation of passages from the Koran, Hadith, or writings by the one of the master Sufi poets such as the Mevlana, as well as the ninety-nine names of God, or some other recitational formula based on the word “Allah.” This common *zikr* type can be performed at any time and in any context; during prayer, while waiting for a bus, while having a conversation with a friend at a café, or even while listening to or performing music. *Zikr khafi* is typically facilitated by the use of *tespîh*, a circular string of ninety-nine (or one hundred) prayer beads common everywhere in Turkey and the Middle East and especially popular with middle aged and elderly men. Often, *zikr khafi* takes a more contemplative tone through the form of meditation (*murakaba*). The meditative *zikr* entails the mental or whispered pronouncement, perhaps as many as three times per breath, of a recitational formula and is usually performed, either with or without *tespîh*, by means of tense physical motions: eyes firmly shut, mouth closed, and tongue pressed against the roof of the mouth.

*Zikr jali*, or *zikr* proclaimed “vocally” with the tongue, includes the same features, gestures, and recitations as *zikr khafi*, but it is usually more active and is distinguished by the fact that it is performed aloud and comprises all vocal and sonic articulations of the anamnesis of Allah. The simplest and most common form of *zikr jali* includes the vocal exclamations used in common daily speech that invoke the name of Allah to express joy,

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<sup>270</sup> Indicative of the deep connection between *zikr* and the Koran is the tradition maintained by some Muslims in which the entire Koran is committed to and recited from memory. Called a *hafîz* (“guardian” or “protector”), such an individual according to Hadith is considered among the greatest of the *ummah*.

surprise, or disbelief. Such typical exclamations in Arabic include simply “Allah” as well as other common phrases and formulas used in *zikr khafi*: “subhhana ’llah” (“holiness be to God”), “alhamdu li-’llah (“praise be to God”), and “Allhu akbar” (“God is great”). In Turkish this practice may be even more frequent as everyday speech not only makes use of some of these Arabic expressions, but is also replete with a multitude of local idioms including “Allahım” (“my God”), “tanrım” (“my God”), “eyvallah” (“thanks to God”), and the ubiquitous “Allah Allah” with its strong emphasis on the “h” liaison.

The more elaborate forms of *zikr jali* are the full ceremonies and rituals developed especially by the various Sufi *tarikāt*-s. It is these communal forms of *zikr jali* that I concentrate on most deeply in the rest of this chapter. The *zikr* ceremony, with its origins traced by Sufi adherents to the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the Hadith-s, has a long, complex history borne out by its changing etymology. Once known as *sama* ‘ (“audition”), the ceremony came to be termed *hadra* (“presence”) in the nineteenth century and is now more simply and universally named *zikr* after the most distinctive portion of the ceremony in which supplicants incessantly repeat either the name of God or a variety of other mystical syllables and textual formulae while swaying or rocking in a seated position.<sup>271</sup> Some of these rhythmic iterations include “Allahu,” “Hu,” “Allah hayy” (“God lives”), and most distinctively “Lā illāha illa Allāh” (“There is no god but God”), the *tahlil* (“chant”) of *al-tawḥīd* (“unity”) drawn from first line of the *shahādah* (Islamic “creed” or “attestation of faith”).

Although *zikr* ceremonies can vary substantially from one Sufi *tarikāt* to another, and sometimes even between *tekke*-s of the same *tarikāt*, most are organized into two

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<sup>271</sup> Trimmingham, 204.

general sections.<sup>272</sup> The first part involves the recitation of the office (*wird*, *ḥizb*, *waz̄īfa*) of the *tarikāt* and various prayers, while the second, referred to as the *zikr* proper, commences with an opening prayer, known as *fatīha* or the *istiftāh*, and is followed by the rhythmic chanting of the mystical syllables and phrases. Instrumental music, especially for percussion, and hymns and other vocal works may be performed throughout both parts of the *zikr* ceremony by specialists as well as by the worshipers present. The congregation, which performs the *zikr* either in a seated or standing position and may be assembled in a circle or crescent, comprises both men and women who are often segregated by gender, but are sometimes intermingled, particularly on special occasions when the gathering hall is overcrowded.

The *zikr* ceremony is performed by dervishes of virtually all Sufi *tarikāt*-s, save for the Nakṣibendi who normally favor *zikr khafī*, and is the primary form of worship for most Sufi adherents. However, not all *tarikāt*-s celebrate *zikr* in the same way, with some groups gravitating towards certain methods and techniques over others, thereby further extending the already lengthy list of *zikr* types. Some orders are even identified by their idiosyncratic approaches. The Yassawi of Kazakhstan, for instance, are known for their so-called “sawing” or “raspy” *zikr* (*zikr arra*), which is characterized by deep expirations on the syllable “ha” and low aspirations on “hi.”<sup>273</sup> The Rifai and Cerrahi *tarikāt*-s are commonly referred to as the “howling dervishes” on account of their exuberant *zikr* ceremonies featuring loud shouting and other strident interjections, while the Mevlevi are called the “whirling dervishes” because of the characteristic turning of their *sema*.

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 204-05.

<sup>273</sup> Alexander Djumaev, “Sacred Music and Chant in Islamic Central Asia” in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Volume 6, *The Middle East*, ed. by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2002): 943 and Trimmingham, 197.

Such differences in ritual practice notwithstanding, and despite the panoply of *zikr* types I outline above, *zikr* ceremonies performed in the many *tekke*-s and private homes of Turkey today exhibit a melding of styles and approaches. This development is perhaps attributable in part to the Sufi doctrine of union (*al-tawhīd*), but undoubtedly the hostile political climate of the twentieth century and the increasing influence from Sufi groups abroad have had their effects. For instance, many groups have adopted the *sema* whirling of the Mevlevi, just as the Mevlevi now also engage in the rhythmic chanting more typical of the ceremonies of other *tarikāt*-s. Yet the blending of *zikr* forms is not necessarily a recent or exceptional phenomenon. In the traditional Mevlevi *zikr*, the *semazen*-s customarily utter the *tahlil* silently while turning and listening to music. Such merging of *zikr jali* and *zikr khafi* is a common feature of most *zikr* ceremonies, which although distinguished by the vocal and musical anamnesis of Allah also incorporate periods of silent prayer and reflection.

### **Music, Ecstasy, and the *Zikr* Ceremony**

Understanding the exact role of music in the ecstatic Sufi *zikr* ceremony has always been a complicated matter. Early writings on the music of *zikr* lack specificity and are generally limited to the perennial debate over music's lawfulness.<sup>274</sup> Moreover, while Sufi intellectuals have been the greatest exponents of music as a form of worship, among many circles of Islamic mysticism music assumes a rather low station in the *zikr* hierarchy, with the silent *zikr khafi* considered the noble vehicle of the advanced dervish

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid. 195.

and the musical *zikr jali* regarded as the lesser form of the less disciplined community.<sup>275</sup> The preeminence of the Mevlevi *tarikāt* and its engrossing whirling *sema* ceremony too has obscured full comprehension of the Sufi *zikr* ceremony and has likewise generated a rather imperfect view of what actually constitutes Mevlevi music and worship.

While my primary focus in this and the following chapters is not limited strictly to the devotional practices of the Mevlevi brotherhood, but rather extends to those of all devotees of the Mevlana Rumi, including followers of other Sufi *tarikāt*-s and belief systems, my consideration here of the music and movement systems used in *zikr* ceremonies commemorating the Mevlana require some discussion and reassessment of the Mevlevi *zikr* practice. General consensus among scholars is that the Mevlevi do not practice *zikr* in the same communal manner as other *tarikāt*-s.<sup>276</sup> Traditionally, the Mevlevi *zikr* is celebrated by means of the *sema* ceremony, which as described in the previous chapter does not entail the swaying motions and verbal iterations of the more typical Sufi *zikr* ceremony. In addition to affecting the repertory of performed ritual movements and gestures, the question of what constitutes the Mevlevi *zikr* also has many important implications for understanding the Mevlevi musical repertory. As we shall see, Mevlevi musical praxis extends far beyond the *ayin-i şerif* and the corpus of compositions used in the *sema* ceremony that are described in academic literature and other forms of official culture as being akin to Turkish classical music.

Jean During, in an attempt to correct the general impression that all Sufi music is similar to that of the classical Mevlevi repertory, writes in a short essay entitled “What is

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<sup>275</sup> See for instance Netton, 2000, 37-39 for his summary of the Ni‘matullāhī reckoning as well as for a concise discussion of al-Ghazali’s primacy of *fikr* (“contemplation”) over *zikr*.

<sup>276</sup> See for example Binbaş 71-72.

Sufi Music?” that just as there are multiple forms of Sufi poetry, so too is there a broad array of Sufi musical styles.<sup>277</sup> During makes his exploration of Sufi music largely by contrasting the classical music of the Mevlevi *sema* with both the main Sufi *zikr* ceremony and *qawwali* from South Asia. Although his comparison is methodologically problematic, it is nonetheless revealing of some of the basic misconceptions commonly held about Mevlevi music.

During’s main focus is on the *zikr* ceremony, which he asserts is the “Sufi mode of expression par excellence, the exclusive domain of Sufism and the Islamic mystical experience.”<sup>278</sup> Stipulating that the *zikr* “lies at the border between speech and music,” he nevertheless describes the ceremony itself as essentially musical: “the *dhikr*, which possesses both rhythm and pulse but lacks melody[,]...is typified by 1) a repetitive formula; 2) a pulsed or rhythmic articulation; 3) a specific vocal utterance (accentuated breathing, sound produced while breathing, non-articulated sounds, etc.).”<sup>279</sup> Working from the misconception that *qawwali* is more firmly rooted in the *zikr* ceremony than Mevlevi music because it bears many of these features and is not premised on secular classical music, During suggests that the latter has a less obvious “Sufi character” and is less of an “original creation,” thereby implying, regrettably, that it is also less spiritually genuine.<sup>280</sup>

Putting aside the fact that *qawwali* is just as well established in the classical Hindustani musical tradition of North India and Pakistan as Mevlevi music is in the

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<sup>277</sup> During, 1999.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 281.

Turkish courtly repertory,<sup>281</sup> During's critical mistake is the disassociation of the two ceremonial types. It is a common erroneous notion that the Mevlevi *sema* is not equivalent in concept to the ceremonial *zikr* tradition practiced by the broader Sufi community; in fact, the *sema* ceremony is quite simply the Mevlevi variant of the Sufi *zikr* ceremony and is not antithetical to it.

The specious partitioning of the *sema* ceremony from the *zikr* not only frequently creates such red herrings as the question of authenticity, but it has also given rise to the problem of genre classification, a peculiar issue in Middle Eastern music given that emic distinctions are typically quite fluid and Western categories are often inappropriate (see Chapter Six for a more thorough discussion). Although all Sufi music, including that of the two ceremonial *zikr* practices, is classified in Turkey as *Türk Tasavvuf Müziği* (Turkish Sufi music), despite any stylistic differences, that of the Mevlevi is universally described as solely classical in origin and aesthetic. Kusić, in his dissertation, explains the broader typology, but perpetuates the limited understanding of Mevlevi musical practice.

Turkish *tasavvuf* music pertains to and embraces all Sufi musical forms without regard to their 'folk' or 'classical' music provenance. This means that under the umbrella of *tasavvuf* comes all music performed in any Sufi *tarikât*, be it *Şii* or *Sünni*. Thus the music performed in the *Bektaşî* ritual, as well as the music performed in the *Mevlevî dergâh*, are both called the [sic] *tasavvuf* music, although the difference between the two is great: *Bektaşî* music is based on Turkish folk music, with *bağlama* as a musical symbol of the order: *Mevlevî* with *ney* as its symbol, is based on the same structural features as Turkish classical music.<sup>282</sup>

This passage exemplifies one of the greatest lacunae in the study of the Mevlevi order and its music: their common portrayal as urban and courtly rather than also rooted

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<sup>281</sup> Qureshi, 1986, 46.

<sup>282</sup> Kusić, 154.

in folk culture and traditions. While the Mevlevi were well ensconced in the elite structures of the Ottoman Empire for much of its reign, the same is not true for the periods both before and after. As Victoria Holbrook explains,

Some modern generalizing characterizations of the Mevlevî Order classify it as primarily urban and elitist or as catering to an elite. It has been recognized to a limited extent that this was not the Order's primary character during the period of its widest diffusion (late thirteenth through early sixteenth centuries), and recognized to a lesser extent that classification of Turkish culture of Ottoman times as elite vs. popular or "high" vs. "low" has been a function of turn-of-the-century politics, and not always as accurate or productive as once was hoped.<sup>283</sup>

Here music helps to advance this argument considerably for even prior to the twentieth century, when the Mevlevi were forced underground with all the other Sufi *tarikât*-s and began to adopt the *zikr* ceremony more regularly, they mixed freely with Sufis of other orders and were not only well aware of their more folk-based music and rituals, but even contributed to their repertory.

This broader body of Sufi music for the *zikr* ceremony is one largely shared by most of Turkey's Sunni *tarikât*-s, including also the Mevlevi. It comprises a wealth of musical forms extending beyond the *ayin-i şerif*, *taksim*, and other genres of the official Mevlevi *sema* ceremony and features mainly vocal works bearing some degree of influence from Anatolian folk music, though drumming is also common. In addition to such musical or music-like items as recitations from the Koran, readings of Sufi poetry, chanted *dua*-s (prayers), and other responsorial chants and formulas, the general Sufi *zikr* ceremony includes non-metrical vocal types such as the pre-composed *durak* and *miraciye* (ascension poem) and the largely extemporized *gazel* (lyric poem) and *kaside*

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<sup>283</sup> Victoria Holbrook, "Diverse Tastes in the Spiritual Life: Textual Play in the Diffusion of Rumi's Order" in *The Heritage of Sufism*, Vol. 2, *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150-1500)*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999): 107.

(ode). These pieces, though in free meter, are often sung, either communally or as solos, over a rhythmic framework set by the *küdum*, *bendir*, or other percussion.<sup>284</sup> Melodic instruments like the *ney*, *ud*, *keman*, and *bağlama* may also be played in heterophony.

More commonly featured in the *zıkr* ceremony than this assortment of ametrical vocal works are metered *ilahi*-s (hymns), which are set to specific *usul*-s and constitute the most popular devotional genre in Turkish Sufism. Sharing the same linguistic root as the Arabic word for God, the *ilahi* is often translated as “divine” and the practice of hymn singing is itself considered an act of *zıkr*. The term actually has several meanings and is rather loosely applied today, though usually not to the other free meter works, even if their texts fit the typology; this is suggestive of how deeply connected the concept of the divine (*ilahi*) is to rhythm and the rhythmic cycles. Technically, the term *ilahi* denotes a literary form as well as a musical genre, though as Walter Feldman explains the two are not necessarily the same.<sup>285</sup> With respect to the musical *ilahi*, Feldman notes that it is of two types: “the *ilahis* that were sung while the motions of the *zıkr* were being performed, *zıkr-ilahis* (in Turkish no special term exists); and *ilahis* sung at all other occasions, including the other sections of the *zıkr* ceremony.”

The latter category, the so-called “non-*zıkr ilahi*-s,” comprises hymns sung on special religious occasions, namely *tevşih* (“ornamentation”) *ilahi*-s sung on the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad and *cumhur* (“crowd” or “mass”) *ilahi*-s sung communally in chorus, either in unison or in heterophony, by professional singers and connected with the *hıjj*, Mevlit (the Prophet’s nativity), and Ramazan (fast) celebrations. The “*zıkr ilahi*-s,” with devotional texts by such Sufi master poets as Yunus Emre and Hafiz, praise Allah,

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<sup>284</sup> Feldman, 1996, 281.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 1992, 192.

the Prophet Muhammad, and the other prophets and saints and are the archetypical genre of the *zikir* ceremony. Unlike the non-*zikir ilahi*-s, which are frequently set to long, complex *usul* patterns, *zikir ilahi*-s are usually composed in one of two short, binary rhythmic cycles: the common Ottoman *usul düyek* (“one-two” in 8/8; Figure 54) or the simpler and perhaps more ancient *usul sofiyan* (“Sufis” in 4/4; Figure 55).<sup>286</sup>



Figure 54: *Usul Düyek*

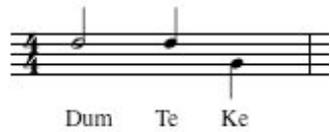


Figure 55: *Usul Sofiyan*

Although *zikir ilahi*-s in longer, more complex *usul*-s are known to have had some limited appeal in the past, as far as I could determine they have fallen completely out of use today.

The *ilahi*-s and other free meter *zikir* vocal works, while not folk music *per se* and technically classified as religious music, have their origins in popular folk forms and are otherwise performed in a folk-like manner. Many of the most common *ilahi*-s in particular exhibit elements typical of Anatolian folk song, including a simple strophic structure, less complicated melodies, and a narrower melodic range than is used in classical music. The hymns developed this folk-like character as early as the late eighteenth century when *ilahi* texts began to be set to melodies similar in character to the

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<sup>286</sup> Feldman 1992, 192.

*türkü* and *şarki*, both folk and popular genres.<sup>287</sup> Today, this style is evident also in the free meter vocal works, especially the extemporized odes and lyric poems.

The general characterization of the Mevlevi as urban, elite, and quite removed from these ritual and musical practices of the other Sufi orders not only sequesters the *ayin* tradition to a spiritual and musical cul-de-sac, it also belies the vitality and expressive dynamism enjoyed by the order both historically and at present. In fact, the Mevlevi have always been free to attend and take part in the ceremonies of other *tarikāt*-s and they have always been key participants in the great musical exchange between the various Sunni brotherhoods that gave birth to the *zikr* musical repertory discussed above. In the nineteenth century, the traditional association of specific *ilahi* and *zikr* types with certain *tarikāt*-s began to disappear and different forms of *zikr* began to be performed successively within a single ceremony.

Yet even prior to this era of consolidation, musical collaboration between the Sufi orders was quite common, with the Mevlevi being among the most active. As Sadettin Nüzhet Ergun describes so well,

A musician attached to the Mevlevi *tarikāt* would compose a piece for a verse Halveti poet, a Sa'di could hear a Celveti work, a Bayrami could hear a Kadiri's *ilahi* with its own tune in the *tekke* to which he belonged. Fundamentally the words, because they were created with an eye for the type of ceremony, were distinguished not according to *tarikāt* but only according to the type of *zikir*. There was no tradition that "this *ilahi* is sung in the Rufai *tekkes*; it is not sung in the Kadiri *tekkes*."<sup>288</sup>

The Mevlevi musician Ergun refers to at the beginning of this passage is Nayi Osman Dede (1652-1730), the patriarch of the great *silsila* of Mevlevi composers (see Chapter

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>288</sup> Translated in Feldman, 1992, 189. For the original see Sadettin Nuzhet Ergun, *Türk Musikisi Antolojisi*, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1943): 124.

Four), and the piece in question is his *miraciye*, described by Feldman as a sort of oratorio on Muhammad's ascension into Paradise.<sup>289</sup> Regarded as one of the most elaborate works of the whole Ottoman period, the free meter *miraciye* was commonly performed by the Halveti and was also preserved by the Mevlevi.

In reality Mevlevi ritual and musical praxis was considerably more flexible and varied than it is usually described. Although classical art music genres are typical of the standard Mevlevi *sema* ceremony, some measure of folk influence is evident in the *son yürük sema 'i* genre that concludes the *ayin* suite.<sup>290</sup> Moreover, the Mevlevi did sometimes celebrate *zıkr* with the singing of *ilahi*-s, even though it was not their usual custom, as Ergun attests.

If it is suitable for the *zıkr*, it was possible to sing some parts of the Mavlavî *âyîn* (*âyîn-i şerîf*), in other *tarîkatâyîn*. In fact, Mavlavî did not sing *ilâhî* (hymns). This was not because they despised the *ilâhîs*, but because of the requirements of their *âyîn*. Moreover, on the special days when *mevlîd* or *mirâciye* was sung, they might invite members of other *tarîkats* and after Mavlavî *samâ'*, they might leave the conduct of the meeting to the oldest *şeyh* (head of a *tarikats*) who is present in that meeting; and they might be allowed to sing hymns and to perform *zıkr-i kıyâmî* (*zıkr* performed standing) or *zıkr-i ku'udî* (*zıkr* performed sitting).<sup>291</sup>

More revealing still is the fact that some later Mevlevi were prolific composers in the song forms of the *zıkr* ceremony; Zekai Dede Efendi (1825-97) alone composed eighty *ilahi*-s and also left behind four *durak*-s.

Perhaps more routinely than they ever did historically, Mevlevi dervishes today continue to attend as well as host ceremonies in which congregants gather around

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<sup>289</sup> Feldman 1996, 95.

<sup>290</sup> See Feldman., 1996, 460-63 and 491 for his theory on this.

<sup>291</sup> Translated in Binbaş, 71. For the original see Ergun, 1, 124.

whirling *semazen-s* to sing *ilahi-s* and *kaside-s* and rhythmically intone the *zikr* formulas. Although these *zikr-s* and genres inexplicably fall outside of the general scope of what is deemed “Mevlevi music,” they have nevertheless essentially replaced the traditional *sema* ceremony as the main vehicle for Mevlevi communal worship. These hybrid *zikr* affairs are held weekly in the *tekke-s* of Konya and at other Mevlevi centers all over Turkey, but are especially popular and more frequent during the Mevlana’s Şeb-i ‘urs when public *sema* ceremonies are also most prevalent. In effect, two concurrent ceremonial forms are in existence in Turkey today in which devotees can remember and honor both Allah and the Mevlana Rumi.

Though parallel in many ways, the *zikr* ceremonies and Mevlevi whirling shows are also quite dissimilar. The cardinal differences all stem from the fact that the official *sema* ceremonies are more standardized and restricted than the private *zikr-s*. Performed by professional, usually conservatory trained, musicians and *semazen-s*, today’s public *sema-s* feature a fixed program of music, a tightly choreographed series of movements, and a rigidly limited window for expressing ecstasy. *Zikr* ceremonies on the other hand are unrestricted trance séances in which both musicians and congregants are free to talk, sing, clap, play music, sit, stand, bow, prostrate, whirl, and move about virtually unfettered. Practically any form of music, including *taksim-s*, *peşrev-s*, *ayin* movements, and folk songs, may be performed at a *zikr* ceremony, though *ilahi-s*, *kaside-s*, *dua-s*, and recitations from the Koran tend to predominate. Both amateur musicians and trained specialists freely intermix during the *zikr* rite and play whatever instruments are at hand according to their ability. Thus, while the “public” *sema-s* are ironically quite confined

events offering little opportunity for communal interaction, the “private” *zikh*-s are paradoxically more open and welcoming.

The more liberal *zikh* atmosphere, though, does not mean that the rites do not have their own proscribed formats, however loose they may be. For instance, the gatherings held at the *dergah* of Nuri Baba in downtown Konya, which I describe in more detail in the following sections of this chapter, abide to the general binary layout described earlier. The first part includes the recitation of the office of the order and perhaps also a few prayers, Koran recitations, blessing, or invocations, either spoken or rendered in heightened speech. This part of the *zikh* gathering can last up to an hour and is usually dominated by the canonical Islamic prayer ritual (*namaz*) and its complex series of bows and prostrations, collectively termed *rekat*-s.<sup>292</sup> While the *namaz* ritual, performed five times daily, is more frequently associated with the mosque, Muslims may execute it anywhere clean and several of my informants explained to me that they preferred to perform it at the *dergah* as opposed to a mosque because it is coupled with the succeeding collective *zikh* experience.

The second half of the *zikh* ceremony, then, comprises the shared *zikh* rite. It usually begins with the communal intonation of the opening prayer (*fatihah*), though sometimes the current presiding *seyh* forgoes this and does not perform it. What ensues after a short pause is an ever-changing succession of *ilahi*-s, *kaside*-s, and other vocal works accompanied always by the *küdum*, and perhaps also a *bendir* and other instruments. The exact sequence of pieces is selected by the musicians present and is sometimes determined by the religious occasion. For instance, during the week of the Mevlana Festival texts by Rumi may be recited or sung. Once a vocal piece begins, the

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<sup>292</sup> See Kusić, 191-96 for a more thorough description.

worshippers gathered, usually seated in a kneeling or cross-legged position, slowly begin to enact the *zīkr* movements, rocking up and down or swaying from right to left. Those who know the hymns may opt to sing along instead of chant. Vocal iterations of “Allah” or the other *zīkr* formulas begin shortly thereafter; rarely have I ever witnessed a *zīkr* ceremony in which the rhythmic chanting either precedes or is done without the music. The accompanying percussion usually continues to play well after the piece has concluded and only ceases once either the congregants have achieved a fevered pitch in their chanting or the *şeyh* or another singer intones a prayer or other song. At this point, the congregation settles briefly before the process is repeated.

This music, in addition to praising Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, or the various saints, also has the core function of facilitating an ecstatic state. Theophony in the *zīkr* ceremony is achieved principally either through the counterclockwise turning of the *sema* or by the rhythmic inhalations and movements of the chanted *zīkr*. The ecstatic state experienced by *semazen*-s generally tends to be more tranquil in nature, though whirlers often describe the episode as emotionally very painful or overwhelming and sometimes break down in tears afterward. *Zīkr* trancing, meanwhile, may result in the worshiper falling to the side in a frenzied fit, shaking and convulsing; resembling what in other traditions across the world is referred to as spirit possession. Although Sufi scholars as well as the trancers I interviewed claim that ecstasy is always involuntary, worshippers do seek it out and actively participate in *zīkr* and *sema* in order to achieve it. This notwithstanding, Shems Friedlander’s account of the process is similar to those described to me by informants.

As one turns, orientation is lost; one loses one's grip on things. Intellect and action become one and existence is without boundaries.<sup>293</sup>

More revealing, though likewise difficult to reconcile with ethnomusicological scholarship on trance, is that a few of my European informants pointed to the repetitive nature of the underlying drumming as the potential trigger of their ecstatic states. This corresponds with Judith Becker's recent observations on the phenomenon.

The assumption that drumming can claim a particularly potent role in triggering trancing has not abated in spite of Rouget's attempts to refute it (Rouget 1985: 172-76). The sheer frequency with which drumming is associated with trancing contributes to the persistence of the belief in a causal connection between the two.<sup>294</sup>

The end of the *zikir* session is signaled by the *şeyh*, who may recite a verse from the Koran or a simple chant glorifying Allah and the Prophet Muhammad before he narrates a litany of praises to the various other saints and holy men of Sufi Islam. The congregants punctuate this lengthy string of names with drawn out "Hu-s" and collective "amin-s." Curiously, the ceremony officially concludes with the communal singing of the *fatiha*, a formula that by definition is actually an opening chant. After a period of contemplation and meditation, congregants normally partake in *sohbet* ("spiritual discourse") and are often offered tea and snacks; on occasion light vegetarian meals may be served and sometimes tea and sweets are also provided before the *zikir* even begins.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Friedlander, 2003, 89.

<sup>294</sup> Becker, 2004, 37. See also Avery, 2004.

<sup>295</sup> The connections between food, music, and *tasavvuf* are numerous. In the Mevlevi *tarikât*, adepts normally served for an extended period in the kitchen of a *tekke* while learning *sema* and repeating *zikir*. This practice corresponds to a famous verse by the Mevlana regarding spiritual development: "I was raw, then cooked, and now I am burnt." See Friedlander, 2003, 115. In addition, as Feldman, 1992, 191 explains, music and *sema* are often described as food for the soul and the word *neva* not only denotes food, but also is the name of a popular *makam*. However, the current convention of communal food sharing after *zikir* runs contrary to the practice described by al-Ghazali in the eleventh century: "After audition some of them dispense with food for days on account of the nourishment of their spirits and hearts with

In the atmosphere of boisterous conviviality after the last *fatiha*, musicians often play *taksim*-s or sing more *ilahi*-s or folk songs on the bağlama. No mere divertimenti, however, congregants often spontaneously turn these into short *zikir* séances that then require another formal conclusion involving a recitation from the Koran or the *fatiha*. Though the *zikir* rite usually lasts around an hour, a full gathering occupies the whole evening and on occasions such as that of the Mevlana's Şeb-i 'urs it may go on past 11:00 p.m. or even until midnight.

### **Ethnography of a *Zikir* Gathering**

December 16, 2004 Konya

Closing the gate behind me and quickly making my way across the courtyard, I can hear that the congregants gathered inside the building at the far end have already begun the *zikir* ceremony. The rhythmic chanting of their faint voices and the muffled thunder of the kudüm fill the air as I pass the small structure containing the tomb of Hacı Abdullah Horasani, a thirteenth century devotee of the Mevlana. I enter the adjacent main building, eager to escape the bitter evening cold, and am immediately enveloped by the din of the ceremony and the comforting warm, moist air of the *dergah* of Nuri Baba. Knowing how hot it gets in the ceremony hall over the course of the *zikir*, I find a free spot on the long coat rack in the foyer and hang up four of my five layers of clothing.

I have a hard time, however, finding space for my old beat up shoes as the floor underneath is strewn with hundreds of sundry pieces of footwear. Most people spend lengthy portions of the day outside traveling to and fro on dirty sidewalks and streets, and

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unseen mystical experiences (*wāridāt*).” See James Robson, *Tracts on Listening to Music* (London, 1938): 112-13.

as prayer and eating are usually done on the floor, it is no minor custom in Islamic culture to remove shoes before entering a home or holy place; rather it is an important act of respect and hygiene. I cast my shoes in the pile, not too concerned about finding them later, and enter the rectangular room to the left, where a sea of Mevlana devotees on the rich, deep blue carpet slowly begins to ebb and flow in communal movement.

With well over a hundred congregants gathered in the small room this evening, it is difficult to find a seat, but I eventually manage a spot at the front, on the left near the door. Located in the maze of streets behind the shrine of the Mevlana in central Konya, the *dergah* is particularly popular with foreign visitors, especially Sufi pilgrims from Mevlevi and other international *tarikats* like the Nakşibendi and Chishti who come to Konya in December for the Mevlana's Şeb-i 'urs. In addition, a few tourists and other transients, alternatively referred to as either "spiritual window shoppers" or "cosmic wanderers" by some of my more cynical non-Sufi informants, invariably find their way here, usually as guests of one of the many friends of the *dergah*. This year, large numbers of Persian and Latvian pilgrims have joined the usual Turkish, European, and North American crowds. A few Israelis, an Australian backpacker or two, a couple of international freelance journalists, and a French anthropologist fill out the rest.

During *zikr* gatherings, the room is often divided into two unequal halves by a white curtain located next to a stove furnace off to my right. Drawing the curtain across the room allows for the creation of a smaller, private space in which women can perform ritual worship in the back. Although unseen by the men, their presence is usually heard through their very active participation in the *zikr*, which involves not only exuberant chanting and singing, but also instrument playing. With so many participants tonight,

however, gender segregation is impractical and women and men are freely intermixed throughout.

On the far wall, no longer shrouded by the curtain, a bookcase loaded with Korans, prayer books, sheet music, and musical instruments—bendir-s, tef-s, and a kudüm set—normally used by the women is visible. A long-neck bağlama, also known as the saz, hangs next to the shelves, and lined all along the walls are dozens of picture frames containing posters of Mecca and Arabic calligraphy. From the ceiling above, two spiraling florescent light bulbs covered by circular white plates decorated with flowers light up the room. In the corner opposite me, a small table bearing a portrait of the Mevlana Rumi and various other religious items functions as a sort of altar. Seated on cushions on either side is a contingent of high-level male Turkish dervishes, including Ali Baba, successor to the beloved Hacı Nuri Baba Effendi who served as *şeyh* of the *dergah* until he passed away in 1998.

Bowing respectfully to Ali Baba, I take my seat next to the musicians who line the wall to the right of the makeshift altar, below two windows opening out into the courtyard. The number of instrumentalists and singers performing during a *zikir* changes from one evening to the next and is dependent on whoever is willing and able. Anyone in the congregation wishing to sing or play is also always welcome to sit with the *mutrib*-s if they choose. Tonight, an exceptionally large ensemble of various singers and instrumentalists has formed, including three ney players, three keman (violin) players, and three percussionist-singers playing tef, bendir, and kudüm. The singers often sing into a microphone, which despite the local tendency toward secrecy, is usually put on the

echo setting, making the vocal timbre reminiscent of the call to prayer that travels and reverberates through the city streets.

Performing from memory and a combination of sheet music and published books of poetry and prayers, the musicians and *şeyh* lead a ceremony consisting of various recitations from the Koran, prayers, poetry readings, responsorial chants, instrumental solos, and sung hymns, the order of which is only sometimes loosely predetermined. Ritual gatherings at the *dergah* are normally held on Saturdays beginning at 7:00 p.m., though with this being Mevlana week, *zıkr*-s are being hosted every evening. Like most of the other foreign and non-Muslim congregants, I chose to come to the *dergah* a bit later this evening as other scheduled festival events have kept me otherwise occupied, and normally the first hour is reserved for contemplation and standard *namaz* (“Islamic ritual worship”).

Still, I am rather surprised to find so many celebrants here before 8:00 p.m. and the *zıkr* already under way. Many more arrive at the *dergah* over the course of the evening, with perhaps as many as one hundred and fifty to two hundred people packing into the small, hot hall at the height of the ceremony. Presently, only the *kudüm* and *bendir* are playing at the end of what began as a communally sung *ilahi*. Moving their heads vigorously from side to side and repeating the word “Allah” and such variants as “Hallah Hallah,” “Ya-llah,” “Hu,” “Ho,” and “Hey,” the seated congregants with closed eyes eagerly work themselves into a fit of ecstasy. Within a few moments, however, the *kudüm* player pounds out a few steady repeated strokes, signaling all to slow down and cease, though the *bendir* player ignores this and continues playing a highly charged, galloping rhythm until all the congregants have joined in a long, sustained “Hu” drone.

After a brief pause for contemplation, one of the singers begins to recite a passage from the Koran, which blares out of the speakers located at the back of the hall by the stove. A few of the worshipers have taken up a posture of serenity after touching their foreheads to the ground, kneeling with eyes closed, their heads drooping to the right as their right hands hover over their hearts. Most, however, continue to blurt out “Hu” and “Allah” or talk with their neighbors. By the end of the Koran recitation, nearly all have calmed down and returned to a more sober state, joining the *şeyh* for a communal response based on the *fatıha*.

After a couple of minutes of coughing, contemplation, and prayer, the musicians begin another hymn, accompanied heterophonically by the ney and rhythmically by the kudüm, bendir, and tef. Ready for more, the congregants familiar with the hymn sing along until the text settles into a flowing “Allahu” and one excited celebrant screams out a quick “Allahu,” prompting all to engage in the *zıkr* more forcefully and coalesce into a steady chanting of the name of Allah. Over the course of the performance, the enthusiastic bendir player has increased the speed of the hymn slowly so that now at the purely rhythmic passage following the *ilahi*, the tempo of the percussion accompanying the chanting congregants is noticeably quicker than it was at the beginning. After a few moments of this heavy trance section, the bendir and kudüm fade out weakly, though most worshipers continue steadily into a third hymn.

The new hymn commences as a vocal solo in free rhythm, with the “Allah-s” uttered by the congregants between the verses of the plaintive melody blending in seamlessly with the timbre of the singer’s voice echoing from the speakers. Shortly after the worshipers have calmed down again, however, the kudüm lightly beats out a four-

beat pattern and suddenly the entire congregation joins in, accompanied by the ney, several bendir-s, and a tef. The percussion and chanting celebrants continue in communal ecstasy uninterrupted for quite some time, even as the hymn eventually gives way to an ode in praise of Allah sung by a different singer. As the rhythms and tempi quicken and intensify, the congregants become ever more agitated and involved, and at one point a lengthy call and response passage based on the mystical phrase “Lā illāha illa Allāh” (“There is no god but God”) ensues among the worshipers. One of the female dervishes is even moved to stand up and perform *sema*, though there is little room on the floor for all those dressed in full white tunics and felt conical hats to do the same; at less crowded *zīkr*-s as many as eight or twelve *semazen*-s will take to the floor.

This lengthy and intense rhythmic segment continues unbroken for almost fifteen minutes, long after the ode has come and gone. Normally, such stretches of drumming and chanting are allowed to go on for even longer, with the *zīkr* reaching a fevered pitch before the worshipers are returned to a more passive state. However, as there are so many people present and there has already been an incident in which one of the Iranian pilgrims fainted tonight, the *şeyh* and musicians are careful to keep things under some restraint.

The *zīkr* concludes with a reading from the Koran and a very long recited litany of praises to Allah, Hacı Nuri Baba, and the many other saints and holy figures important to various *tarikāt*-s, including Hacı Bektaş Veli and Şams Tabrizi, all of whom receive a bow and short “Hu” as a show of respect. The Mevlana Celal ed-Din Rumi, however, receives the deepest bow and the longest and most low-pitched and profound “Hu” of all. A few celebrants maintain a continuous “Hu” droning throughout the whole of the litany.

After a short communal respond in which Allah and Muhammad are praised, the congregation gives way to solemn contemplation and then unabated chatter and communal sharing of food. As usual, tea and fruits are served on circular plastic floral print tablecloths spread out on the floor. A faint ney improvisation floats through the air as celebrants eat and engage in religious discussions. Suddenly, an emphatic, prolonged *zikir* based on the *tahlil* emerges from the ney *taksim*; evidently, the congregants were not satisfied with the short, half hour *zikir* and are keen to extend communal worship well into the evening. After only a few minutes, however, profound “Hu-s,” “*amin*-s,” and the *fatiha* bring the gathering to an early end as the elderly *şeyh* is tired and must prepare for the commemorations of the Mevlana’s Şeb-i ‘urs the next day.

Most linger a bit longer, finishing up their discussions and waiting for the crowds to disperse. I am invited by several of the congregants to another *zikir* gathering that will shortly be held at a carpet shop; clearly many are not ready to call it an early night. On the way out, I ironically locate my shoes right away, but have more difficulty finding my coat and sweaters.

### **Arcs of Ascent and Descent: Analysis of a *Zikir* Ceremony**

As evident in the account above, the concept of motion permeates throughout the Sufi *zikir* ceremony. Participants are impelled by their devotional convictions and desires for ecstatic oneness to be in constant movement, even as various structural conventions and other ritual forces require periods of relative stasis. Ultimately, therefore, the *zikir* aesthetic of motion is not so much one of perpetual progression, as in a straight line, but one of incremental forward and backward and up and down movement, best

conceptualized and represented by three curved geometric shapes each loaded with deep theological and semiotic meaning: the circle, the spiral, and especially the arc or crescent. These designs are manifest in the conceptualization and enactment of the most rudimentary performative elements of the *zikr*, such as in physical gestures, vocal iterations, volume, rhythm, and tempo, as well as in the overall structure of the whole gathering.

On both the microscopic and macroscopic levels, the movement aesthetics of the *zikr* ceremony are less tied to melodic modulation than in the *sema* ceremony (see Chapter Four). Though change of *makam* does occur between the various vocal works sung in the *zikr*, it is neither as extensive nor as elaborate as in the *sema* ritual; nor is this form of musical motion as symbolically meaningful or consistently performed in the *zikr* gatherings. The distinction is attributable in part to the spontaneous nature of the *zikr* sessions as well as to the limited technical training and amateur status of the musicians, who place greater emphasis on rhythmic movement and the intensification of tempo and volume. My analysis therefore focuses on these elements and not on melody and mode.

It is in such elemental features as well as in the general overall ebb and flow of sung pieces that the geometrical curves and arches of the *zikr* ceremony are most apparent. While Pacholczyk raises some important reservations about interpreting such shapes and mandalas in music, pointing out that there is rarely any hard, direct evidence that can corroborate such analyses,<sup>296</sup> both he and Yürür, nevertheless, have made convincing arguments for their application to musical structure and tempo.<sup>297</sup> Indeed, such interpretations often come from Sufis themselves; Sufi literature on music is replete

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<sup>296</sup> Pacholczyk, "Music and Astronomy in the Muslim World," 150.

<sup>297</sup> See *Ibid.*, *Sufyana Musiqi* and Yürür, 1989.

with metaphorical interpolations based on geometry, numerology, and other forms of symbolism, as mystics tend to find or impose meaning on everything. In his writings on the movements of the *zikr* ceremony, for instance, al-Ghazali, the foremost Sufi scholar of the eleventh century, describes three main physical forms of worship—dancing, whirling, and jumping—in figurative terms.

The dancing is a reference to the circling of the spirit round the cycle of existing things.... The whirling is a reference to the spirit's standing with Allah in its inner nature (*sirr*) and being (*wujūd*).... And his leaping up is a reference to his being drawn from the human station to the unitive station.<sup>298</sup>

In essence, the three movements are correlated to the circle, the spiral, and the arc of ascent.

Modern scholars vary somewhat from al-Ghazali in their taxonomies of the positions and movements used during the *zikr* ritual. Walter Feldman, without drawing parallels to the sacred geometries, likewise identifies three main types of *zikr* postures, but his list includes standing, whirling, and sitting or kneeling as the primary methods of worship.<sup>299</sup> Traditionally, a *zikr* gathering would normally feature just one of these *zikr* forms, as determined by the customs of the hosting *tarikat*. Today, however, a greater degree of variety and blending is more common.

In the *zikr* ceremonies held at the *dergah* of Nuri Baba, for instance, all three of Feldman's primary *zikr* postures are possible, though some are more frequently featured than others. The whirling *zikr*, performed by way of the circling and spiraling *sema*, has special significance in the *dergah* and is the ideal method of *zikr* performance. Its frequency, however, is limited both by the size of the gathering hall and by the

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<sup>298</sup> See Robson, 99-100.

<sup>299</sup> Feldman, 1992, 196-97.

availability of whirlers, as not all dervishes learn to perform *sema*. In the ceremony described in the previous section, the hall was full to capacity and there was only enough room for a few whirlers to take turns and briefly perform *sema*, even though many had dressed in the traditional Mevlevi *semazen* tunic. On more regular occasions, up to a dozen congregants will perform the whirling *zikr*, usually one at a time and dressed in street clothes, though all permutations are possible. A *zikr* gathering without *sema* is considered lacking, and at those times when there are no expert whirlers in attendance, even the most poorly trained adept is allowed to take the floor or, barring that, it may be that one of the musicians will temporarily have to stop playing or singing in order to render the *sema*, the physical movement taking precedence over the music.

Of Feldman's tripartite listing, the standing *zikr* is the least common at the *dergah* because it is the least active, and it is performed by some only out of necessity, such as on occasions when the prayer hall is overcrowded and there is not enough room for all those in attendance to assume the other two postures. The standing *zikr* is normally performed in an erect, stationary position and is more appropriate for individual, meditative worship than for the communal gatherings usually held at the *dergah*. In the ceremony I described earlier, those congregants who were forced to stand along the walls or by the entrance to the gathering hall were never immobile for long and instead swayed about rhythmically and enacted a repetitive sequence of bows, in effect performing a more upright variant of the kneeling or sitting *zikr*.

This third *zikr* posture is the one most commonly performed at the *dergah* and is the one I concentrate on in this section. Although the seated *zikr* is less overtly symbolic than the circling and spiraling *sema*, a more thorough analysis of the specific movement

motives reveals a wealth of symbolism not explored by Feldman in his taxonomy. The typical posture assumed by the Turkish and other Asian congregants and musicians is that of kneeling, with the hands resting on the legs; Westerners, finding this position uncomfortable after a few minutes, usually sit with their legs crossed. Only the elderly *şeyh* ever sits leaning against the wall with one knee up, as this gesture is otherwise considered improper. The kneeling position is regarded as the most appropriate for *zikr* because it is also part of the sequence of movements of the canonical *namaz* and is thereby connected to the important Islamic act of prostration.

Although prostration is not an element of the sitting or kneeling *zikr*, congregants do bow repeated as they rhythmically chant the standard *zikr* formulas, and this simple act of bowing is endowed with the most complex layers of Sufi mystical symbolism. By bowing downward, supplicants not only humble themselves before God, they also enact the sacred geometrical shape of the arc of descent. This arc represents the divine act of creation and the means by which God reveals Himself to mankind and the physical world. The complementary upward motion, by contrast, represents the arc of ascent, the path on which humanity travels in its ultimate quest for unity with Allah.

The upward return to the seated position is also highly symbolic in that it has the added meaning of resisting or even defying the physical world and is further connected to the concept of negation in other ways. In Turkey and the Middle East, as well as in Bulgaria, “no” is conceived of as a word that must move in an upward direction, as indicated by a variety of common gestures: a deliberate lifting of the chin, a quick raising of the eyebrows, an up and down nod, or a shucking sound created by raising and pressing the tongue against the roof of the mouth and clicking. Any combination of these

can be used, with or without a verbal declaration of the word for “no” (*hayır* in Turkish, *lā* in Arabic). Such negation is also implicit in the motions of the seated *zikr*, which is performed so that an upward movement of the torso or head is tied directly to either the “-lah” of “Allah” or the first syllable of the *tahlil*, the “Lā illāha illa Allāh” (“There is no god but God”) formula. In addition, the up and down motions of the seated *zikr* taken together correspond to the compound Arabic letter لآ (ل + آ), pronounced *lā*, and thus the gesture is interpreted as 1) a physical defiance of terrestrial existence, 2) an embodiment of the concept of not-forgetting, and 3) an active reaffirmation of *al-tawhīd*, the unity and monotheism of the One God.

The circle and spiral too are important geometrical symbols manifest in the physical gestures of the seated *zikr*. The union of the arcs of descent and ascent naturally generates a complete circle and inspires the repetitive up and down nature of the *zikr*, making it ultimately a ritual of cyclical gestures. In addition, circularity is also obvious in the way that congregants usually sit on the floor of the prayer hall in a large circle (*halka*) and sometimes move their heads in circular motions while their torsos continue to bow repeatedly. In fact, a careful study of the physical gestures made by congregants, especially during the most intense periods of the *zikr*, additionally reveals a variety of spiraling movements formed by the head, limbs, and torso. Heavy trancers in particular often vary their up and down motions with front to back and side to side movements, embodying the Sufi doctrine of the six directions of human motion as they swing, twist, and thrash about widely and sometimes violently.

The concept of motion and the sacred geometries, in addition to being enacted physically through the postures and gestures of the seated *zikr*, are also evident in the way

that vocal utterances undergo a general process of contraction over the course of a vocal piece and in the way that such other elements as volume, tempo, and rhythm become incrementally more intense. For the vocalized facets of the *zikr*, Jean During identifies an overall pattern in which spoken, chanted, and sung material becomes progressively shorter in length as the ceremony advances; a process he describes as circular and mandalic in nature.

The unfolding of most *dhikr* can be represented by a series of concentric circles starting with the largest and culminating with the smallest, that is, the center. The *dhikr* begins as long, articulated, sung phrases (wird), but these are followed by shorter and shorter phrases. The final *dhikr* is no longer articulated and no longer has contrasting differentiated parts. It is reduced to a unity—a breath—as a circle can ultimately be reduced to a point. Thus it is no longer a rhythmic cycle of six, four, or two periods but a simple, pulsating point. Dervishes can be said to have reached the center when they no longer need the material assistance of the *dhikr* but are submerged in an empowering supernatural force.<sup>300</sup>

Although During's interpretation is more suggestive of a spiral rather than a circle and while what he describes does not agree fully with the ceremonies I studied—for instance, *illahi*-s and other vocal pieces of more or less equal length are sung throughout, creating very clearly differentiated sections in the ceremony—his principal is useful and applicable in a general way.

It is on the more microscopic level that During's notion of cyclicism is most evident in the *zikr* ceremonies I studied and it is especially clear in the repeated iterations of the vocal phrases pronounced by the congregants. Even the chanting of the *tahlil*, the longest and most complex of all the formulas, follows this principle, as it is recited repeatedly all in one breath. Here, a circular pattern consisting of the arcs of ascent and descent emerges as the negative first half of the formula (“Lā illāha”) is exhaled in an

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<sup>300</sup> During, 2002, 185.

upward motion, while the positive affirmation of the One God (“illa Allāh”) is inhaled and pulled forcefully downward. Yet this circular concept goes only so far, as the spiral design ultimately prevails, particularly when the practice of vocal contraction is taken into account. Over the course of the ceremony, it is common for congregants, especially as they move deeper and deeper into an ecstatic state, for the chanted phrases they recite to shorten in length. The common “Allahu,” for instance, reduces to “Hu,” “Allah hayy” becomes either “Allah” or “hayy,” and the *tahlil* moves from “Lā illāha illa Allāh” to simply “Allah.”

This pattern of verbal contraction occurs in conjunction with a gradual intensification of volume, rhythm, and tempo both over the course of an individual song as well as throughout a whole ceremony. In the ceremony I described in the previous section, each of the vocal pieces is initially accompanied by the chanted formulas in a low whisper and by soft to moderately loud percussion. The extemporized ode, for instance, though in free meter, is accompanied in the beginning by faint, tentative strokes on the kudüm and, eventually, by the light murmurs of the “Allah hayy” formula. By the middle and most clearly at the end of the ode and during the succeeding long drumming passage, when the *zīkr* formulas no longer compete with the sung text, the whispers give way to emphatic chanting as well as to shouts and screams, while the kudüm, now joined by the battery of bendir-s, thunders away in a vigorous fortissimo.

This pattern of dynamics is typical not only of all *kasīde*-s, *ilahi*-s, and other individual sung forms, but of the gathering overall, which begins with quiet, introspective *namaz*, moves into the recitation of the office and other prayers, and culminates in the boisterous *zīkr* before attenuating in a period of contemplation and then social

conviviality. This general outline, however, reveals neither a spiral, nor even a circle, but ultimately a series of arcs or crescents. Thus, while each vocal work may increase in volume as it segues into its extended percussive coda, suggesting perhaps a linear or spiraling trajectory, the obligatory cadence into a quieter period for contemplation afterwards indicates instead the sacred geometrical shape of the arc, by which the supplicant not only rises toward God but also descends to the physical world. Even in the case of the *zīkr* formulas, it is not uncommon for congregants, once they have spiraled through enough of one formula, to begin reciting another and thereby initiate a new process of contraction, creating in effect a series of smaller arcs within the larger arc of the vocal piece.

This concept of the arc is borne out in yet other elements of the ritual as well. With respect to rhythm, for instance, although the aspirated or chanted *zīkr* formulas and underlying rhythmic framework of the *zīkr* ceremony are invariably described by scholars as performed simply by means of a repeating ostinato or rhythmic mode,<sup>301</sup> common *zīkr* praxis reveals that the aesthetic is more complicated and is not based on literal or strict cyclicism. Considerable rhythmic variety is evident not only over the course of an entire ceremony, but even in the performance of a single vocal piece, as the process of contracting the *zīkr* formulas results in the iteration of various patterns that can differ greatly from the shifting rhythmic cycles performed by the accompanying percussionists. During the intense *kasīde* discussed previously, for example, the rhythms of the contracting “Allah hayy” performed by the congregants are not the same as the cycles

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<sup>301</sup> See for instance Ali Jihad Racy, “Overview of Music in the Mashriq,” in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Volume 6, *The Middle East*, ed. by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2002): 543.

performed by the kudüm player, who likewise seems to prefer rhythmic variety (compare Figures 56 and 57).

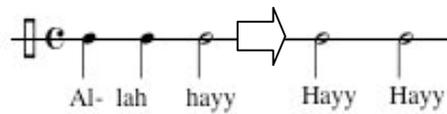


Figure 56: Rhythmic Contraction of the “Allah Hayy” Formula

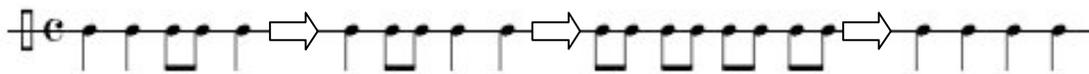


Figure 57: Changes in Kudüm Rhythmic Cycles

Thus, while the rhythmic patterns may be cyclically reiterated, the overall sensibility reveals that the cycle or circle is less of an all-pervading concept than is usually assumed.

In fact, when the rhythmic aspects of the *zikr* are studied in conjunction with tempo, their natural counterpart, the overriding importance of the arc once again predominates. The gradual acceleration of rhythms over the course of a vocal piece can often be quite dramatic, particularly as they are embodied through the motions of ritual worship. The greatest fluctuations in speed are usually exhibited in the vocal works at the beginning of a *zikr* ceremony, with tempo doublings from  $\downarrow = 60$  to  $\downarrow = 120$  being not uncommon. Less dramatic, though still quite perceptible, are tempo variations occurring in works sung later, when the rate of intensification is already high. In the case of our later free meter ode, the kudüm player, urged on by the pulsations of the chanting congregants, gradually accelerates from  $\downarrow = 116$  to  $\downarrow = 120$ , then to  $\downarrow = 132$ , culminating in  $\downarrow = 138$  before very quickly decelerating to the end. As the tempo quickens, the rhythmic patterns, dynamics, vocal iterations, and physical gestures all intensify, creating

what is perceived as an ascendant trajectory that must then descend and attenuate. As Feldman articulates,

In the *zikr*...time is continually emphasized by changes of tempo, both acceleration and deceleration. The *zikr* must always give the impression of organic life—moving, flowing, and even reversing itself. Although the *ilāhīler* of some parts of the *zikr* may have certain fixed sequences, the ideal is never cyclical (as it is in the *fasıl* or *ayīn*). Rather, the *zākirbaşı* and the *shaykh* continually alter the order and constitution of the particular hymns in accordance with the perception of the spiritual moment (*ān*).<sup>302</sup>

In essence, the whole of the *zikr* ceremony is comprised of a series of rising and falling arcs within which the other sacred geometrical designs, the circle and spiral, are also embedded. The overall arching scheme is made all the more prominent by the alternation of vocal pieces like the *kasıde*, the *ilahi*, and other works generally connected with the arc of ascent with prayers and recitations from the Koran, which are associated with the arc of descent. As Feldman again observes,

In terms of musical semantics, the *zikr* may be seen as the opposite of the Qur'ānic *tecvit* (Arabic, *tajwīd*), which represents the word of Allah descending to man. The *tecvit* conveys timelessness, represented by the nonmetrical flowing rhythm.... The *zikr*, by contrast, is mankind's response to Allah: mankind seeks to imitate the worship of the angels by continually affirming the existence of Allah both through words and through circumambulation of his throne (*'ars*)....<sup>303</sup>

Thus, as this chapter demonstrated, it is through the undulating ebbs and flows of the *zikr* ceremony that faithful celebrants both praise Allah and commemorate the Mevlana Rumi. As careful analysis demonstrates, this ritual of communal anamnesis is based on the fundamental doctrine and aesthetic of motion, which is manifest through the sacred geometric shapes of the circle, the spiral, and most significantly the arcs of ascent

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<sup>302</sup> Feldman, 2002, 192.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 192.

and descent at all levels from the most broad scale aspect of overall form to the most minute details of music and ritual gesture.

What this chapter further reveals is that devotional worship of the Mevlana is neither restricted ritually or musically to the archetypical forms preserved today by the Turkish state, nor limited only to affiliates of the Mevlevi order. Rather, even the most private of ceremonies is celebrated by initiates of diverse *tarikats* as well as by followers of virtually every faith in the world. The music, which serves as the main vehicle of communal worship, is also more variegated than is usually acknowledged, and even draws from repertoires previously thought to be unrelated. To fully understand the current renewal of Mevlana culture, therefore, old paradigms of what constitutes the music of the cult of the Mevlana need to be reconsidered and expanded.

Thus, in the following two chapters my focus becomes increasingly less centered on “Mevlevi music” *per se* than on music for the Mevlana. My more comprehensive approach allows for the inclusion and evaluation of other forms of music that normally fall outside the scope of traditional scholarship and uncovers an even richer world of musical and devotional expression than I have described until now. Before turning to the great variety of non-Turkish musics used in devotional contexts in Chapter Seven, I explore at length in the following chapter a wide range of popular musical forms that too set out to honor the Mevlana Celal ed-Din Rumi.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **SOUNDS LIKE SUFI SPIRIT: THE MEVLANA IN POPULAR MUSIC AND CULTURE**

This chapter, divided into eight sections, traces the religious and musical events that have given rise to various Sufi popular music scenes now emergent in Turkey and elsewhere across the world. It describes the way in which specifically the Mevlana and the religious practices of his devotees have been absorbed into popular music and culture both locally in Turkey and globally in places like the United States, Western Europe, India, and Pakistan. I put forward the premise that the development of Sufi popular musical forms has in part helped to promote Sufism in Turkey and has stimulated its growth there despite the official law that prohibits its existence as a living religion.

To this end, I begin with a short anecdote illustrating the fact that popular musical expressions of Sufism can be found even in the least likely of places in Turkey, in this instance at a supermarket where I purchased a CD of music I analyze a little later in the chapter. In the second section, I step back a bit so as to both outline the development of popular music in general in Turkey and to consider some of the major issues surrounding the establishment of a specifically Sufi meta-genre of popular music. Having laid out this foundation, I concentrate in the rest of the chapter on various popular styles that have been rather receptive to Sufi themes. My discussion delves first into three non-Turkish popular forms that have been mutually influential and have also served as precursors of and catalysts for the genesis of Turkish forms of Sufi popular music, which I analyze in detail at the end of the chapter.

Thus, in the third section, I explore the rise in popularity of the New Age spiritual movement and explain how Sufi, particularly Mevlevi, doctrines and practices have been incorporated into New Age religious tenets and music. Subsequently, I discuss the case of Madonna, who brought greater exposure of both Sufi and New Age themes to Western popular culture through her music. In the fifth section, I survey the development of Sufi popular music in South Asia as yet a third forerunner to the nascent Sufi popular scene in Turkey, which I explore in terms of Turkish rock music in the sixth section and Turkish techno electronica in the seventh section. In the eighth and final section of this chapter, I address the principal questions of authenticity, legitimacy, and intentionality that all of these popular forms engender in Turkey.

### **Sufi Spirituality at the Supermarket**

January 18, 2005      Bornova, İzmir

Getting off the crowded city bus, I notice that it is a crisp, but sunny winter afternoon as I walk briskly along the edge of the Ege (Aegean) University campus to the nearby Kipa, the Turkish equivalent of the American retail giant Wal-Mart. I have been invited to have dinner with a college-aged friend and his roommates at their place tonight and am picking up a few things before I head over there. My backpack is already full of CDs and recordings I have collected during my travels throughout Turkey and the Levant, but as such dinners often turn into late night music sharing parties, I decide to see if there is anything new I can buy at the music store just beyond the Kipa checkout lines.

I spend some time flipping through recordings of Turkish and international pop, finding the prices here more off-putting than those at the bootleg CD stalls close to the

Bornova city center. In the unmarked religious music section, though, next to recordings of Ottoman-era Mevlevi music and among the images of the Mevlana, whirling dervishes, and *neyzan*-s all wrapped in pre-shrunk plastic, I find a peculiar CD entitled *Mevlevî-Sufî Relaxation: Mental Journey*. On the cover, amid the mural-art imagery of colorful tropical birds, waterfalls, and rainforests, the white italic script reads: “Authentic sound recordings from the naturel [*sic*] world and a Mevlevî-Sufî Tradition music composed on this background.” Not knowing what to expect, I buy it along with several other commercial recordings of Mevlevi music and make my way to my friend’s apartment just after sunset.

As expected, dinner eventually gives way to a night of talking and listening to music on my friend’s laptop computer. His roommates are especially interested in the VCDs of Arabic pop music I had bought in Syria, finding the blending of traditional Arabic and “modern” Western elements particularly viable and intriguing. The New Age elements on *Mevlevî-Sufî Relaxation*, however, raise a number of disapproving eyebrows. They scoff at the thought of undertaking any sort of “mental journey” with the ney improvisations and electronic samples of natural sounds on this recording and instead praise the more “authentic” ney *taksim*-s on my new classical Mevlevi CDs. As we sit on the floor having this conversation, eating sunflower seeds and downloading mp3 files from the Internet well into the night, I am reminded in an odd sort of way of some of the *sohbet* discussions about spirituality, music, and authenticity I have just recently had with devotees of the Mevlana at the *zikr* gatherings in Konya.

## Towards a Sufi Popular Music in Turkey

This chapter is among only a very few Western academic works that has to date dealt with Turkish popular music in any extended way.<sup>304</sup> Given the scope of this study, however, my focus here must necessarily be limited to manifestations of Sufism and the Mevlana Rumi in Turkish popular music and culture and cannot hope to document even a fraction of the enormous development that has occurred in the Turkish commercial music industry since the 1990s. In addition, while this study is the first to investigate Sufi popular music cross-culturally as a specific typology or meta-genre, its focus is likewise concentrated on those elements pertinent to the dissertation and those broached in the anecdote above; namely to traditional aesthetics such as motion and to issues of authenticity and intentionality.

This chapter is limited yet further by the fact that, unlike in South Asia where the synthesis of traditional *qawwali* music with Bollywood film music, international pop, and rock and roll in the past few decades has given birth to several new musical styles, a distinct genre of Sufi popular music has yet to form in Turkey.<sup>305</sup> What I describe as Turkish Sufi popular music encompasses that of only a few artists who work neither in one distinct style nor in collaboration with one another. Sometimes, an artist may produce only a single piece of music that could be considered part of this typology.

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<sup>304</sup> See Martin Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate: Music and Musicians in Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Alev Cinar, "Cartel: Travels of German-Turkish Rap Music," *Middle East Report* 211 (1999): 43-44; Feza Tansuğ, "Turkish Popular Music: The Political Economy of Change" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Maryland, 1999).

<sup>305</sup> The bard-like *aşık*-s of the Anatolian countryside, whose music has strong affinities to Alevi Sufism, both sonically and morally, would be likely contenders, but this tradition is generally subsumed within the broader category of folk music, and, indeed at present, it bears little influence from those commercial forces that govern international popular music-culture. See Yildiray Erdener, *The Song Contests of Turkish Minstrels: Improvised Poetry Sung to Traditional Music* (New York: Garland, 1995) for a more detailed discussion of this tradition.

Furthermore, the artists discussed in this chapter may not necessarily subscribe to Sufi Islam, nor do the Sufi communities of Turkey embrace them as their own or legitimate such music.

Another important factor to consider is that the Western categorization of music into such groupings as classical, folk, or popular is a concept foreign to West Asia.<sup>306</sup> Even when such distinctions are recognized, artists generally do not neatly fit under them. Moreover, they routinely violate the market-generated definitions by performing in several different styles or combining multiple genres in a single song. Yet, because of Turkey's extensive program of Westernization in the 1920s, such classifications have not only been adopted, they proliferate in great multitudes. One reckoning includes no fewer than thirty genres of Turkish music including such "popular" styles as "popular Turkish art music" (*Hafif Türk Sanat Müziği*), "Turkish kanto" (*Türkçe Kantolar*), "tavern music" (*Fantazi-Taverna Müziği*), "arabesque" (*Türk Arabesk Müzik*), "pop-arabesque" (*Türk Pop-Arabesk Müzik*), "tango Türk" (*Tango Türk*), "Turkish jazz-blues" (*Türkçe Jazz-Blues*), "Turkish hip hop" (*Türkçe Rap Müzik*), "Turkish pop music" (*Türk Pop Müziği*), "Turkish rock music" (*Türk Rock Müziği*), "Turkish pop-rock" (*Türk Pop-Rock Müziği*), "Anatolian rock music" (*Anadolu Rock Müziği*), "Turkish independent music" (*Özgün Müzik*), and "Turkish alternative music" (*Türk Alternatif Müzikleri*).<sup>307</sup> Missing from this listing are the many varieties of electronic dance music (collectively referred to as *Elektronik Müziği* and *Tekno Müziği*) found in the bars, nightclubs and dance halls of İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, and elsewhere.

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<sup>306</sup> See, for instance, Virginia Danielson, *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997): 14.

<sup>307</sup> "Music of Turkey," *About, Inc. AllExperts Encyclopedia*, accessed September 17, 2006 <[http://experts.about.com/e/m/mu/Music\\_of\\_Turkey.htm](http://experts.about.com/e/m/mu/Music_of_Turkey.htm)>.

Such diversity makes evident the very long and dynamic history of Western-oriented popular music in Turkey, which began nearly a century ago. Already in the 1920s, during Atatürk's great push for Westernization, European and American orchestras and gramophone recordings popularized the Argentine tango in Turkey. Increasingly after the 1930s, indigenous Turkish popular musical styles of urban theaters, taverns, and clubs (*gazino-s*) began either to succumb to the influence of such foreign popular styles or to compete with them for audiences. In the 1950s, for instance, film music imported from Egypt and Lebanon and rockabilly and other forms of "light Western music" (*Hafif Batı Müziği*) like rhythm and blues, tin pan alley, and jazz from the United States stimulated the development of both new indigenous and hybrid popular musical forms in the following decade.

The origins of Turkish popular music are, thus, generally traceable to the 1960s when artists first became more independent of foreign dominance, creating original versions of non-Turkish popular musics or adapting folk and classical idioms into the imported forms.<sup>308</sup> Arabesk and Anadolu rock both emerged in this era, and continued to dominate Turkish popular culture on and off for the next fifty years. However, Turkey remained open to developments in international pop throughout the second half of the twentieth century. French chanson was widely adopted in the 1960s, as was American psychedelic rock. In the 1970s and 1980s, Anglo-American punk rock and its many offspring, as well as international pop, initiated the development of homespun Turkish pop and pop-rock music; Sezen Aksu, who successfully integrated traditional music with these new forms, is widely regarded as the most influential figure in Turkish popular

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<sup>308</sup> Tansuğ, 79.

music history.<sup>309</sup> American alternative rock and American and Turkish-German hip hop arrived in the 1990s and, along with Arabesk, continue to dominate the markets today. Electronic dance music (techno) and world music also came in the late 1990s and early 2000s and have a more modest, but growing following.

Given so much activity and variety, it is perhaps surprising that popular expressions of Mevlevism or other sects of Sufi Islam have not yet coalesced into a uniquely independent musical genre. There are, however, a number of factors that can account for this anomaly. First of all, the absence of a vibrant Sufi pop music scene can be attributed in no small part to Turkey's staunchly secularist policies and to the ambiguous legality of Sufi orders in the country. In addition, although Turkish folk and classical musics have been fully reconciled with the musical aesthetics of the largely Western-dominated international popular genres, generating some truly exceptional works in various popular styles including rock, rap, and dance hall music, the same cannot be said of Turkish religious music,<sup>310</sup> which has generally eschewed such hybridization.

Despite these obstacles and caveats, there is today such renewed fascination in Sufism in general and the Mevlana in specific that a rather modest Turkish Sufi popular music scene is now in evidence. Such music is a small, but growing aspect of a larger spiritual movement that has enabled Mevlevism to be thoroughly inculcated in the popular culture of Turkey and elsewhere. Since the mid-1990s Mevlevism, perhaps in

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 55 and 123-32.

<sup>310</sup> This is particularly ironic given that Turkey is one of only a few nations in West Asia that has adapted Western musical typologies and officially recognizes such a category as "Turkish religious music" (*Dini Türk Müziği*), which is further subdivided into "mosque music" (*Cami Müziği* and *Tekke Müziği*) and "Sufi music" (*Türk Tasavvuf Müziği*).

spite of outdated legal directives, has become manifest in a variety of media including books for academic as well as general readership, documentaries, posters, and audio recordings of Mevlevi classical music. That Mevlevi music, whether classical, New Age, or popular, can be bought in a supermarket, at music stores, and on the Internet is an indicator of the scope and quotidian appeal of this phenomenon.

The ultimate expression of this, however, comes in the ironic way that the Mevlevi have come to represent the Turkish nation-state itself (see Chapter Four for a more extended discussion). One clear, albeit rather extreme, instance of this new Turkish national identity as symbolized by the Mevlevi whirling dervish within the context of Turkish popular music is a recording entitled *Turkish Hits Vol. 3*. Evidently a Russian-made compilation of some of the most beloved chart-busting Turkish pop songs of 2002, the CD is meant to present both the modernity and exoticism of contemporary Turkey. The front cover features a silhouette of the famous Sultan Ahmet Mosque and a giant, reddish image of a barely clad woman, wearing only a bra, go-go boots, and a pair of underwear that she is removing while pouting her lips in a kiss. The image is repeated twice behind the first image in faded gradations, implying quick motion or perhaps a sort of belly dance. The back cover features a track listing and a variant of the front cover: it depicts five dervishes whirling in a laser light show and five reproductions of the female figure from the front cover, superimposed over the dervishes.

As far as I am aware, none of the tracks on the disc have anything to do with either the Mevlevi or even Sufism. Musically, the eighteen songs are essentially dance hall hits featuring especially clear “Turkish” (*alatürka*) musical elements: ornamented vocal style, traditional Arabo-Turkic instruments, non-Western tunings, *makam*-like

melodic formulae, shifting rhythmic patterns and/or irregular meters, and some Arabic language expressions such as “aman” and “vallah.”

A more explicit example of the nationalist tinge that Mevlevism takes in the realm of popular music comes from Sertab Erener (b. 1964), a protégé of Sezen Aksu and one of the great divas of Turkish pop music. After unsuccessful attempts in 1989 and 1990 in the Turkish finals, Erener went on to represent Turkey at the Eurovision Song Festival in Riga, Latvia in 2003, ultimately winning the international competition with the song “Everyway That I Can.” As a result of her victory, İstanbul was selected to host the Festival the following year. Presiding over an expanded two-day affair, Turkey firmly established its reputation in the world of European commercial pop music by introducing a number of innovations for the contest, including the first broadcasting in digital high definition (DHD) format, the first releasing of the entire contest on digital video disc (DVD), and the use of the new standard logo in which the host nation’s flag is graphically set within a heart.<sup>311</sup>

Erener, as the previous winner, was invited to perform onstage at the competition in İstanbul, a practice imitated by winners in the following years. Bearing a striking resemblance to Madonna at the performance, Erener presented a medley comprising her winning song and the more operatic “Leave,” both of which she released on her fourth all-English album *No Boundaries* (2003). At the 2004 İstanbul performance, the raucous presentation of “Everyway That I Can,” complete with belly dancing, soon gave way to a

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<sup>311</sup> “Eurovision Song Contest 2004,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, modified April 15, 2007, accessed April 20, 2007 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurovision\\_Song\\_Contest\\_2004](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurovision_Song_Contest_2004)>. Turkey’s musical influence is further evidenced by the 2005 Kiev contest in which the entry by the United Kingdom’s Javine (“Touch My Fire”) made prominent use of *alatürka* musical traits. Additionally, Elena Papparizou’s “My Number One,” which clinched the first-ever victory for Greece that year, also relies on broader “Ottoman” musical influences.

more contemplative atmosphere appropriate for the dance Erener wanted for “Leave.” The act, which welcomed the audience to Turkey, called for a large troupe of female whirlers dressed in the traditional white, male Mevlevi dervish attire—generally females are required to wear more colorful gowns—to begin turning at Erener’s dramatic sustained high note introduction to the chorus.

Although the spiritual and devotional nature of the performance may be in question, the song text is not so obviously that of a secular love song as it may at first seem. The original 1999 Turkish version of “Leave” was entitled “Aşk,” a term, which as I have discussed previously, refers both to love in general, as well as to the Sufi concept of mystical or universal love.<sup>312</sup> In addition, the lyrics for the chorus and second verse of the English version performed in İstanbul center on travel and motion, which I argue are important in Sufi aesthetics.

Leave.../Hold your head high/You know men don’t cry/Don’t look back now  
Leave.../Hold your head high/Heavens may cry/You can’t look back now

So.../Go see the world/I’ll keep my heart/In a shell like a pearl/  
I’ll wait/For someone who deserves/And takes me as I am

These lyrics, referring to the heavens, pearls, and elsewhere to the natural elements,<sup>313</sup> are suggestive of several of famous poems attributed to the Mevlana, especially “Come, come, whoever you are” and “There is some kiss we want with our whole lives.”

The musical setting of the text, which requires the singer to transverse several octaves, is less clearly indebted to Mevlevi influence than to Western pop, orchestral

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<sup>312</sup> In 1999, Sertab Erener also recorded the song as a duet with popular Greek singer Mando. The lyrics were rewritten to alternate between Turkish and Greek, and the song was given the hybrid Turkish-Greek name of “Aşk/Fos” (“Love/Light”).

<sup>313</sup> In other versions the lyrics of the chorus are rearranged to include the phrase “like rain on fire.”

music, and even hip hop. Nevertheless it retains some *alatürka* features, including the prominent use of such classical instrumentation as the kanun and ud, which in Turkey are sometimes directly associated with the Mevlevi (see the discussion in Chapter Four on the common conflation of Ottoman and Mevlevi musical traditions). Yet even without more overt references to traditional Mevlevi music, there is in all of the theatrics of soaring vocals and sweeping orchestral strings an obvious assertion of nationalism with respect to Mevlevism by way of its most distinctive element, the elegant whirling.

Although it may be easy to condemn *Turkish Hits Vol. 3* or Sertab Erener's flagrant appropriations of sacred symbology, these examples clearly illustrate the new Mevlevi-Turkish iconicity. In addition, like *Mevlevî-Sufi Relaxation*, they perhaps also satisfy a niche market desire for a Turkish popular variant of Mevlevi music that is only now beginning to materialize. Such developments in nationalism and popular culture may yet continue to invigorate the nascent Sufi popular musical scene, but whether this will prove to be a true movement in Turkey or fizzle like any other fad depends on any number of political, economic, and religious factors.

### **The Mevlana in the New Age**

The longevity of Sufi-influenced Turkish popular music, both in Turkey and internationally, may ultimately hinge not so much on one-off pop offerings like those described above as on the more long-term association of mystical Islam with the New Age movement. In fact, the tourist appeal and perhaps overall resurgence of the Mevlana and the Mevlevi order discussed in previous chapters come in part because of sustained interest and support of New Age adherents who purchase tickets to whirling shows and

frequent the *zikr*-s of İstanbul and Konya. It is in this New Age context, therefore, that the existing cases of Turkish Sufi popular music are often understood or even created.

The term “New Age,” coined by the mass media in the 1980s, is used to clump together several disparate and diffuse belief systems that are typically ineffable by their nature.<sup>314</sup> In short, the label applies to the widespread adoption in the West of a syncretic blend of scientific, psychological, Judeo-Christian, and non-Judeo-Christian spiritual beliefs and practices, what Lewis terms “unchurched spirituality.”<sup>315</sup> One common New Age belief is in the power of holistic medicine, crystals, sacred rocks, and/or meditation to restore physical and mental balance or heal illness. More radical followers accept the existence of crop circles and extraterrestrial beings. The majority of New Age principles, however, are attributed to Native American religions and more mainstream belief systems as Buddhism, Hinduism, and the mystical branches of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Sufi elements that are especially prevalent include the doctrine of mystical love (*aşk*), the use of numerology and mystical symbolism, and the notion of cosmic holism (*al-tawhīd*)—that humanity, all life, and the universe are interconnected through spiritual energy.

Although the popularization of New Age spirituality has more immediate roots in the countercultural and musical trends that swept through the West in the late 1960s, its origins are traceable to the nineteenth century and, in fact, are partially built on centuries of Western orientalist fascination with the poems of the Mevlana and the *sema* of the Mevlevi. George Gurdjieff (c. 1872-1949), an émigré from the collapsing Ottoman Empire, was among the first to generate mass interest in Sufism in the West, specifically

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<sup>314</sup> For a more thorough history of the New Age movement see J. Gordon Melton, “A History of the New Age Movement” in *Not Necessarily the New Age: Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Basil (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988): 35-53.

<sup>315</sup> Lewis, 513.

in France, Britain, and the U.S. in the 1920s, by adapting the teachings of the Mevlana and the *sema* of the Mevlevi. Numbered among Gurdjieff's disciples were architect Frank Lloyd Wright, novelist Christopher Isherwood, and Alfred Orage (1873-1934), editor of the British journal *New Age*, which ran from 1894-1938 and featured numerous articles on psychology and spiritualism.<sup>316</sup>

The well-traveled Idries Shah (1924-96) moved from India to London in the 1960s to succeed Gurdjieff and others in the further promotion of Sufism in the West. Grounded in the writings of the Mevlana, Shah's unorthodox interpretation of Sufism, which he argued predated the Koran and which he sought to make more universalist in nature, proved to be especially resilient in the West; his books, which he published through his own Octagon Press, sold over fifteen million copies in twelve different languages.<sup>317</sup> Shah was especially influential on the countercultural youth of the 1960s and, according to Lewis, "played an important role in the later canonization of Rumi as one of the patron saints of New Age spirituality during the 1980s and 1990s."<sup>318</sup> Indeed, the Mevlana's position within the New Age pantheon was already apparent by the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death in 1973, as young people eagerly espoused the great dervish in the anti-materialist spirit that spread across the West.

One such admirer was Reshad Feild (b. Richard Timothy Feild), a former member of the folk music trio The Springfields. With a mandate from Şeyh Süleyman Dede of Konya, who made him a Mevlevi *şeyh* in Los Angeles in 1976, Feild firmly established the Mevlevi *sema* in the West, popularizing it further by admitting participation by both

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 514.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid., 515.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 517.

women and non-Muslims. Feild eventually went on to develop his own non-Islamic philosophy, heavily indebted to the teachings of the Mevlana, and formed what is today the Mevlana Foundation in Colorado and the Turning Society based in Vancouver.

Gurdjieff, Shah, and Feild can be counted among the leading figures of New Age spirituality and are responsible, at least in part, for popularizing the Mevlana and the Mevlevi in the West, though only Feild was actually a Mevlevi; the others were initiates of the Nakşibendi order. Lewis suggests that in the West “the popularity of Sufism has perhaps now eclipsed the Indophilic spirituality of the 1960s.”<sup>319</sup> Yet, it must be asserted that the New Age movement is a popular *global* phenomenon and that the increased interest in the Mevlana and the Mevlevi is not limited to the Western world.

Even in Turkey, not only have the Mevlana and his whirling dervishes regained public interest, but also other New Age spiritual influences are now widely in evidence. The reading of tarot cards, for instance, is currently extremely popular in Turkey,<sup>320</sup> while books on Ayurveda and yoga classes are widely available. Turkish markets and outdoor bazaars, ever the consumer’s paradise, are virtual New Age shops filled with such paraphernalia as scented candles, incense, moon and sun wall hangings, beads, wind chimes, rain sticks, djembe-s, and the like. Such wares can be purchased even in the most out-of-the-way of places. At the indoor bazaar in the far eastern border town of

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 519.

<sup>320</sup> While shopping for a Christmas party at the Kipa retail store in Bornova, İzmir in December, 2004, I found, to my great surprise, a seasonal sale on Rider-Waite tarot cards. Being somewhat of an adept reader and keen on owning Turkish-language cards, I bought a set. Within days, word had somehow spread, and I found myself inexplicably holding regular reading sessions for both friends and complete strangers alike. The practice of reading tarot for profit, however, seems to have been outlawed in the reforms of 1925. The resurgence in tarot’s popularity recently became an issue for the courts, when a prosecutor filed charges against fourteen popular cafés for offering “free” fortune-telling sessions with the purchase of tea or coffee. The practice apparently drew in “large numbers of customers.” See, “Coffee-Serving Fortune-Tellers Draw Turkish Judiciary’s Ire,” *Kathimerini: English Edition*, December 8, 2005, accessed September 28, 2006 <[http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/news/world\\_\\_KathiLev&xml/&aspKath/world.asp?fdate=08/12/2005](http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/news/world__KathiLev&xml/&aspKath/world.asp?fdate=08/12/2005)>.

Doğubeyazıt, for example, I encountered a painting of a Native American flutist amid an array of New Age items (see Figure 58) and once on a trip from İzmir to İstanbul, perhaps somewhere outside of Balıkesir, the bus I was on made a rest stop at a remote up-market store that sold largely teak statues of the Buddha, candles, and CDs of Mevlevi music, as Madonna's *Ray of Light* lingered on in the background.



Figure 58: Painting of a Native American Flute Player (Doğubeyazıt, November 19, 2004)

As these examples intimate, music plays an important role in New Age spirituality, or at least in its commodification. On the other hand, they also reveal the inconsistent and sometimes contradictory nature of New Age music. Like the movement itself, New Age music intentionally resists easy definition. “Indeterminacy,” as Dennis Hall explains, “is what New Age music is all about. Meaning and cultural utility are

deliberately left up to the listener, to be constructed, as the occasion warrants....”<sup>321</sup>

Nevertheless, contemporary New Age music is recognizable by a loose set of aesthetic criteria, which Hall itemizes and argues are reflective of the values of postmodernity.<sup>322</sup>

Thus, New Age music “seeks to confuse...the distinctions among elite, popular, and folk cultures,” is “eclectic” and “aggressively multicultural,” entails “playfulness,” “irony,” and “quotation,” and is “at once anti-intellectual in its stance yet devoted to learning, [and] opening up esoteric [knowledge].”<sup>323</sup>

More specifically, as Susan Grove Hall highlights, New Age music often seeks to be natural or to represent or recreate a feeling of nature by way of being “relaxing, calming, and meditative.”<sup>324</sup> This aspect of the music combines environmentalism and alternative healing, two of the most widely accepted precepts of New Age spirituality. Ironically, nature is typically invoked through the least natural of compositional and performative methods. Contemporary New Age music is largely electronic, making regular use of digitized sound samples and synthesized instrumental timbres, and it is rarely performed live. The sense of naturalness, however, is achieved, especially in live performance, through heavy reliance on such “spontaneous” features as improvisation, variation, and ornamentation.

Another important aspect of New Age music is its pretense towards universality. Programmatic instrumental music, devoid of such communicative barriers as language,

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<sup>321</sup> Dennis Hall, “New Age Music: A Voice of Liminality in Postmodern Popular Culture” in *Popular Music and Society* 18, No. 2 (1994): 17.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>324</sup> Susan Grove Hall, “New Age Music: An Analysis of Ecstasy” in *Popular Music and Society* 18, No. 2 (1994): 23.

predominates. Vocal music is generally based on either vocables or short passages of text in an obscure or mutually unintelligible language. The practice of using polyphonic vocal choirs, often electronically synthesized, ascribed to Christian and Tibetan Buddhist tradition and is evocative of generic spirituality as well as timelessness or antiquity. Although New Age music is largely in a Western musical idiom, so-called “world music” and various ethnic, non-Western musical traditions contribute significantly to its sound, to the point where New Age and world music are grouped together in retail music stores and catalogues. Didgeridoos, non-Western flutes, ud-s, sitar-s, tabla, frame drums, and djembe-s, often in combination, are especially common. Among the genres frequently subsumed under the umbrella of New Age and world music are Sufi forms like *qawwali* and music for Sufi whirling, i.e. Mevlevi music.

One unique contribution of Sufism to New Age spirituality is that of dance, which is of growing importance in part because of its meditative quality, but perhaps also because it provides ritual structure to New Age Sufi gatherings. While the rocking motions of seated *zikr* are not uncommon, the whirling *sema*, alternatively referred to as “Sufi dance,” “dervish dance,” or “meditative dance,”<sup>325</sup> is perhaps the most widely adopted form of New Age ritual movement. Besides Reshad Feild, the popularization of *sema* and its offshoots in New Age spiritual gatherings in the West can be attributed to Samuel L. Lewis (1896-1971), also known as Sufi Ahmed Murad Chisti, Mushrid (“exalted teacher”), or “Sufi Sam.” Lewis formed his own Sufi community in San Francisco in 1966 and developed a cycle of over five hundred spiritual meditative dances known as the Dances of Universal Peace. Based on the Mevlevi *sema*, they are performed usually to guitar and drum music and have grown to incorporate gestures from

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid., 519.

other world dance traditions. These accretions, sometimes considered unusual, have earned the practitioners the label of “goofy Sufis,”<sup>326</sup> though whirling remains a distinctive feature. The dances, despite its detractors, are today performed worldwide in a variety of contexts,<sup>327</sup> though they retain their Sufi connections.<sup>328</sup>

Thus, aside from their immediate “Ottoman” or “Turkish” associations, the Mevlana, the *sema*, and traditional Mevlevi music are most widely known in this context of popular New Age spirituality, with its focus on meditation and healing, universal brotherhood, and love. Such an association seems to be developing even in Turkey. For example, *Mevlevî-Sufî Relaxation: Mental Journey* (2004), despite its English title, was produced for the Turkish market. On the inside jacket—which is in a distinctive shade of green—, beneath a small, slightly blurry picture of whirling dervishes, are five quotations of poems by the Mevlana about nature in Turkish. Bulleted by octagons decorated with the name of Muhammad in symmetrical calligraphy, these verses are not lyrics, but are meant for contemplation, for all of the tracks on the disc are instrumental.

The three pieces on the recording have programmatic Turkish titles meant to evoke a spiritual journey, ironically, through the same natural world that the Mevlana taught to abandon. The first, *Açılış (Opening)*, establishes a sacred atmosphere and comprises three movements: *Gölgeler (Shadows)*, *Yakarış (Prayer)* and *Devr-i Alem (Turning of the Universe)*. It commences with a sample of roaring wind and the sound of rain and thunder. Synthesizers and the steady, subtle beating of a bendir soon follow

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid., 519.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid., 518.

<sup>328</sup> The Dances of Universal Peace, for instance, were among the scheduled activities of the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Ozark Sufi Camp, held in Missouri in October 2006. Other highlights of the program included *zikr*, meditation, a sweat lodge, and “dervish healing service.”

introducing an extended improvisation on the ney by an anonymous player. All three pieces are, in effect, quasi-metered *taksim*-s for ney accompanied prominently by the sound of birds and ocean waves.

The second track, *Sana Dođru (Truth To You)*, draws on the Sufi aesthetic of motion in the titles of its three movements: *Kervan (Caravan)*, *Yollar (Paths)*, and *Semadan Toprađa (From the Sema to the Earth)*. Aside from many modulations through various *makam*-s, no other steps are taken to sonically invoke a sense of motion and the piece is virtually identical in character to the previous; the sound of wind, thunder, chirping birds, and pouring water again accompanies the ney and bendir. The only addition is that of a synthesized, vibrato polyphonic sample suggestive of an angelic choir, which is the sole indicator of the possible sacredness of the ney's modal wanderings. *Okyanusa Dođru (Straight to the Ocean)* in two movements, *Dalgalar (Waves)* and *Yakamoz (Phosphorescence in the Sea)*, concludes the meditative journey in imagined mystical rapture, although it lacks the intensifying and climactic character of either a *zikr* ceremony or even a performance of classical Mevlevi music. Despite how different the music on this disc is from traditional forms, it proved successful enough for a second volume, based on themes of love and water, to be released in 2006.

Typical of New Age music, these recordings are not easily classifiable. While they draw on the *taksim* tradition, a Turkish listener would be hard pressed to consider them classical Mevlevi music. Likewise, the lack of text in some ways precludes them from being *tasavvuf* music, despite their spiritual intentions. Neither are they popular music *per se*, although it is in this context that they are best understood. As I will argue, New Age musical aesthetics have been highly influential in the development of Sufi-

based popular music and in the mass popularization of the Mevlana, especially in the West.

At the heart of the Mevlana's adoption into New Age music in the West is American poet Coleman Barks, professor emeritus from the University of Georgia. In 1976, Barks began his own "translations" of the Mevlana's writings, finding earlier scholarly English editions to be spiritually lacking.<sup>329</sup> Although Barks does not know Farsi and works from previous translations, his evocative renditions of the Mevlana's poetry, nevertheless, are wildly esteemed and have helped to make the Mevlana the best-selling poet in the United States.<sup>330</sup> An important part of this success is the aggressive method of distribution that involved Barks himself giving readings of his translations either in person, for which he traveled widely to universities, Sufi gatherings, and elsewhere, or on commercially released recordings.

Barks typically performed his recitations to music. As Lewis observes, Barks argued "that the musical rendition of poetry is the typical performance mode in most indigenous cultures...[and that]...it is most appropriate in the case of Rumi."<sup>331</sup> Yet, as Lewis again notes, rarely do these performances and recordings make use of culturally appropriate Turkish or Persian music or instrumentation.<sup>332</sup> Barks and his imitators turned instead to the New Age and world music fusion sounds that now characterize non-Western spirituality in the popular music industry. Barks, thus, traveled with New Age musicians and released several cassettes and CDs that featured a New Age backdrop

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<sup>329</sup> Barks, 1976; 1993; 1995; 2002; and 2003.

<sup>330</sup> Alexandra Marks, "Persian Poet Top Seller in America," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 25, 1997.

<sup>331</sup> Lewis, 591.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, 626.

consisting of atmospheric drones and instrumental improvisations. The earliest of these recordings is perhaps *Open Secret: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Living* (1987), which features flute and violin. Following Barks's lead, a host of other artists, poets, and translators have undertaken similar recording projects, and since the late-1990s the New Age market has been inundated by Mevlana related CDs, with at least one released every year.

Thus, in 1997, in commemoration of the 790<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Mevlana, Koorosh Angali released *Koorosh Angali Recites Rumi, Volume I*, in which his Farsi readings of the Mevlana's verses are accompanied by santur and synthesized orchestral drones. In the same year, *Vision II: Spirit of Rumi* was released, following on the heels of the surprising commercial success of *Vision: The Music of Hildegard von Bingen* (1994) and the *Chant* (1994) album of the Benedictine monks of Santo Domingo de Silos.<sup>333</sup> On the cover of *Vision II*, surrounded by a border of crescent moons and five-pointed stars, is a painting of a whirling dervish in a spotlight, suggestive of spiritual enlightenment. The eleven tracks on the CD have such programmatic titles as "Seek In Your Heart," "Ocean," "Breath," "Desert Dusk," "Great Mystery," and "Center," which, like "Don't Go Back to Sleep" and its reprise, is symmetrically arranged on the recording. The New Age/dance hall music on the disc by Australian composer Graeme Revell makes use of such unusual instrumentation as zurna, duduk, and uilleann pipes, and features Pakistani *qawwali* singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan on three tracks, Israeli singer Noa performing a Hebrew translation of a poem by the Mevlana, and ethnomusicologist Ali Jihad Racy on flute.

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<sup>333</sup> Taylor, 1997.

The translations of Coleman Barks, in particular, have given rise to many similar New Age musical settings many times over and prove to be the most enduring. Thus, on his *The Breeze at Dawn: The Poems of Rumi in Song* (1999) composer Dale Zola arranged Barks's translations for voice and a bewildering array of instruments including accordion, didgeridoo, string quartet, and gamelan-like chimes in a panoply of styles such as tango, Spanish ballad, and country-western. In 2002, Barry and Shelley Phillips composed music for cello, Celtic harp, and various wind instruments for their *What Was Said to the Rose: Rumi*, on which Barks can again be heard reading his own paraphrases of the Mevlana. Most recently, Ramananda issued *Secret Language: Rumi, A Celebration in Song* (2004) with music for keyboard and bansuri, again based on Barks's translations.

Several other translators have also seen their editions of the Mevlana's poetry set to New Age music. In *The Soul Wakes: Rumi in Song* (2004) Michael London turns to Jonathan Star and Kabir Helminski, as well as to Barks, for texts for his music, which includes in its instrumentation guitar, guitar synthesizer, flute, clarinet, saxophone, Tibetan bells, and shakuhachi. Nader Khalili's translations were used for recitation over flute, saxophone, cello, cimbalon, Bulgarian tambura, tabla, and other percussion by Sura Charlier on *Rumi: Fountain of Fire* (1999) and again by Hamoon Tehrani on *True Love Rumi* (2006). In addition, Seyyed Hossein Nasr made translations that he recited over music directed by Turkish *neyzen* Süleyman Ergüner on the album *Lament of the Reed* (2001).

Undoubtedly the most successful translator outside of Coleman Barks in the New Age market is Indian endocrinologist and New Age spiritual healer Deepak Chopra.

According to Franklin Lewis,<sup>334</sup> Chopra, in February 1996, “ostensibly overwhelmed with emotion” when a woman performed an “ecstatic dervish dance” as he recited an English translation of a Mevlana poem by one Fereydoun Kia, decided on the spot to undertake his own rather liberal translation project of the “love poems” of the Mevlana.<sup>335</sup> Shortly thereafter, Chopra released a long, thirty-six track CD entitled *A Gift of Love* (1998), which featured Chopra and a throng of A-list Hollywood stars reciting his versions of the Mevlana’s writings over a jazz and world music influenced New Age soundtrack composed by Adam Plack and Yaron Fuchs. Madonna led the way with her contemplative reading of “Bittersweet.” Others narrators include Demi Moore with her chill rendition of “Do You Love Me,” Martin Sheen with his funk-based “Caught in the Fire of Love,” Goldie Hawn with her more serious reading of “The Meaning of Love” over flute improvisations, and civil rights activist Rosa Parks with her inspirational “Looking for Love.”

The album was an enormous commercial success and charted on *Billboard’s Top 20 List*. Clothing designer Donna Karan used the recording as the backdrop for a fashion show introducing her Mevlana-inspired fall lineup.<sup>336</sup> Several of the songs were even redone for the dance hall, with the remix of Demi Moore’s “Do You Love Me” by Eddie Baez being especially popular with disc jockeys at New York nightclubs. Because of its overwhelming popularity, Chopra released *A Gift of Love II: Oceans of Ecstasy* in 2002, a smaller, though racier, collection of poems by Tagore as recited by Lisa Bonet, Marisa

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<sup>334</sup> Lewis, 602.

<sup>335</sup> Deepak Chopra, *Love Poems of Rumi*, (New York: Harmony Books, 1998).

<sup>336</sup> Robin Givhan, *Washington Post*, April 6, 1998, D1.

Tomei, Sinead O'Connor, Antonio Banderas, Melanie Griffith, Angelica Houston, and several others.

### **Our Lady of Mysticism: Madonna and the Mevlana**

In many ways, Madonna (b. Madonna Louise Ciccone) was also an important catalyst of this Mevlana craze that developed in Western elite culture in the 1990s. She was among the first Western pop artists not only to be deeply moved by the Mevlana and the practices of his devotees, but also to make use of Mevlevi themes in Western-oriented popular music. In early October 1993, while on her worldwide “Girlie Show Tour,” Madonna performed in both Tel Aviv (October 4) and İstanbul (October 7). Although orthodox Jews staged an unsuccessful campaign to cancel her first-ever performance in Israel, her inaugural Turkish concert, for which some 54,000 tickets were sold, proved to be more positive and may be the biggest popular music event ever mounted in Turkey.<sup>337</sup> Her Middle East performances appear to have left a similarly weighty impression on the singer, for Madonna subsequently came under the spell of Islamic as well as Jewish mysticism, though I have not been able to confirm definitively that she attended a whirling show during her visit to İstanbul.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Umut Mert and Fatih Melek, “MadonnaTürk Ahmet San’la Görüştü,” *MadonnaTurk.com*, January 2006, accessed September 26, 2006 <<http://www.madonnaturk.com/roportaj/ahmetsan.html>>.

<sup>338</sup> Yildirim suggests that Madonna did witness a Mevlevi performance, perhaps in Galata, while in Turkey, despite her demanding concert schedule and the fact that she had just missed the festivities for the Mevlana’s birthday (on September 30) the week before. Email communication, Ali Yildirim, September 25, 2006. See also his Yildirim’s extensive website on Turkish music *Tarkan DeLuxe: Turkish Music and Artists*, May 16, 2004, accessed September 25, 2006 <<http://tarkandeluxe.blogspot.com/2004/05/turkish-music-and-artists.html>>. According to one report, Ahmet San, Tarkan’s former manager, not only brought Madonna to İstanbul, but gave her an extended tour of the city, which more than likely included some form of Mevlevi presentation. See Umut Mert and Fatih Melek, 2006.

Exactly one year later, in the wake of both her world tour and the controversies surrounding her album *Erotica* (1992) and her erotic book *Sex* (1992), Madonna released her sixth album. *Bedtime Stories* (October, 1994) aimed to present the more subtle, artistic side of Madonna, and though it was not as commercially successful as some of her other efforts, it nevertheless reached the top ten charts in eight European nations, Australia, Canada, and Mexico and peaked at third in the U.S. *Billboard Top 200*. Furthermore, the album proved, in hindsight, to signal a decisive shift in both Madonna's music and personal life.

The video for the title song "Bedtime Story," co-written by Icelandic popular artist Björk, proved to be particularly important. Released in 1995, it was directed by Mark Romanek and is considered among Madonna's most artistic and experimental music videos, having been added to the permanent film and video collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art. Complexly blending reality and dreams, science and faith, realism and absurdity, and tactility and abstraction, the video establishes itself unquestionably as a product of postmodernity and the New Age. The narrative is framed as a series of events, projected on a futuristic computer monitor, that are taking place in the dreaming subconscious of subject "Ciccione, M." who is intravenously connected to a round table in a clinic. The video is replete with depictions of water, the moon, and various birds, and draws on the beliefs and symbols of several world religions; it features ancient hieroglyphs and stars a Japanese Zen Buddhist monk and a representation of death. Madonna, herself, with clear light emanating from her forehead like a third eye and extending her tongue, portrays Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction.

Especially important in the video are references to the Mevlevi and their *sema*. A mysterious, stationary elderly figure wearing a wool coat and pointed wool hat, perhaps representing an observant psychotherapist, resembles more a watchful Mevlevi *seyh*. Nine “dervishes,” wearing purple gowns, sparkling gold tunics and hats, and pink spectacles over their closed eyes, recur frequently throughout, whirling in a counterclockwise direction with outstretched arms, though their hands are positioned contrary to Mevlevi tradition. Madonna herself appears in a counterclockwise spinning cube, as well as in a white night gown reminiscent of actual Mevlevi attire. An overall impression of circumambulation is generated further in the video by the clockwise rotation of various objects and characters, not the least of which is the table-bed on which the sleeping Madonna lies. Other Sufic symbols also occur throughout the video, including octagons and grapes, which Madonna mashes with her foot in the process of destroying the Arabic phrase, written in sand, “Try to forget whatever you have ever learned before.” Such classical Sufi themes allude to the state of intoxication and perhaps even *fana*, the state of self-annihilation that is the essence of *sema*.

Textually and musically, too, “Bedtime Story” is indebted to Sufi and New Age aesthetics. The lyrics, for instance, state plainly the esoteric knowledge that Celal ed-Din Rumi sought to conceal in his poetry:

Today is the last day that I'm using  
words  
They've gone out, lost their meaning  
Don't function anymore

Let's, let's, let's get unconscious honey  
Let's get unconscious honey

Today is the last day that I'm using  
words  
They've gone out, lost their meaning  
Don't function anymore

Traveling, leaving logic and reason  
Traveling, to the arms of  
unconsciousness  
Traveling, leaving logic and reason  
Traveling, to the arms of  
unconsciousness

[Chorus:]

Let's get unconscious honey  
Let's get unconscious  
Let's get unconscious honey  
Let's get unconscious

Words are useless, especially sentences  
They don't stand for anything  
How could they explain how I feel

Traveling, traveling, I'm traveling  
Traveling, traveling, leaving logic and  
reason  
Traveling, traveling, I'm gonna relax  
Traveling, traveling, in the arms of  
unconsciousness

[Chorus]

And inside we're all still wet  
Longing and yearning  
How can I explain how I feel?

[Chorus]

Traveling, traveling  
Traveling, traveling  
Traveling, traveling, in the arms of  
unconsciousness

And all that you've ever learned  
Try to forget  
I'll never explain again

The clichéd references here to “honey,” “longing,” and “yearning,” and even the sexual connotations of being “wet” on the inside, are those of ecstatic Sufi poetry, not of secular love. Indeed, “Bedtime Story” bears little semblance to the “material girl’s” typical fare that blatantly exploits erotic subject matter. Instead, she literally, repeatedly, and perhaps unwittingly, refers to concepts of movement central to Sufi philosophy (“traveling,” “going out,” and “leaving”), and subtly alludes to achieving *fana* through *sema* (getting “lost” and “leaving logic and reason to the arms of unconsciousness”). Themes that are specific to New Age and postmodern sensibilities include the inability to verbalize and understand truth and meaning, as well as references to relaxation and meditation.

On the surface, “Bedtime Story” owes less musically to Mevlevi tradition than it does to New Age and techno. Less melodically driven than most of her previous work, the song is also slower and more atmospheric, having more in common with *Mevlevî-Sufî Relaxation*. The electronic character of the song is produced by synthesized instrumentation, especially strings and organs, and by sampled and digitally manipulated vocals and homophonic choirs. However, some parallels may also be drawn to the Sufi *zikr* ceremony, especially with respect to the song’s complex rhythmic texture, which made the song a dance hall favorite in the mid-1990s. The layers of rhythmic intricacy are underpinned by a muted, but steady and continuous rhythmic loop suggestive of the *zikr*. The pattern ♪. ♪. ♪ ♪. ♪. ♪ is constant throughout the entirety of the song, though slightly altered at points for variety; sometimes it is also clapped or amplified by organs. Also reminiscent of the *zikr* is a digitally altered inhalation on the syllable “ah,” which reoccurs intermittently, but is especially prominent at the beginning.

Although Madonna eventually came to identify herself as a practitioner of Kabala, her forays into Islamic mysticism continued throughout the 1990s. In 1998, aside from releasing her seventh album *Ray of Light*, which owed its contemplative and electronic techno rave character to “Bedtime Story,” Madonna was reportedly the motivating force for Chopra to have his translations of the Mevlana’s poems set to music on his *A Gift of Love* recording.<sup>339</sup> As the highest profiled and most important admirer of the Mevlana in Western popular music, she has been influential, at least in part, in the recent meteoric rise of Sufism and Mevlana culture in the West.

### **Sufism and Popular Music in South Asia**

In addition to the influence of Madonna and the New Age movement, various currents from South Asia too have been important contributors to the establishment of Sufism and the Mevlana Rumi in popular music and culture. Already in this study the efforts of such Indian personalities as Idries Shah and Deepak Chopra have been noted, as has the general influence of Hinduism and South Asian Sufism. My focus now turns to developments in India and Pakistan more specifically for it is in these countries, not in Turkey or in the West, that the earliest manifestations of Sufism in popular music first emerged. Of particular significance has been the fact that unlike in Turkey and elsewhere in West Asia where secularist forces either suppressed or banned Sufism for much of the twentieth century, in both India and Pakistan Islamic mysticism has been permitted to thrive as a popular form of religious expression. The favorable social conditions in the subcontinent have not only allowed traditional Sufi musical forms like *qawwali* to rise in

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<sup>339</sup> See Jamaluddin Hoffman, “The Mevlevi Order; Rumi: A Poet for all Times,” *The Islamic Supreme Council of America*, accessed September 30, 2006  
<<http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.org/bin/site/wrappers/spirituality-mevlevi.html>>.

popularity, but they have also enabled Sufi concepts to flourish in such mainstream forms as Bollywood film and rock music.

Sufism has been especially long lived in India and Pakistan ever since it arrived in the subcontinent in the late eighth century. The most prominent *tarikat* has been that of the Chishti, which in its history shares many commonalities with that of the Mevlevi. Originating in the tenth century in what is now Afghanistan, the Chishti order spread to India in the thirteenth century in advance of the same Mongol hordes that pushed many Persian mystics like the Mevlana Rumi into Anatolia, and it quickly took root at the royal court of the Turkish sultanate of Delhi. Like the Mevlevi, the Chishti are known for their doctrines of tolerance, openness, and mystical love, and just as their Turkish counterparts are immediately associated with the whirling *sema*, the followers of Mu‘in ad-Din Chishti are inextricably linked to *qawwali* music.

A highly emotive devotional genre, *qawwali* is the principal form of Sufi musical expression in South Asia, serving as the local form of the ancient *sama*‘ spiritual concert. Its origins are traced mythically to eighth-century Iran and later to the thirteenth-century mystic Abul Hasan Yamin al-Din Khusrau (1253-1325), who according to legend also invented the tabla and sitar. Khusrau is further credited with a large body of mystical poetry, which, along with the *gazel*-s of the Mevlana Rumi, forms the primary corpus of texts used in the standard *qawwali* repertory.<sup>340</sup> Although by definition a vocal genre—the term derives from the Arabic *al-qawl* meaning “the spoken word”<sup>341</sup>—, *qawwali* has traditionally been performed by a sizeable ensemble comprised of at least one *qawwal*

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<sup>340</sup> Qureshi, 1986, 13.

<sup>341</sup> According to Amnon Shiloah this term is still used in reference to the singing of folk poetry. See Shiloah, 1995, 32 and 59.

(“one who says”), a chorus of singers who also clap, and such instruments as the tabla, dholak, and harmonium.



Figure 59: *Qawwal-s* at Chittaurgarh Mosque (Chittaurgarh, India, August 7, 2003)

With the advent of commercial recording in the subcontinent in the early part of the twentieth century, *qawwali* music has enjoyed enduring mass appeal.<sup>342</sup> Particularly in the past fifteen years the genre has also been able to attract a broad international audience beyond the Diaspora and has become a favorite of the world music industry. World-renowned *qawwal-s* include Abida Parveen and the Sabri Brothers, as well as the incomparable Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (1948-97), who over the course of his career released an estimated one hundred and twenty-five albums, earning him an entry in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for recorded *qawwali*.

Born in Pakistan to a family of *qawwali* singers, Khan, with his powerful six-octave tessitura, gained international notoriety toward the end of his life when he began collaborating with such Western popular musicians as Bruce Springsteen, Eddie Vedder, and Peter Gabriel. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Khan released several crossover

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<sup>342</sup> See Qureshi, 1992-93, 111.

recordings in which his traditional *qawwali*-s were either remixed as techno dance songs or inspired by the music of Madonna and his other key Western influences. For instance, in his well-known “Sab Vird Karo Allah Allah,” (“Everyone Chant Allah Allah”), widely available on the posthumous compilation *Rapture* (1997), Khan combines traditional flute improvisations, tabla, and his distinctive coloraturas with a steady backbeat, keyboard synthesizers, an electric guitar solo, and a group of female backup singers repeating the name of Allah. The success of such crossover fusions generated Western interest in his more traditional work as evident in the popularity of his two-disc *Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan: The Final Studio Recordings* (2001), another posthumous release, which commences with his rendition of the Mevlana’s “Too Kareemi Man Kamina Barda Am” (“You Are the Gracious, I Am the Ignoble”).

In addition to his forays into the Western commercial pop, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan also worked with both Western and South Asian filmmakers in order to popularize *qawwali* music further through the silver screen. While his contributions to the soundtracks of *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), *Natural Born Killers* (1994), and *Dead Man Walking* (1995) garnered acclaim in the West, his collaborations beginning in the late 1970s with leading Bollywood actors and directors like Raj Kapoor brought *qawwali* to ever larger audiences in India and Pakistan.

The term Bollywood derives from the conflation of the words Bombay and Hollywood and refers not only to the prolific movie industry based in Mumbai, but also to those of the other major film centers of the subcontinent, including Chennai (Madras), Kolkata (Calcutta), and Lahore; in Pakistan often the term Lollywood is used. Beyond question, the dominant popular song form of South Asia is the Bollywood film song

(*filmi git*). With a minimum of five or six songs per film and with an output of up to one thousand films per year, it is no exaggeration to say that virtually all of South Asia's popular music comes from the movies and that a film's success is usually incumbent upon the appeal of the soundtrack and on the visual characterization of each song; by virtue of the cinematic format, each *filmi git* is visually presented in a movie as a song-and-dance number or as an MTV-style music video.

Although a great multitude of film song styles and subgenres exists and continues to proliferate, one of the most popular and influential is that of the Bollywood *qawwali*. The typical Bollywood *qawwali* differs from the traditional form in that it is shorter, it employs an expanded instrumentation that includes a Western string orchestra, and is thematically more concentrated on romantic rather than spiritual love. Significantly, the couplet structure of the traditional *qawwali ghazal* (Turkish *gazel*) not only prevails in the Bollywood *qawwali*, but is also used in many of the other Bollywood song forms. More revealing still of the importance of the Bollywood *qawwali* is the fact that visual characterizations of it almost always depict a full *qawwali* ensemble onscreen, whereas the usual Bollywood convention is to place primary emphasis not on musicians, but on dance, scenery, and costuming.<sup>343</sup>

Some of the most popular early film *qawwali*-s include “Nigaahein Milane Ko” (“Love at First Sight”) from *Dil Hi To Hai* (*This is the Way the Heart Is*, 1963), “Yaari Hai Imaan Mera” (“Friendship is My Religion”) from *Zanjeer* (*Chain*, 1973), and “Pardah Hai Pardah” (“Everything is Veiled”) from *Amar Akbar Anthony* (1977). It is

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<sup>343</sup> See Peter Manuel, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World: An Introductory Survey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988): 180-81. In fact, as Sarrazin points out, it is mainly in Muslim contexts and in the case of Muslim musical genres that musicians most consistently appear onscreen. Telephone conversation, Natalie Sarrazin, April 4, 2007.

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, though, who with over two dozen film *qawwali*-s brought the genre to the forefront in the 1980s and 1990s. In the year of his passing, he had two songs featured in the film *Aur Pyar Ho Gaya (And I Fall in Love, 1997)* alone, appearing onscreen for the first time in the *qawwali* ensemble for the song “Koi Jaane Koi Na Jaane” (“Some Know, Some Don’t”).

Increasingly since the year 2000, Sufi themes have gained even greater currency in the South Asian film industry. Several movies, including *Fiza* (2000),<sup>344</sup> *Veer-Zaara* (2006), and *Fanaa (Destroyed in Love, 2007)*, are either premised on or make overt reference to specific Sufi motifs and concepts. The Bollywood Sufi craze has even given rise to rumors circulating widely on the Internet and in the Turkish press that Indian filmmaker Muzaffar Ali, director and producer of the highly acclaimed *Umrao Jaan* (1981), has planned a movie, perhaps starring Daniel Day Lewis or Al Pacino, about the Mevlana Rumi, though until now nothing has yet materialized.

In the meantime, the Mevlana’s poetry and that of other great mystic writers, though not quoted directly, continues to inspire *filmi git* lyricists and has fueled a new trend in which many Bollywood movies now feature at least one *qawwali* song. Recent *qawwali* hits include “Tumse Milke Dil Ka Hai Jo Hal” (“The Woes of My Heart Have Glimpsed You”) from *Main Hoon Na (I’m Here Now, 2006)* and especially “Kajra Re” (“Kohl-Lined Eyes”) from *Bunty Aur Babli (Bunty and Babli, 2005)*, which has not only been ranked among the most popular songs in history on a BBC Internet poll, but has also displaced “Chaiyya, Chaiyya” (“Shadow, Shadow”) from the critically acclaimed *Dil Se (From the Heart, 1997)*, a previous non-*qawwali* favorite based on classical Sufi poetry

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<sup>344</sup> The *qawwali* from this film, “Piya Haji Ali” by the Sabri Brothers, has become so successful that it is now a standard in the traditional *qawwali* repertory. Telephone conversation, Natalie Sarrazin, April 4, 2007.

and featuring dancers performing a *zikr*-like dance on a moving train. Such songs are joined by an emergent new form of Bollywood *qawwali* exhibiting greater influence from Western commercial pop, techno, and rock, which in some cases may be considered *qawwali*-s only by virtue of their lyrics and visualizations. An extreme example is “Ya Ali” (“O Savior”) from *Gangster* (2006), which features an electronic soundtrack with some quasi-flamenco references and is set visually in a Sufi shrine, but with a band of guitar-playing mystics, rather than the traditional *qawwali* ensemble.

In addition to traditional and Bollywood pop *qawwali*, Sufism has also engendered yet a third important genre of South Asian popular music: Sufi rock and roll music, which has gained a large following both in the subcontinent and internationally. The term “Sufi rock” was first devised in the 1990s to describe the distinctive hybrid sound of the Pakistani rock group Junoon. The band was formed in 1990 by guitarist and songwriter Salman Khan and comprises members of both Pakistani and American nationalities. With more than half a dozen albums released, a few Bollywood crossover hits, and many prominent worldwide performances, including several commemorations of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S., Junoon remains today the most popular and most influential Sufi rock group of any country.

Junoon’s music seeks to fuse traditional *qawwali* and Pakistani folk music with hard rock and is deeply inspired by Sufi imagery and themes. The band takes its name from a Sufi ecstatic concept translated as either “obsession” or “frenzy” and their songs, which are as much about divine love as they are about earthly romance, are often based on the writings of such Sufi poets as Allama Iqbal, Baba Bulleh Shah, and the Mevlana, to whom concerts and recordings are routinely dedicated. The song “Ab Tu Jaag”

(“Awake Traveler”) from their fifth album *Parvaaz (The Flight, 1999)*, which is widely regarded as among their finest, clearly demonstrates Junoon’s characteristic treatment of Sufi poetic texts. The lyrics are drawn from Punjabi Sufi poet Bulleh Shah (1680-1757), who was himself inspired by the *gazel*-s of the Mevlana,

Awake traveler, move on.  
Trailing its star, the night is gone.

Do what you have to, today.  
You will never be back this way.  
Companions are calling. Let’s go.

Awake traveler, move on.  
Trailing its stars, the night is gone.

A pearl, a ruby, the touchstone, and dice —  
With all that you thirst by the waterside!  
Fool, open your eyes. Get up.

Awake traveler, move on.  
Trailing its stars, the night is gone.  
Awake!<sup>345</sup>

This movement-inspired text is set to guitar, bass, and dholak and the song features two lengthy guitar solos, occasionally colored by a sitar-like timbre, a fast-paced galloping rhythm in the dholak, and a vocal melody that fuses blues with *qawwali* ornaments and rising sequences.

The growth of Sufi popular music in South Asia has had tremendous resonance worldwide, particularly in North America, Europe, and the Middle East where artists like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Junoon have concretized and where Bollywood has an ever-growing viewership. In Turkey these influences have been less direct, though they have nevertheless contributed to the emergent Sufi popular music scene there as well.

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<sup>345</sup> Mohsin Habib and Talha (Zerocool), *Junoon[dot]com: The Official Website*, accessed April 4, 2007 <[http://www.junoon.com/jeemography\\_files/lyrics\\_files/Parvaaz/Ab\\_Tu\\_Jaag.htm](http://www.junoon.com/jeemography_files/lyrics_files/Parvaaz/Ab_Tu_Jaag.htm)>.

Bollywood *filmi git*-s and the *qawwali*-s of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan in particular have some following in Turkey and as *qawwali* and Mevlevi music are the two most internationally recognizable Sufi musical forms, cross-influence is inevitable. Before turning to the music of Mercan Dede, who draws the most influence from South Asian musical forms, I explore the emergence of Sufi rock music in Turkey, drawing parallels to Junoon, where possible.

### **Sufi Rock in Turkey**

As in Pakistan and India, Sufism in Turkey has found new expression in local forms of rock music. Although a distinct genre of Sufi rock music has not yet been recognized in Turkey as it has in South Asia, the number of rock musicians exploring Sufi themes is growing and individual songs are becoming increasingly more popular. These songs are in some ways quite distinct from those of South Asian Sufi rock bands, especially in terms of their reliance on traditional musical elements. Unlike Junoon and other South Asian groups, whose influence from *qawwali* and other traditional genres is sometimes less obvious or minimized, Turkish rock artists like Replikas, Nev, and Murat Göğebakan are generally more mindful of Mevlevi music and other Sufi and religious genres when they premise their songs on Sufi themes. This is particularly noteworthy as rock music in Turkey over the last decade has in general become less prone to stylistic hybridization than in the past and is now frequently cast purely in the sound world of Anglo-American rock, especially in such idioms as hard rock, alternative rock, and punk.

Rock and roll has been without question the most successful and longest lived of all the genres of Western-oriented popular music in Turkey. Founded already in the late

1950s, Turkey's rock music scene is one of the oldest, continuous rock music movements outside of the U.S. and it is so well established that it is almost perceived as indigenously Turkish. In the mid-1960s, after only a few years of American domination, Anadolu rock (Anatolian rock) emerged as one of the earliest subgenres of rock and roll, as artists sought to forge a distinctive "Turkishness" in rock by infusing it with elements of Anatolian folk music and Turkish classical music. Inspired by the experimentalism and progressiveness of the San Francisco psychedelic movement, Turkish musicians commonly made use of asymmetrical rhythms and such instruments such as the bağlama, and composed melodies that were often richly adorned with vocal ornamentation and *makam*-like inflections. Today, the term Anadolu rock is indiscriminately applied to all types of rock music in Turkey, be they original creations or local variants of imported forms sung in Turkish.

Of all the new rock musicians that have surfaced since the mid-1990s when the Turkish government began privatizing the music industry, perhaps the one group that is most closely associated with the experimental and psychedelic Anadolu rock of the 1960s and 1970s is Replikas, though technically they are classified as a "post-rock" band. Originally formed in İstanbul in 1993, Replikas had fully defined their sound and expanded to their current size by the year 2000, and they are today internationally recognized as one of the foremost popular music groups of Turkey. Known for their eclecticism, band members are most interested in experimenting with musical sound, making extensive use of advanced electronic techniques and drawing heavily from Turkish folk and traditional music; they often make use of such traditional folk instruments as the bağlama, ikliğ, zurna, and darbuka.

Among their many influences, Replikas cite Mevlevi, Bektaşî, and Alevi Sufi *tekke* music as being particularly significant.<sup>346</sup> Their reliance on Sufi music and concepts is most evident on their debut album *Köledoyuran* (*Slave Feeder*, 2000) on which six of the eleven tracks either have titles evocative of Sufism and travel, like “Fakir” (“Dervish”) and “Seyyah” (“Traveler”), or draw directly from Sufi musical forms. The *zikr* ceremony especially is invoked at several points in the album and is in itself a recurring and organizing principle.

The *zikr*-like passages first appear in the third track “Akis” (“Reflection”), the centerpiece of which is an extended section of deep rhythmic breathing based on the utterance “Hua” set within a thick texture comprised of high-pitched electronic samples, an ostinato-like electric guitar riff, and distorted slow-paced inhalations and exhalations. In the following “Çekirge Dansı” (“Grasshopper Dance”), perhaps the most distinctive and well-known piece of the album, the *zikr* becomes more defined. The first half of the track features a meandering, whiny, and high-pitched guitar improvisation over a darbuka emphasizing the rhythmic iteration of the heavily-aspirated phrase “ağlama sen sakın, ağlama geçer” (“don’t cry, crying passes”), which plays on the phonetic similarities of the words “ağlama” and “Allah” (Figure 60).



Figure 60: *Zikr*-like Formula from “Çekirge Dansı”

As the texture becomes more polyphonic with the addition of a distorted zurna ostinato, the tempo and volume gradually intensify like in the traditional *zikr* ceremony until a full

<sup>346</sup> Deniz Durukan, *Türk Rock 2001*, (İstanbul: Stüdyo İmge, 2002): 181-82.

pause marks the beginning of the possibly unrelated jazz-inspired second half of the piece.

The *zikr* returns again as a primary element in the final two tracks of the album. Reminiscent of “Akis,” the song “Yol” (“Path”) centers on a *zikr*-like interlude characterized by the repetition of the *zikr* syllable “Hayy,” while the final instrumental piece “Kûh” (Farsi for “Mountain”), like “Çekirge Dansı,” uses the *zikr* ceremony, this time based on the heavily aspirated “Allah Hayy” (“God Lives”) formula (Figure 61), as the foundation for elaborate guitar passages.

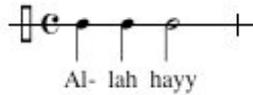


Figure 61: Zikr Formula used in “Kûh”

As the *zikr* proceeds steadily throughout, the textural density and pitch range increase by way of tense and upward moving choral vocal sequences and expanding guitar chords.

Despite their attention to the specific musical and movement aesthetics of the Sufi tradition on this album however, it is important to note that Replikas did not invoke the *zikr* for spiritual or ceremonial purposes, but intended rather to make an artistic and poetic statement about nihilism.<sup>347</sup> Their four *zikr*-s, especially the two in “Çekirge Dansı” and “Kûh,” are placed within tense musical settings dominated especially by winding, tortured guitar solos, ultimately suggesting the darkness, coldness, and ennui of modern life. Moreover, Replikas did not use *zikr* or other Sufi elements in their later albums, further indicating that their interest in fusing Sufi music concepts with rock was not rooted in religious or devotional conviction.

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<sup>347</sup> Ibid., 182.

To get a better sense of what more spiritually inspired Sufi rock music might be like in Turkey, we must turn instead to artists like Nev and Murat Göğebakan, both of whom recently released highly poetic rock songs featuring Mevlevi whirling dervishes in their videos. Looking somewhat like Buddy Holly in his black and white quasi-formal attire and black-brimmed eyeglasses, pop-rock singer Nev (b. Nevzat Doğansoy, 1968) released his sole Mevlevi-informed song “Efkarlı” (“Anxious”) in 2002 on his debut CD *Herşeye Rağmen (In Spite of Everything)*. The slowest, most contemplative song of the twelve on the album, “Efkarlı” explores spiritual restlessness through a series of non-rhyming couplets.

Efkarlıyım başım duman Sitemim var ey koca çınar	I'm anxious, my head is in a bad state I am reproachful, O great plane tree
Zor günümde nicesini andım Muhabbet yetmezmiş bilmedim	In my difficult days, I remember your greatness I didn't know love wouldn't be enough
Dün bugün dedim gönlüm avuttum Yarın yetmezmiş bilmedim	Yesterday I said today, I dallied with love I didn't know tomorrow wouldn't be enough
Dert bir yandan sevda bir yandan Derman yetmezmiş bilmedim sitem ne çare	Pain from one side, love from another I didn't know strength wouldn't be enough What remedy is my reproach?
Şu dünyanın haline kandım Ben yalnızmışım bilmedim	I had my fill of that empty world of yours I didn't know I would be alone
Gönül için için yanar da Sabır yetmezmiş bilmedim sitem ne çare	My soul burns in flames I didn't know patience wouldn't be enough What remedy is my reproach?
Efkarlıyım başım duman Sitemim var ey koca çınar	I'm anxious, my head is in a bad state I am reproachful, O great plane tree

Nev's musical setting of this text does not conform to the typically livelier style of other Turkish pop and pop-rock music, and it differs considerably even from those of his other songs on this album, none of which incidentally are arranged in couplets. Rather,

Nev alters the standard pop song style in “Efkarlı” to allow for multiple overt references to Mevlevi traditional music to come into relief. For instance, the song begins with a short, semi-*taksim*-like introduction for solo acoustic guitar and pauses briefly before moving into the first main section, which, although in a brisk and lilting 5/8 meter (♩ = 160), nevertheless has the staid character of classical Mevlevi music. In addition, his vocal style in “Efkarlı,” in comparison to that of the other songs on the album, is more tense as he is largely constrained to his upper tessitura and becomes progressively more melismatic and slightly more ornamented toward the end; the overall effect is in keeping with the vocal style of Mevlevi and other Muslim religious vocal music. More attributable still to Mevlevi musical influence is the prominent use of bendir and especially ney, which while it is rarely featured in popular music on account of its religious associations, it is here used both in heterophony with the vocal and guitar parts throughout the whole song, and as the dominant instrument in the interludes between the sung verses.

The simple music video for “Efkarlı” features only two individuals on a plain white background: a reverent Nev singing and playing guitar and a woman clad in a full white Mevlevi tunic whirling with outstretched arms. Full-body and close-up shots of each of the two fade gently one into another continually throughout the video, creating a subtle sense of movement, though the primary focus during the three ney interludes is on the female whirler, further emphasizing the association of the ney with the Mevlevi *sema*. While the video has no real narrative to speak of, it ends, after a few last *sema* turns, in silence on a still frame with Nev having disappeared and left behind his guitar on his stool, thus implying his spiritual and corporeal transcendence. In the fickle and

ephemeral world of Turkish popular music, both the song and the video seem to enjoy unusual staying power for, though originally released in 2002, they remain popular on the Internet today and were heavily rotated on the radio and especially on Turkey's many cable music television channels late as 2005, well after Nev had released his second album.

Perhaps the one mainstream rock artist who identifies most closely with the Mevlana Rumi and the spiritual traditions of his devotees is Murat Göğebakan (b. 1968), whose "Sana Olan Aşkim Şahit" ("My Love For You Is a Witness") from the eponymous album of 2005 overlapped on music television with Nev's "Efkarlı." Göğebakan, who has had Sufi training, is among the few Turkish popular musicians and songwriters in the overwhelmingly secular world of Turkish popular music to not only overtly address religious themes in Western-oriented pop, but to infuse rock lyrics specifically with references to Allah and other sacred terms, in effect creating a sort of Turkish Islamic rock music. Musically, his instrumental style makes no obvious concessions to any Islamic forms, be they Sufi, Mevlevi, or otherwise. Rather, it is solidly grounded in 1970s Anglo-American hard rock and characterized by loud, driving electronic guitar playing, occasional gratuitous guitar solos, and pounding drums. Often this instrumental framework is augmented by the addition of violins and other orchestral strings, synthesized orchestral drones, and perhaps other elements typical of Arabesk music and Arabic song.

Göğebakan's vocal style, on the other hand, readily betrays the influence of Muslim religious models. Characterized by highly emotive, even exaggerated, singing and occasional semi-spoken recitation, Göğebakan's mannerisms are related to a popular

religious musico-poetic style that involves the dramatic half-sung, half-spoken recitation of poetry or lyrics over an instrumental foundation, usually a drone played on ud or ney. To my knowledge, this genre, despite its widespread popularity, has not been systematically studied by music scholars, though I have already referred to one variant of it in my earlier discussions on the narration of the Mevlana's poems over musical accompaniment, as popularized by figures like Coleman Barks, Deepak Chopra, and Madonna. It is likely that the appeal of this exaggerated vocal style is inspired, at least in part, by the overly affective preaching style of the charismatic and extremely influential Turkish religious scholar Fethullah Gülen, better known as Fattullah Hoca. Göğebakan employs this technique in his "Sana Olan Aşkım Şahit," particularly in his rendering of the third stanza of the song's text.

Güneşimi solduran gözlerim şahit  
Geceye mahkum eden yokluğun şahit

Kapıda bir ömür bekleyip  
Yollarına bakan gözlerim şahit

Ömrüme ömürler veren yüreğime  
sevgiler eken  
Bedenimi almaya gelen Azrailin pençesi  
şahit  
Sehpada Pir Sultan birimi boynunda  
Cem Sultan  
Sana olan aşkı anlatan bir yol atan  
Allahım şahit

Eğer  
Birini ararsan titreyişlerinde  
Görüp görebileceğin  
Duyup duyabileceğin  
Herşey ama herşey  
Senin cennet kokan saçlarına karışımın  
Benim yüreğim şahit  
Gözlerime bak yedi veren yürek  
Gözlerime  
Hayalerimi uçurtma  
Yaptım  
Yıldızlara dilek  
Yazdım adını semaya yazdım  
Oku  
Aşkım için oku  
Çünkü bu kara sevdaya  
Allahım şahit

My eyes witness my fading sun  
Convicted to the night, I witness your  
absence

I wait at your door for a lifetime  
My eyes, which stare at your path, are a  
witness

Giving life to my existence, planting love in  
my heart  
Coming to take my body, Azrael's claw is a  
witness  
My spiritual guide is at the table, at his neck  
is the master of ceremonies  
The one who explains my love for you,  
the one who puts a path before me  
My God is a witness

If  
You seek someone who is trembling  
Look and you will see  
Listen and you will hear  
Everything, but I mean everything  
The smell of heaven in your disheveled hair  
My heart is a witness  
Look into my eyes seven times giving heart  
Into my eyes  
Do not devour my dreams  
I did it  
I wrote a wish to the stars  
I wrote your name in the firmament  
Read it  
Read it for my love  
Because (it is for) this blind love  
My God is a witness

With an overall message of mystical death and references to the fading sun, trembling *fakir*-s, his Pir Sultan, and the path of enlightenment, Gögebakan's song is clearly indebted to the writings of Sufi masters like the Mevlana.

The video for "Sana Olan Aşkım Şahit" is not only visually far richer than that for Nev's "Efkarlı," it also reveals a deeper awareness of Sufi concepts of motion. Starring Gögebakan, members of his band, and a troupe of five whirling *semazen*-s, it is set

entirely in the gardens and courtyards of İstanbul's famed Aya Sofia Museum, which was formerly a mosque and before that a church.<sup>348</sup> While the musicians are shown simply playing their instruments in a relatively placid manner, Göğebakan is depicted performing grandiose, overly dramatic gestures that correspond to his exceedingly emotive vocal style. With the wind blowing through his gelled long hair, Göğebakan lifts his hands up to God often and flails his arms about repeatedly in order to emphasize the delivery of the lyrics, and close up shots of him show him either making caressing motions over his lips and face or closing his eyes in reverence as he tilts his head. Even during the softer musical portions of the song, his gestures are exaggerated and excessive. For instance, at the beginning of the video, when the music features delicate orchestral drones and a subdued guitar solo, Göğebakan is depicted performing wide, flowing Tai Chi-like movements in the shadow of the Aya Sofia and again at the end, as the melody fades, he is shown placing his right hand over his heart and blowing a kiss at the camera with his left hand.

The Sufi aesthetics of motion, however, are not suggested only in Göğebakan's actions, but are in fact explicit in the video's cinematography, which is inspired entirely by the whirling of the five Mevlevi *semazen*-s. An overall sense of elegant, sweeping cosmic turning can be said to pervade the whole video, as principal photography was shot mainly by rotating cameras using wide-angle lenses, transforming even the most static scene focusing on the musicians into a sort of counterclockwise dance. The *sema* proper is featured multiple times in the video and is highlighted particularly during the semi-

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<sup>348</sup> In addition to being a cultural icon, the Aya Sofia is also an important religious symbol hotly contested by the rival secularist and pro-Islamist factions of Turkey. In 1935 Atatürk turned the mosque into a museum and on various occasions since then it has been in dispute and has even become a protest site for devout Muslims. See, for instance, Howe, 74.

spoken third stanza of the lyrics as well as during more muted musical sections at the beginning and end.

The disparate examples I discuss above by Replikas, Nev, and Murat Göğebakan constitute, as far as I am aware, the only cases of Sufi-inspired Turkish rock music that have come into the mainstream in recent history; an earlier album entitled *Zikir* by Okay Temiz also received some notoriety and was apparently a key influence on the music of Replikas, though I have been unable to learn anything further about either the recording or the artist. To these examples may be added the Sufi rock of Junoon as well as the narrated songs “The Intelligent Fish,” “The Half Intelligent Fish,” and “Stupidfish” by the American band Three Fish, which drew their inspiration for their self-titled first album (1996) from a well-known tale by the Mevlana Rumi.<sup>349</sup>

In musical terms, this motley assortment of Sufi rock exhibits the stylistic plurality more typical of an unsettled, nascent musical form, rather than that of a mature, fully defined genre. Exploitation of traditional forms and instrumentation is as much deliberate and self-conscious as it is inconsistent. For instance, while Replikas and Nev invoke classical Mevlevi and Sufi genres like the *zikr* and *taksim* and Nev and Junoon make use of iconic Sufi instruments, Murat Göğebakan draws on none of these and as a result creates possibly the most spiritually-informed examples of Sufi rock. Perhaps the only unifying feature of these examples apart from the textual content may be the pervasiveness of concepts of movement, which are so ingrained and fundamental to Sufi forms, that they naturally become manifest in Sufi popular styles.

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<sup>349</sup> See Lewis 1-2 and 610.

## **Mercan Dede, Sufi Traveler**

While Sufism has made some important inroads into the world of rock music, undoubtedly the most prominent, most consistent, and longest lived manifestations of the teachings of the Mevlana in Turkish popular culture can be found in techno electronic dance music, namely in the ambient style of Arkin Ilıcalı, Turkey's best-known techno DJ. Performing under the stage name Mercan Dede, and sometimes also Allen Arkin, Ilıcalı is a composer and music producer, as well as a ney and bendir player. He was originally born in Turkey in 1966 and now resides also part time in Montreal.

Maintaining a very active touring schedule across Turkey, North America, and Europe, he is one of Turkey's most peripatetic artists, and with an ever-growing international following, Ilıcalı has become a rising figure in the world music market. In 2004, his international standing was bolstered further when the Ministry of Culture appointed him an official representative of Turkish culture and arts around the world, a rare distinction afforded a Sufi artist that in itself both reflects the growing tolerance towards Sufism within the state bureaucracy and contributes to the rehabilitation of Mevlana culture.

As Mercan Dede, Ilıcalı's success comes from his effective blending of traditional Turkish, Persian, and South Asian Sufi musical elements with ambient techno electronic dance music and New Age music, resulting in an eclectic, yet subdued Sufi world music fusion. Though a solo artist, he normally performs with a number of different ensembles including the Mercan Dede Trio, the Mercan Dede Ensemble, and Secret Tribe, and he is known for his collaborations with a variety of singers and instrumentalists working in a diverse spectrum of musics ranging from Turkish rap, Arabesk, and gypsy music to jazz and Western and Persian classical music. Thus in addition to computer generated sounds

and his record spinning and ney and bendir playing, Mercan Dede's music also features an *ad hoc* assortment of instrumentation including kanun, ud, bağlama, tar, sitar, electric violin, double bass, flugelhorn, clarinet, didgeridoo, dholak and other sundry Western and Middle Eastern percussion. In all, Ilıcalı's discography to date includes, in addition to over twenty compilations and studio productions for other artists, almost eight Mercan Dede albums starting with *Sufi Dreams* (1998) and continuing through *Journeys of a Dervish* (1999), *Seyahatname (Book of Travels, 2001)*,<sup>350</sup> the two-disc compilation *Sufi Traveler* (2004), and a series of four concept albums based on the four material elements: *Nar (Fire, 2002)*, *Su (Water, 2004)*, *Nefes (Breath, 2006)*, and the as yet unfinished and untitled CD based on the theme of earth.

Despite the many influences on his music, Mercan Dede's works follow a generic linear scheme that normally progresses from a slow or free meter introduction to one or more extended metered sections, sometimes broken up by ametrical interludes, before reaching a climax and concluding with a fading free meter denouement. The metered sections are comprised of looped samples or cyclically recurring rhythmic patterns and are characterized by an overall tendency toward textural and dynamic intensification. Meanwhile, instrumental, and sometimes vocal, improvisation is featured throughout the whole composition. Traditional Sufi elements play a critical role in virtually every work as well, but they can vary considerably from the use of *taksim*-like ney improvisations as in *Neyname (The Book of the Ney)* from *Seyahatname* to *zikr*-like passages as in *Semaname (The Book of Sema)* from the same album and *Nar-ı Cem (Fire of Communal Union)* from *Nar*. The recitation or singing of *gazel*-s and other Sufic texts is also

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<sup>350</sup> This title, which refers to Mercan Dede's own spiritual journeys, is derived from a popular genre of travel writing best exemplified by the *Seyahatname* of the famous seventeenth-century Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi.

common, as in *Dem (Breath)* from *Nefes* in which Iranian-born and Indian-raised singer Azam Ali sings verses by the Mevlana Rumi or in *Zefir (Exhalation)* also from *Nefes* which is based on a recording of Kâni Karaca, the late master interpreter of Mevlevi and other Turkish religious music, singing poetry by Yunus Emre.

The piece *Dreams of Sufi Saints, Walking on the Red Sea* from *Sufi Dreams* is representative of Mercan Dede's style and features several references to Sufi religious and musical traditions. The lengthy, nearly nine-minute track begins with a slow, steady pulsation reminiscent of a heartbeat that is soon joined by an incremental layering of rhythms: first the intermittent sound of bubbling water, then a low-pitched electronic loop followed by a recurring sample that sounds vaguely like a *tef*, and finally more complex patterns performed on tabla. This warren of rhythms serves as a foundation for the recitation of the names of various Sufi saints including the Mevlana Rumi, Şams Tabrizi, and Nur ed-Din al-Cerrahi as well as for the pronouncement of a string of praises for the love of Allah. While this work lacks both the improvisations and winding melodies of his later works and has no obvious climax to speak of, it does peak precisely at the golden mean with the sound of blowing wind, creating a somewhat unsettling distortion of the underlying polyrhythm.

In effect, *Dreams of Sufi Saints*, with its litany of names and praises at the beginning and its grounding in recurrent patterns of complex persistent rhythms is redolent of the Sufi *zikr* ceremony. The normal performance context for this piece, a techno dance party, is also understood by Mercan Dede and many club-goers as having direct parallels with the *zikr* gathering, as both make use of highly repetitive rhythmic music and vigorous up and down movements of the head and torso to engender a feeling

of communal well-being and spiritual union between participants, described in both instances as ecstatic trancing. It is in this performance context, more so than in the album titles or music videos, that both the aesthetics of motion and the devotional nature of Mercan Dede's music are most palpable.

I attended one such performance in Konya on December 14, 2004, during the week of the Mevlana's Şeb-i 'urs (Figure 62).

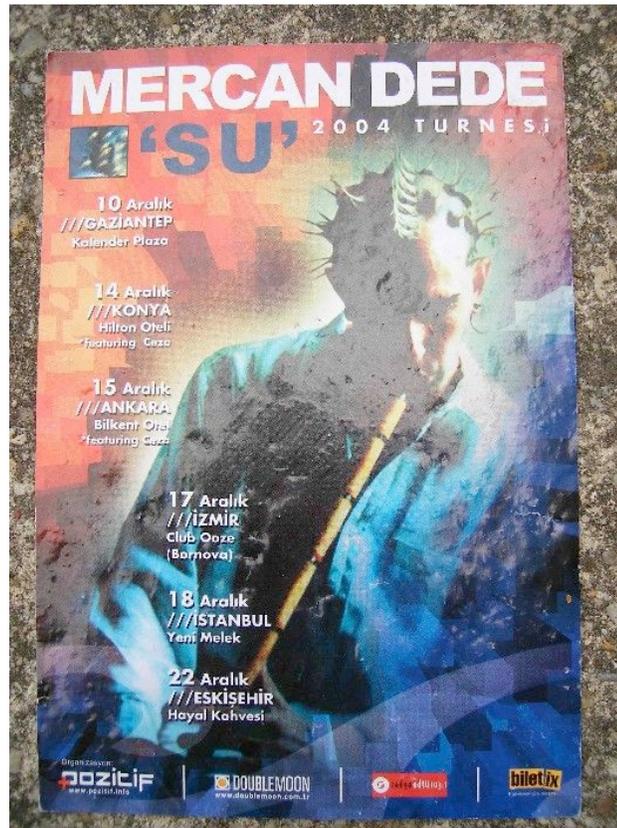


Figure 62: Flyer for Mercan Dede's Concert Tour during the Mevlana Festivities of December 2004

The audience was comprised mainly of high school and college aged youth, many of whom informed me that they were either enamored of the Mevlana or were deeply interested in Sufism and Sufi music. Though in many ways identical to a techno rave in the West, the event bore an unmistakably Sufi stamp. On a screen behind the stage, the name of the Prophet Muhammad written in a symmetrical design alternated with bright

colors, psychedelic geometric patterns, and swirling images of the Milky Way. In between the changing colors of the hypnotic light show, I could make out the silhouettes of scarved and gelled heads bobbing up and down, while one of the musicians breathed deeply *zikr*-like into the microphone.

Onstage, Mercan Dede, with his distinctive bleach-blond mohawk, stood mainly concealed behind his fortress of turntables and electronic equipment, preferring to have all the attention directed toward his accompanying musicians and especially toward his captivating *semazen* Mira Burke, the Canadian Sufi female whirler who with glow sticks sown into the hem of her white tunic has gained a cult following of her own. Her routine, while breaking significantly from tradition, allowed for more motion and activity than the traditional *sema* and was characterized by longer periods of whirling and more free flowing arm movements. Her reverence and expressivity elicited great enthusiasm in the audience and at one point one young woman on the crowded dance floor even fainted, much as I had seen at the private *zikr* ceremonies and even at the public *sema* shows.

In fact, Mercan Dede's live performances occupy the realm in between the two great Sufi ceremonial traditions of Turkey, offering more of a visual concert presentation than at the *zikr* ceremonies while at the same time providing a more interactive experience than at the *sema* shows. Ultimately, events such as this are not only further indicators of the resurgence of Sufism in Turkey, they also bear witness to and perhaps may even be key stages in the evolution of Sufi tradition as mystical Islam becomes known to a new generation of potential Sufi adherents, both in Turkey and across the world. Yet, even as manifestations of Sufism in popular culture are generating greater interest in the teachings of the Mevlana and the ways of Islamic mysticism, they have

also caused some controversy and have drawn heavy criticism ironically not from secularists or the state government, but from traditionalists and the Sufi religious establishment, as I explore in the following section

### **Spinning in Circles: Popular Music, Intention, and the Polemics of Authenticity**

Frequently in this chapter, and indeed at many points throughout this dissertation, the questions of authenticity and intentionality have surfaced and lingered in the air. They are among the thorniest and most pervasive of all the issues surrounding the study and performance of Sufi music in Turkey, and they are posed of all musical types, from the popular genres discussed in this chapter to the state sponsored *sema* performances analyzed in Chapter Four; charges of spiritual disingenuousness are even raised against the lodges of downtown Konya for allowing so many “foreigners” to participate in the *zikr* ceremony, as if being Turkish and a Sufi were synonymous and exclusive terms. This element of nationalism only complicates matters further, especially given the precarious legal standing of Sufism in the country, but it may be that it is this very matter of prohibition that makes the issues of authenticity and intentionality so prominent. Then again, the question of spiritual authenticity can be traced back at least to the mid-seventeenth century when one Katip Chelebi (1609-57) criticized the Mevlana’s devotees for performing the *sema*, to use Lewis’s words, “in an ungrounded fashion.”<sup>351</sup>

It is interesting to note that music is so interconnected in this tradition with ceremony, devotion, and spirituality that questions about the authenticity of the one can cast doubts upon the genuineness of the others, particularly since Sufi enlightenment is

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<sup>351</sup> See Lewis, 519 and Kâtip Çelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, trans. G. L. Lewis (London: Allen and Unwin, 1957): 43.

ultimately a personal journey that is not necessarily tied to any specific musical or ceremonial form.<sup>352</sup> Indeed, as Jean During argues, what makes a kind of music “Sufi” has more to do with intention and interpretation than with anything specifically attributable to musical content,<sup>353</sup> yet even he is quick to dismiss popular music as devotionally viable and would not likely subscribe to Hammarlund’s suggestion that “Maybe, Sufi rock music can become a vehicle for *zikr* in the future, rather than staged *sema* shows of so-called whirling dervishes.”<sup>354</sup> I have deliberately circumvented the issues of authenticity and intentionality until now so as to address them in the one area of Sufi music where they are most poignant. Sufi popular musics, as I have demonstrated, have played an important role in bringing Sufism to ever-larger numbers worldwide, but they have done so by manipulating traditional forms and sometimes by making changes so extreme that they raise doubts about the true intentions of the artists and are declared inauthentic.

To detractors, the problems of popularizing Sufism through popular music, or of popularizing Sufism at all, are manifold. For some *tarikats*, mystical knowledge is meant to be esoteric, a closely guarded secret that should be divulged only to those who are most worthy and most prepared.<sup>355</sup> In other cases, the concern is over desecralization, with the secularism, materialism, and consumerism glorified by popular culture being

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<sup>352</sup> To offer a parallel example from Western Europe, Johann Sebastian Bach, who was not a Catholic, did not compose the Mass in B Minor wholly out of religious motivations, yet today this does not preclude the work from being understood as sacred, even when it is usually performed in a secular concert hall setting.

<sup>353</sup> See During, 1999.

<sup>354</sup> Anders Hammarlund, “Sacral, Secular or Sacred? An Essay on Music and Aesthetic Emancipation,” in *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and Middle East*, Papers Read at a Conference Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, November 27-27, 1997, ed. Anders Hammarlund, Tord Olsson, and Elisabeth Özdalga (Istanbul: Svenska Forskningsinstitutet; Richmond, England: Curzon, 2001): 45.

<sup>355</sup> See During, 2001, 153.

seen as antithetical to the core of Sufi teachings. As Franklin Lewis reveals in expressing his worries of the Mevlana's adoption into pop culture, at the heart of this anxiety is the belief that commercialism engenders, among other things, misrepresentation, misinterpretation, and misunderstanding.

I watch now with concern as pop culture dilutes and distorts his message, with a foreboding sense that modern secular culture will inevitably reduce the sacral into the banal through its relentless commercialism and consumerism.<sup>356</sup>

In Turkey, the issue of desacralization is also connected to the power struggles currently taking place between religious and secularist forces, with the popularization of Sufism sometimes being construed as a cynical attempt on the part of the government to further neutralize or even ridicule genuine piety. Added to this already lengthy litany of issues involving the rise of Sufism in popular music and culture are the classic tensions between modernity and tradition, the fear that Sufism is becoming more of a musical rather than a spiritual movement, and the belief that this music attracts spiritual dabblers and not serious devotees.

Many of these concerns pertain to certain frictions existing between Western secularism and Islam, but they stem more directly from the way that Sufism has spread to the West through such figures as Gurdjieff, Shah, and Feild. Traditionalists criticize these individuals in particular for divorcing Sufism from Islam, diluting its principles, and polluting it with elements from the occult, paganism, and other faiths.<sup>357</sup> This has led

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<sup>356</sup> Lewis, 4.

<sup>357</sup> See for instance Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Review of *The Sufis*, by Idries Shah, *Islamic Studies* 12 (1964): 531-33 as well as his *Sufi Essays* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972): 15.

some to recognize two distinct branches of Sufism, one traditional, the other Western,<sup>358</sup> with the latter sometimes referred to in such terms as “recreational Sufism.”<sup>359</sup> The implications of this perceived schism are that Western adherents of Sufism are often assumed to not be full Muslims or otherwise lack the commitment, spirituality, and esoteric understanding required for being true Sufi dervishes. Madonna, for one, has been widely accused of faddism for her interests in the Mevlana and Jewish mysticism.

Yet such criticisms are levied not only against Westerners, but are applied to any artist, Sufi or otherwise, who chooses to merge Sufism with Western-style popular culture. While Junoon and Bollywood *qawwali* are the prime targets in South Asia,<sup>360</sup> in Turkey, Mercan Dede and Mira Burke are chief among those accused of being musically and spiritually inauthentic. In addition to not being an actual *dede*, Mercan Dede invites criticism for his hybrid musical style and his commercial appeal, meanwhile Burke acknowledges receiving disapproval not only for her unorthodox *sema* style, but also for being a highly visible female whirler.<sup>361</sup> What their detractors are not usually aware of is that both have had decades of training in various Sufi orders in Turkey and abroad, that Burke is in fact the daughter of a *seyh*, and that Ilıcalı actually performs under a variety of pseudonyms precisely in order to escape the cult of personality and other trappings brought on by success in the world of popular music.

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<sup>358</sup> See Olav Hammer, “Sufism for Westerners,” in *Sufism in Europe and North America*, ed. David Westerlund (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004): 138-40.

<sup>359</sup> Asma Hasan, *Why I Am a Muslim: An American Odyssey* (London: Element Books Limited, 2004).

<sup>360</sup> See Vikas Hatwani, “Pop Goes Sufi,” *The Indian Express Group*, July 20, 2006, accessed September 17, 2006 <<http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=192820>>.

<sup>361</sup> Mira Burke, personal communication, December 14, 2004.

In response to their indictors, Sufi popular artists and their fans typically retort that criticisms put forth against them run contrary to the ideals and values of the teachings of the Mevlana Rumi and they are quick to invoke the doctrines of universalism and tolerance that are especially characteristic of Sufism in the West. As Coleman Barks puts it,

Rumi is certainly important in many different cultures, and had followers of different faiths in his lifetime. I see him as someone who kicked free of doctrinal confinement and got to the core from which we all worship. I think he saw these God clubs as divisive. Others may see him differently.<sup>362</sup>

It is likely that the issues of authenticity and intentionality will remain of central importance as the Mevlana continues to be assimilated into international popular culture and as Sufi popular musical forms keep on proliferating in Turkey and across the world. In the meantime, these questions also persist in the *sema* and *zikr* traditions in Turkey, especially as foreigners remain key supporters of Mevlana culture. In the next chapter, I revisit these issues of authenticity and intentionality as I explore more fully what other roles outsiders play in further expanding Mevalana-related musical life in Turkey.

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<sup>362</sup> Peter Culshaw, "Giving the Dervish a Whirl," *The Guardian*, December 1, 2001, accessed April 4, 2007 <<http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/classics/story/0,,609873,00.html>>.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SONGS FROM OTHER SPHERES: NON-TURKISH MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP OF THE MEVLANA

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, veneration of the Mevlana Rumi has begun to take on new modes of musical expression beyond the conventional Turkish *sema* and *zikr* ceremonies and now also includes New Age music and various types of popular music. However, one need not venture into the space age to discover that worship of the Mevlana extends well beyond the traditional Turkish forms. During my fieldwork in Turkey in 2004 and 2005 and subsequently thereafter, I encountered numerous occasions when various other musical styles were used for devotional purposes. These comprised mainly of traditional musical forms indigenous to other cultures that were performed in Turkey primarily by pilgrims and touring musicians.

This chapter surveys some of these traditional genres. Because of the wealth of the material and the potentially interminable listing of musical forms, however, I have chosen to limit my discussion here largely to those performances I documented during the 2004 Mevlana Festival, which nevertheless still constitutes a considerable amount of music. As in previous chapters, my primary goal is to discuss the aesthetics of motion and the devotional aspects of these disparate styles, but my focus is less analytical than ethnographic in nature because, while most of these musics have already been thoroughly analyzed by other scholars, their connections to the Mevlana Rumi have heretofore either been overlooked or underemphasized; in some instances, the associations were previously nonexistent.

Thus, in the first section, I present a brief ethnographic excerpt from a *zikr* ceremony I attended at the *dergah* of Nuri Baba during which a Catholic Sanctus was sung by one of the pilgrims. I place this performance in fuller context in the following section and use my analysis of it and various pieces of Western classical music based on the Mevlana as a springboard for my discussions in the rest of the chapter. Hence, in the third section, I concentrate on a series of sundry concerts held at the Konya Chamber of Commerce that together launched the First Annual Konya International Mystic Music Festival. I conclude the chapter with an examination of another group of performances held in honor of the Mevlana during the 2004 Mevlana Festival that, while unrelated in type, all originate from Iran and Afghanistan, both of which lay claim to the Mevlana as a native son.

**“Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.... It Means ‘Allahu Akbar!’”**

December 13, 2004 Konya

This evening’s *zikr* ceremony has been more exuberant than usual. It is the third day of the Mevlana Festival and the growing number of visitors descending upon Konya is becoming more and more evident. Perhaps as many as a hundred and fifty souls have packed into the prayer hall of the *dergah* of Haci Nuri Baba this evening, whereas only about twenty five were in attendance just two nights ago. While many of the congregants are Turks, most have come from abroad, and with each new eager face the atmosphere becomes increasingly more animated and charged with *tasavvuf*. Mevlana devotees have arrived from as far afield as India, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, and the U.S., but the overwhelming majority tonight hail from Iran.

Although we are currently in the contemplative lull following the concluding *fatiha*, the *zikr* gathering has been dominated by the fervor and contagious energy of the Persian pilgrims. Some of them had brought along bendir-s decorated with kitschy sepia images of whirling dervishes, augmenting the already sizable musical ensemble to an unprecedented six frame drums. Keen to extend their ecstatic experience, the unrelenting Persians drummed well after the last “Hu” of each of the many *ilahi*-s performed, and some jumped and screamed as they chanted the *zikr* formulas. A few men and women even wept and sobbed profusely from their spiritual euphoria.

Shortly after the *zikr* rite, many of the Persians left and the gathering gave way to a more subdued poetry reading session. The *seyh* recited Turkish translations of the Mevlana’s *gazel*-s from memory, which another congregant then loosely and artlessly translated again into English. A second reader, a young German-Turkish woman who had traveled the world in search of deeper spiritual knowledge, was eventually asked to take over. Having spent some time in Brazil studying the Santo Daime movement only to find what she was seeking in her ancestral homeland, the otherwise modest pilgrim translated as she read to the mixed assembly of men and women. Her voice and the words of the Melvana echoed loudly from the tinny speakers and they seem to linger on even now that the gathering has opened up to *sohbet* and informal music making.

Presently, while some are still engaged in muffled side discussions, a Dutch woman sitting on her knees close to the *seyh* suddenly but calmly sings a beautiful melody in a high, moving voice. Although I do not recognize the tune, the lyrics are certainly familiar. With her eyes closed and her hands on her heart, she sings the full Latin text of the Catholic Sanctus. Overcome with joy, she proffers an awkward English

translation, “All Goodness to everyone who comes in the name of God,” and then blurts out, “It means ‘Allahu Akbar!’” Her singing and sentiment prompt resounding approval from the other congregants, particularly from the elder Turkish dervishes who thank her before one of the musicians begins to play the *bağlama* and initiates a lengthy and vigorous second *zikir* ritual.

### **The Mevlana and Western Music**

The heartfelt singing of the Christian Sanctus in the segment of the *zikir* ceremony described above may be unorthodox, but it is certainly not unprecedented and neither is the recitation of poetry in multiple languages. As I explained in Chapter Five, foreign pilgrims and travelers from distant lands are a common sight at the *dergah* of Nuri Baba in central Konya. Rarely did I attend a *zikir* gathering where there were no visitors from other countries present, even outside of the busy Mevlana season in December. Visitors mainly came from Europe and North America, but during the 2004 Mevlana Festival pilgrims arrived from all four corners of the earth. Because of the heavy traffic of congregants flowing through the *dergah* year round and because the *şeyh* likes to leave parts of the gathering open for anyone in attendance to perform music or read poetry, a *zikir* ceremony here can be a highly unpredictable affair (see Chapter Five). Although I did not encounter any other instances of the use of Christian music in Sufi devotional contexts during my fieldwork, Franklin Lewis notes that at one Sufi gathering in San Anselmo, California in 1976 a group of women sang the famous Quaker spiritual “’Tis A Gift To Be Simple” as accompaniment to the performance of *sema*.<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Lewis, 521.

In fact, there is a long history of the Mevlana Rumi being connected to the musical traditions of the West, particularly those genres that fall under the broad, generic category of Western classical music. Most of these examples comprise vocal settings of translated texts written by the Mevlana. Among the earliest are German *Lieder* based on translations done by Friedrich Rückert. Franklin Lewis has compiled a comprehensive list of almost a dozen of these songs by various composers of the Germanic tradition, including most notably Franz Schubert's well-known "Du bist die Ruh," D. 776 and "Lachen und Weinen," D. 777 and Richard Strauss's "Die Schöpfung ist zur Ruh gegangen," Op. 62 and "Und dann nicht mehr," Op. 87, No. 3.<sup>364</sup>

Added to the *Lieder* are a number of other vocal works including choral settings, solo vocal compositions, operas, and oratorios. From the choral repertory, the third movement of Beethoven's *Die Ruinen von Athen*, Op. 113 (1811), the so-called "Chorus of the Dervishes" is among the first to draw inspiration from the Mevlana tradition. More substantial examples, however, come from the twentieth century, when translated editions of the Mevlana's writings became more accessible. For instance, Lewis has pointed out that a second-generation Polish translation of a Mevlana poem by Tadeusz Micinski from Rückert's German edition served as the basis for the choral segments of Karol Szymanowski's Symphony No. 3, Opus 27 ("Piec 'n' o nocy").<sup>365</sup> Also on Lewis's inventory is Ton de Leeuw's *Transparence* (1986) for mixed chorus and brass, which features French and Dutch texts based on verses by the Mevlana and three other Sufi poets.

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid., 617.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., 619.

An important update to this list of Mevlana-themed choral works is the *Mevlana Symphony* by the Viennese-trained Turkish composer Sabri Tuluğ Tırpan. Inspired by notions of pilgrimage and the composer's own inner voyage, the work was written in honor of the Mevlana's 700<sup>th</sup> birthday and premiered on May 9, 2007 at the Hagia Irini Church in İstanbul as part of the Europe Day festivities. The premiere starred Turkish popular singer Sertab Erener accompanied by the Vienna Classical Players, which consists of members from the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, and also featured choreography by modern dancer Ziya Azazi.<sup>366</sup>

Major English language translations of Mevlana poetry in the late twentieth century have also led to the composition of a few solo vocal works by U.S. composers. Diane Thome used translations of various poems by Kabir Helminski as the basis for her *The Ruins of the Heart* (1990) for soprano, orchestra, and tape. Andrew List composed a trilogy of Mevlana song settings entitled *Oh My Beloved* in two versions, one for mezzo-soprano, clarinet, and piano, and the other for mezzo-soprano, clarinet, and string quartet. Meanwhile, Ben Johnston set translations by Coleman Barks for bass narrator and string quartet in his *Quietness* (1996).<sup>367</sup>

In addition to choral and solo vocal works, the Mevlana has been the subject of a few of opera projects. The earliest of these is *Soliman second* (1761) by the prolific Charles-Simon Favart, who included a Mevlevi-inspired divertissement at the end of his popular semi-operatic verse play. More recently, Philip Glass composed *Monsters of Grace* (1998), a multimedia production that features a vocal quartet singing Mevlana

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<sup>366</sup> Aslı Sağlam, "Travelling through His Inner Soul, Composing for Mevlana," *Turkish Daily News*, May 5, 2007, accessed May 5, 2007 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=72360>>.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, 619-20.

translations by Barks and electronic samples of Persian music. The American composer Michael Paul Ellison has also written an opera in three acts based on the life story of the Mevlana with a libretto drawn from translations by Nader Khalili as a dissertation project for his doctorate from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Composed after a year of research in Turkey on Turkish classical and folk music, *Mevlana: A Chamber Opera* (2003) is set for Azeri singers and Western chamber orchestra and singers, with optional parts for kemençe, tanbur, çeng, and kanun, as well as a non-optional part for ney.<sup>368</sup>

The Mevlana's life story, however, has been most popular as the subject for oratorio libretti. At least four Mevlana-themed oratorios have been composed since the 1960s. The first was by Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer, who has also written a theatrical work called *Loving* (1979) for two actors and vocal quartet on Mevlana verses. Schafer's *Divan i Shams i Tabriz for Orchestra, Seven Singers, and Electronic Sounds*, which is also known by the title *Lustro*, was composed on the poetry of Rumi and Tagore between 1969 and 1972 and was followed in 1973 by the *Mevlana Oratorio* of Ali Doğan Sinangil, which was written in honor of the Mevlana's 700<sup>th</sup> Şeb-i 'urs.<sup>369</sup> Meanwhile, commemorative performances of two other works entitled *Mevlana Oratorio* have been scheduled on the occasion of the Mevlana's 800<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2007. The Ankara State Opera and Ballet has featured Mustafa Erdoğan's *Mevlana Oratorio* in its 2006-2007 program,<sup>370</sup> while the İstanbul Opera and Ballet Orchestra and Choir has planned to give multiple performances of Can Atilla's *Mevlana Oratorio* throughout the year. This latest

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<sup>368</sup> Michael Paul Ellison, "Mevlana: A Chamber Opera (One Act)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California at Santa Barbara, 2003).

<sup>369</sup> Lewis, 619.

<sup>370</sup> "Ankara State Opera and Ballet to Hail New Season with Surprises," *Turkish Daily News*, September 30, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=55314>>.

Mevlana-themed oratorio by Atilla, based on a libretto by Semih Sergin, was written specifically for the Sufi saint's anniversary and features recitation of the Mevlana's poetry, *sema*, and music for a 200-piece orchestra and choir reminiscent of Richard Wagner; the composer intends for the work to also be performed at the Vatican and in New York.<sup>371</sup>

In addition to music for voice, the Mevlana and his devotees have also inspired a more modest assortment of ballet music and instrumental pieces. Already in 1788, the Mevlevi had been the subject of a ballet performed at the Théâtres des Grands Danseurs du Roi in Paris entitled *Les Derviches*. In the twentieth century, the Mevlevi and their *sema* resurfaced more frequently in ballet and modern dance and sometimes were also referenced in instrumental music. In November 1920, the ballet *Dervishes*, with music by Alexander Glazounov, was premiered at the Ballet Suédois.<sup>372</sup> Some time later, dance would continue to be a major theme in instrumental music, as exemplified by Dan E. Welcher's *Dervishes: Ritual Dance-Scene for Full Orchestra* (1976). Strongly characterized by sweeping orchestral movement, this piece derives its name from the second main section, which features a dance-like 5/8 ostinato motif that is suggestive of the *zikr* ceremony. In addition, Michael Paul Ellison, who we have met as the composer of the Mevlana chamber opera, has also written a piece called *Fana* for violin and jazz piano trio in 2001, although it was not initially informed by any Sufi concepts.

Among the few examples of purely instrumental music to draw on the Mevlana and his writings directly is a chamber piece entitled *The Heart's Ear* (1997) for flute,

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<sup>371</sup> "Mevlana's Life and Works Brought to Stage," *Today's Zaman*, March 27, 2007, accessed March 31, 2007 <<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=106609&bolum=110>>.

<sup>372</sup> For a more detailed treatment of Mevlana-inspired ballet, see Lewis, 620-21.

clarinet, and string quartet by Liza Lim, a student of Ton de Leeuw with a deep interest in the Mevlana's poetry. Mevlana-inspired instrumental works remain rare in part because the medium lends itself less well than vocal music to the Mevlana's teachings and in part because many composers are hesitant to assume projects of such spiritual magnitude. As the Turkish pianist Fazıl Say articulates so well,

I want to create a work inspired by Mevlana but as this is a very delicate topic, one should prepare well. I regard this as a very serious spiritual task. When I feel I'm ready, I will definitely compose a piece on Mevlana.<sup>373</sup>

The case of Fazıl Say, who has also rejected the idea of composing a Mevlana Symphony for similar reasons, along with all of the Western art musics surveyed above, raises several significant issues that shape my discussion throughout this chapter on the aesthetics of motion in non-Turkish devotional music.

First among these is what precisely constitutes "non-Turkish music." In the other sections of this chapter, the definition of the term as simply music that is not indigenous to Turkey is straightforward enough, however, in the present case of Western art music such a distinction is less axiomatic. European musical forms have a long history in Turkey and were officially established as early as 1828 when Giuseppe Donizetti (1788-1856), elder brother of the famed Italian opera composer Gaetano Donizetti, became Master of Music to Sultan Mahmut II (r. 1808-39). During his almost thirty years of service, Donizetti made Western music prevalent at the Ottoman court, replacing the repertory of the Mehter military musical corps with Western-style military music, organizing visits by such leading European figures as Franz Liszt, and, most importantly,

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<sup>373</sup> Quoted in "Renowned Pianist Fazıl Say Wants to Compose Piece on Mevlana," *Turkish Daily News*, December 25, 2006, accessed January 3, 2007 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=62548>>.

giving music lessons to scores of courtiers. In following generations, with European art music firmly implanted in court life, Ottoman Turkey boasted numerous accomplished performers and composers, including several sultans, most notably Abdülaziz (r. 1861-76) and Murat V (r. 1876).

By the dawn of the Republican Era, European music had already begun to spread beyond the elite circles of the royal court, and under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who was an enthusiastic admirer of opera, Western styles came to officially supplant most traditional music as part of the sweeping series of reforms that sought to modernize the fledgling nation-state.<sup>374</sup> Thus, the Istanbul Conservatory was founded in 1926 and the German composer Paul Hindemith helped to launch the Ankara State Conservatory in 1936. Today, Western art music is well established in the Turkish musical education system and continues to be supported through various state institutions and festivals. Fazıl Say is among Turkey's best-known composers and performers, and, like most Western music advocates, he maintains a busy touring schedule both in Turkey and around the world. Despite this rich history and the current flurry of activity, however, Western art music in Turkey is still considered to be “non-Turkish” and is referred to as *Klasik Batı Müziği* (Western classical music) or by some variant that distinguishes between *Batı* (Western) and *Türk* (Turkish).

The second major issue that Mevlana-themed Western music raises is that of intentionality. The problem concerns whether the composition, performance, or audition of a particular piece of music, either with or without a Mevlana, Mevlevi, or other Sufi

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<sup>374</sup> See for example Orhan Tekelioğlu, “An Inner History of ‘Turkish Music Revolution’ – Demise of a Music Magazine,” in *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and Middle East*, Papers Read at a Conference Held at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, November 27-27, 1997, ed. Anders Hammarlund, Tord Olsson, and Elisabeth Özdalga (Istanbul: Svenska Forskningsinstitutet; Richmond, England: Curzon, 2001): 111-15.

theme, is intended to be an act of worship or devotion, a more non-religious gesture of tribute, or merely a display of musical artifice. As I suggested in my earlier discussion on popular music artists (see Chapter Six), gauging spiritual intent, and thereby the religious authenticity of any performance of music, is extremely difficult and is something that ultimately cannot be fully known. While it may not be quantifiable, intention, methodologically speaking, must nevertheless be considered as one of the most important factors in the study of Sufi music, for it is the presence of *tasavvuf* (“spiritual essence”), or at the very least the construal of its presence, more so than any thematic or sonic element, that in the end renders something truly “Sufi” and devotional.

It is not axiomatic, despite how closely the Mevlana is tied to nationalism in Turkey today, that a piece of music is more likely to be intentionally devotional in nature if composed or performed by a Turk than by a Westerner, or by anyone from any other culture for that matter, especially considering the prevalence of secularism in Turkey and the increasing globalization of Sufism. All music has the potential to engender or be infused with *tasavvuf*, be it a Mevlana Symphony or a Sanctus. Indeed, a piece of music need not even be originally intended for worship in order to be interpreted as such. Conversely, as I discuss in the following section, a performance that is intended to be mystical in nature may not be received that way by an audience.

The third and final issue that bears addressing here is that of the aesthetics of motion. I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation that movement, as both a physical action and a concept, is central to Sufi Islamic doctrines and is correspondingly manifest not only in music and ceremonial, but also in Turkish and Middle Eastern culture at large in various ways. With the expansion of what constitutes Sufi music and

music for the Mevlana, the question that by necessity arises now is how the Sufi aesthetic of motion can be present in styles and genres that were not originally Sufi. In my earlier analyses of the *sema* and *zikr* ceremonies, I showed that the concept of motion is evident in ways that are culturally and musically rather specific (see Chapters Four and Five). However, Sufism has a far deeper tradition of espousing and laying claim to broader notions that are more universally applicable and apparent.

With their tendency towards universalism, Sufis appreciate and interpret musical movement in the most generic of terms from programmatic titles or references in vocal texts to dance or rhythm; indeed, as one informant explained to me, music is in and of itself a form of motion, progressing from one sound to the next through time and space. Apart from these more universalist, and occasionally more cerebral and philosophical, reckonings, the aesthetic of motion in music is most specifically identified in the ability of a performance to instill *tasavvuf*, its ability to be spiritually and emotionally moving and thereby elicit movement in the form of a physical response or perhaps ecstasy. This shifts the question back to the elements of intention and interpretation, but in the end these may be the only factors that limit or contain the universalist outlook that allows a Sufi to potentially construe motion in just about everything. To better explore these concepts and issues, I turn now to three specific examples that I documented in Konya in 2004 during the commemorations of the Mevlana's passing from this earth.

### **The Pyrotechnics of Piety: Music at the First Annual International Mystic Music Festival**

The most prominent examples of non-Turkish music performed in Turkey in honor of the Mevlana Rumi, whether as acts of devotion or otherwise, are those occurring at the annual International Mevlana Mystic Music Festival, which is held each December in Konya as part of the official program of the broader Mevlana Festival. The Mystic Music Festival was established in 2004 in commemoration of the Mevlana's 731<sup>st</sup> Şeb-i 'urs with a series of afternoon concerts performed by seven groups from six countries over the eight days of the festival. The program included an *ilahi* choral group from İstanbul, which gave two performances, a *qawwali* ensemble from Karachi, a Persian classical music group from Tehran, a folk music group from Azerbaijan, a gospel choir from Paris, a choral group from Sarajevo, and a Bektaşî troupe from Nevşehir (Hacıbektaş); at the last minute, the Bosnian group cancelled due to inclement weather and the program was shortened to seven days. Ironically, the mystical recitals were all held at the Konya Chamber of Commerce, perhaps in an attempt to either deemphasize or mask the spiritual nature of the festival.

Although my focus here is on the Pakistani *qawwali* ensemble, the Azerbaijani folk group, and the French gospel choir, I want to first describe the first of the two *ilahi* recitals so as to establish the expectations and behaviors of the standard Turkish audience and to provide a basis for comparison. The inaugural performance on December 10, 2004 featured a large nearly thirty-member chorus accompanied by a massive instrumental ensemble comprising of two ney-s, two tanbur-s, two ud-s, kemençe, two kanun-s, keman, viyolonsel, four bendir-s, and küdüm under the direction of the well-known conductor, composer, and *tasavvuf* music exponent Ahmet Hatipoğlu. The

official program listed over two dozen pieces, including fifteen *ilahi*-s, numerous compositions by Hatipoğlu, and the third *selam* from Nayi Osman Dede's *Hicaz Ayin-i Şerif*. The performance, however, presented only a few of these pieces and instead took the form of a short staged *zıkr* ceremony featuring a few *ilahi*-s, *kaside*-s, *taksim*-s, and unison choral singing of the *zıkr* formulas. It began with the recitation of an *ilahi* text over ney and kanun drones and occasionally featured quasi-polyphonic passages.

Unlike the *zıkr* ceremonies I had been attending, this performance was quite staid and sober, as is typical of a classical music concert, and had all the trappings of an official state function: flags, speeches from government bureaucrats, and cameramen recording the event for posterity. The conservatory trained singers and musicians in black and white formal attire, while occasionally quite emotive, remained rather stiff and virtually motionless throughout the performance, only Hatipoğlu, who also played kûdum at one point, made any movements, and then these were the grand gestures characteristic of a conductor of Western classical music, and not those of the *zıkr* ceremony. The large audience, which consisted mainly of Turks and a few Westerners, too sat relatively still, but listened avidly to the performance. In between pieces, audience members applauded enthusiastically and at the end there was an instant standing ovation. Hatipoğlu and the group were honored with flowers and kisses before the contented audience began to disperse.

On the following day, much of the audience returned, with a few new additions from the U.S., Europe, Iran, and South Asia, to hear Pakistani *qawwal* Faiz Ali Faiz and his ensemble, which consisted of seven members who sang, clapped, and played harmoniums, dholak, and two sets of tabla-s. Wearing colorful blue *kurta*-s, they sat on

the floor of the stage under the Turkish and Pakistan flags and presented a long recital of five *qawwali* songs, some of them nearing twenty minutes in length. The first song was dedicated to the Mevlana Rumi and the Prophet Muhammad and featured a very long ameterical introduction characterized by numerous improvisations and meandering vocal ornaments before settling into the exuberant metrical song and speeding up to the end. As each *qawwali* song unfolded in a similar way, Faiz sang passionately with deep emotion, often thrusting his right palm forcefully into the air in order to convey his elation and the sentiments of the texts, reminding me of the late Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.<sup>375</sup>

Compared with the Turkish group from the day before, the performance was more visibly ecstatic and the foreign audience members, myself included, too were more obviously enthralled throughout. The Turkish audience members, however, appeared to be on the whole more reserved. Unaccustomed to the lengthy pieces, the unabashed display of emotion, and the fervent gesticulation in a such a concert setting, they were quite reticent at first, but eventually warmed up, clapping along with the ensemble and offering resounding applause at the end, though not much of a standing ovation. In India and Pakistan, audience response to *qawwali* performances is usually far more uninhibited. As Qureshi notes,

[A]s for the listener's outward responses, it is assumed that mystical emotion, though spiritual in nature, will express itself physically, and strong emotional arousal, being an inner movement, needs to find outward expression in physical movement.... [I]n the extreme state of ecstasy, complete restraint from physical movement is impossible.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> For a more thorough catalogue of all the gestures and expressive responses used in *qawwali* performance, see Qureshi, 1995, 121.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 120.

Meanwhile in Turkey, public performances of *tasawwuf* music, from the *sema* shows to the *ilahi* concerts, are usually more contemplative in nature and, hence, more restrained. Undoubtedly, the more muted responses from the Turks can also be attributed in part to the long history of state repression and the still tenuous permissibility of such open displays of *tasavvuf*.

If the pyrotechnics of Faiz Ali Faiz's performance posed somewhat of a challenge for the Turks, those of famed Azeri singer Baba Mirzayev and his ensemble two days later on December 13, 2004 would prove to be downright controversial and scandalous. Betraying some of the influence that the state had on folk music during the Soviet period, Mirzayev and his ensemble, which consists of four instrumentalists on tar, clarinet, accordion, and percussion (double-headed drum, bendir, etc.), gave a long performance that was more characteristic of a schmaltzy cabaret show than of a pious spiritual recital.

The concert began unassumingly with a lively folk-based instrumental piece, but toward its end, when the clarinetist stood up to perform a lengthy solo, a few concertgoers began to furl or raise their eyebrows, not expecting such a brazen display at a recital of mystical music. From this point on, however, the performance would only become increasingly more gratuitous. During the applause, Baba Mirzayev, displaying an even greater flair for the dramatic, sauntered onto the stage wearing a puffy white shirt and a black coat elaborately decorated with a sparkling gold trim. Already in the next piece, Mirzayev's exaggerated vocal style and stage presence was obvious. He sang extremely long melismas and high notes with a feigned look of ecstasy on his face while at the same time signaling to the audience for applause with his right hand. Somewhat later, he broke into fits of laughter while reciting a story and switched unexpectedly

between singing and loud whispering. As he continued, his other onstage antics included dramatically kicking over a chair, singing at the tar as it played a solo, singing to the cameraman that was filming him, and singing into the microphone while on his knees.

The instrumentalists too engaged in similar choreographed displays of showmanship and ostentation. Near the end of the concert, during an extended series of solos that lasted nearly half an hour, for instance, the clarinetist disassembled his instrument and performed numerous solos using only the mouthpiece and various parts of the instrument. Also during this period of solos, the percussionist impressively played several drums simultaneously while striking a bendir with his head and occasionally slapping himself and Mirzayev with his right hand, a feat that elicited wild applause and rhythmic clapping from the audience.

While most of the repertory Mirzayev and his group performed were display pieces, there were some Azeri folk songs that were more in keeping with the mystical theme of the festival. These songs, which referred often to Allah and Muhammad, were either recited over tar or clarinet drones and improvisations or were sung in free meter and richly ornamented. Twice while singing these songs, Mirzayev walked deliberately around the stage in a wide circle, invoking the more folksy *sema*-like *ayini-i cem* ceremony of the Shiite Alevi and Bektaşî Sufi mystics. At the end of the concert too, after having been presented with flowers, Mirzayev commandeered the microphone and delivered a lengthy discourse on the Mevlana and his greatness, something none of the other artists performing at the festival had done.

Despite Mirzayev's tributes to the Mevlana and the excellent musicianship displayed by him and his ensemble, much of the audience had long since dismissed the

performance for being too consciously self-absorbed with technical virtuosity and pretension. At various points during the concert, outbursts of laughter could be heard and some had become visibly embarrassed. Yet it was not only the Turks who had had their sense of propriety and reserve offended; both local and foreign concertgoers had grown impatient with the self-indulgent melismas and other onstage antics and a few of the more restless could occasionally be heard blurting out exclamations like “crazy” and “Allah Allah” in their dismay and incredulity. Still, these sentiments were not unanimous as several audience members around me, both Turkish and non-Turkish, were fully engrossed in the performance and cheered enthusiastically at the end, throwing their hands in the air in praise. Indeed, even many of the detractors had by the end abandoned whatever expectations or reservations they may have had and simply enjoying the unabashed display of showmanship.

Undoubtedly the most unusual and initially least obviously Sufi performance programmed under the banner of the First Annual International Mystic Music Festival, however, was that given by The Gospel Legend Singers two days later on Wednesday, December 15, 2004. The Gospel Legend Singers was a French group comprising entirely of Afro-French and Francophone Africans who sang American gospel songs and Negro spirituals predominantly in English, though a few were in Zulu and other African languages. Dressed in colorful church robes, the eight-member choir was accompanied by keyboard, electric bass, and drum set and was directed by Jackson Mpongo, who formed the group in 1995. Their listing on the program drew a full house of curious Turks and large numbers of Europeans, who had by now begun to pour into the city in anticipation of the Şeb-i ‘urs events on Friday. The program featured a number of real

crowd pleasers including old classics of the African American vocal repertory like “Amazing Grace,” “Swing Low,” and “When the Saint’s Go Marching In,” which had many in the audience holding hands and swaying.

In many ways, Gospel Legend’s performance was as much a “show” as it was a sacred recital, and in the end they had more in common with Baba Mirzayev and his ensemble than they would initially seem. For instance, during several vocal solos, Mpongo signaled to the audience with his hand for applause, much as Mirzayev had done two days earlier, and at one point, several choir members engaged in a scene of play-acting and pantomime as they sang. In yet another song, one of the choir members, having caught the spirit, even moved out into the audience to dance and initiate what for a moment looked very much like an Evangelical revival meeting. At first, the Turkish members of the audience seemed unsure of how to react and behave, but following the lead of the contingent of the excited Europeans at the front of the hall, they soon became more comfortable with clapping to the songs, dancing in their seats, and singing along with the choir.

In the end, it was the European audience members, more so than the Turks, who sought to foster a more outward expression of *tasavvuf*, holding hands and swaying back and forth at many points during the concert. This was particularly evident during the performance of the song “Freedom Is Coming,” which featured ululations, a strong underlying polyrhythm, and a section of call and response between the choir and the audience on the word “freedom.” Thoroughly caught up in the moment, the row of Europeans all joined hands and began to rock front to back, intentionally transforming the gospel show into a seated *zikr* session. In fact, most of these Europeans were actually

Sufi pilgrims who had come to commemorate the death of the Mevlana Rumi and they were quite moved at the end of the show when Mpongo dedicated their performance to brotherhood in Allah. In an informal discussion after the concert, however, some of the choir members admitted to me that they had no idea who the Mevlana Rumi was and explained that they had come to Turkey to spread the word of Jesus and to go sightseeing.

This selection of four performances from the Mystic Music Festival, particularly this last gospel recital, showcases well some of the greatest and most pressing complexities, tensions, and ironies that currently face Sufis and Sufi music audiences in Turkey today. As Sufi adherents work to reassert the cult of the Mevlana in Turkey, they are also striving to follow his teaching of universal brotherhood and are beginning to reach out to embrace other Sufi communities and peoples of other faiths worldwide. In the process, the notion of what is or what can be Sufi devotional music is slowly expanding in Turkey to include forms that in their performance reveal interesting paradoxes involving spiritual intention and interpretation.

Each of these four cases described above, for instance, included varying degrees of onstage theatrics that, because of their specific contexts, called into question the spiritual intention of the artists and therefore the authenticity of the performance. At the root of each of these questions of spiritual genuineness is the element of movement. While the Turkish choral performance had been more inhibited, perhaps in part because of the official state setting, Faiz Ali Faiz and his ensemble, indeed all of the other non-Turkish groups, displayed unrestrained passion and gestured or moved about without abandon. By and large, the Turkish performance seemed to have received the greatest approval from the Turkish audience, but given the history of state control over religious

musical performances, some doubt may linger as to the real spiritual intent of the artists. In the case of Baba Mirzayev, his pyrotechnical performance, though intended to be spiritual, was not accepted as such in part because of his excessive movement and self-indulgent choreography.

Conversely, the gospel show was ironically very well received for the very same reasons that Mirzayev's had been rejected, and was in the end transformed into a Sufi devotional event, even though that had not been the original intent of the performers. Here, *tasavvuf* occurred irrespective of intention and, as I have argued, it is this presence of spirituality that more than anything else makes a performance of music truly Sufi. In the end, it had been the unfettered movement—the dancing, the pantomime, even the spontaneous vocal ornamentation—brought on by spiritual passion that had made the Christian performance one of the most truly Sufi of all those programmed for festival.

Perhaps the most important detail to emerge from this comparison of devotional performances, however, is that it appears that it is the non-Turkish performances and not the Turkish ones that are most prone to outward displays of physical movement. In fact, public Sufi presentations such as the *sema* shows and *ilahi* recitals on the whole tend to be more contemplative in nature perhaps in part because of state censorship; yet even at the *zikr* ceremonies Turkish Sufis in some respects are more reserved in their outward displays of ecstasy than their visitors from the Low Countries, India, or Iran. It may be that the specifically Turkish aesthetic of motion is more tempered than it is in Sufism at large. In the next section, I present three further examples of non-Turkish devotional performances that seem to corroborate this observation.

## **Returning to Rumi's Roots: Music from Iran and Afghanistan**

Apart from the concerts I described above, the majority of non-Turkish music that I saw performed in honor of the Mevlana Rumi during the 2004 Mevlana Festival was that originating from Iran and Afghanistan. Though it is likely that the Mevlana's true birthplace may be in what is today Tajikistan (see Chapter One), both countries are usually cited as being his natal lands. Persians in particular are quick to claim the Mevlana as a cultural icon and one informant even expressed to me his great contempt for the Turks for their having appropriated him as their own. Despite the rivalry, *ziyaret* to Konya from Iran during the Şeb-i 'urs had been increased steadily since the late 1990s, growing, according to the same informant, from perhaps around fifty pilgrims in 1997 to well over one thousand in 2004. While Persians constituted one of the largest pilgrim groups at the 2004 festival, regrettably the Afghans were among the smallest, for I met only a single one, a musician from Herat, and even he had come by way of Europe, to where had emigrated because of the difficult political and economic circumstances he faced in his native country.

Having already examined the major questions raised by non-Turkish music in the previous sections, I end this chapter more simply here with ethnographic descriptions of three performances that were given by some of these Persian and Afghan pilgrims and that were intended to be unadulterated acts of worship of the Mevlana Celal ed-Din Rumi. The first of these is an account of a concert of traditional Persian music at which many of the audience members had been so overwhelmed by the beauty of the music and the spirit of the Mevlana that they slipped effortlessly into ecstatic states. The next two passages describe events that occurred on the final day of the Mevlana Festival, the day

commemorating the Mevlana's passing and his wedding with the Divine. The first of these two is set at the shrine of the Mevlana and describes a large ceremony at which Persian pilgrims recited poetry written by the Mevlana. The second describes a recital performed by the Afghan musician Seyed Abdul Haq on the evening of the Mevlana's final sublimation with Allah.

December 15, 2004 Konya

After inquiring at the concierge and wandering around lost in the hotel for a while, I finally hear the sound of the tar coming from one of the conference rooms and lead us right to the concert. During *sohbet* at the *dergah*, my new freelance journalist friend had told me that the Persians were about to hold another recital tonight at a nearby hotel. Indeed, I had noted their absence at *zikir*, and as we were both eager to connect with them further, we decided to head out to find the hotel immediately, as the concert had already started. Standing at the door now and peering in, I see a few familiar faces from the *dergah*, but the only free seats are off to the left. The large audience consists almost entirely of Persian pilgrims and is in fact comprised largely of women; there are only a few Turks and Westerners sprinkled about.

Taking my seat and getting my bearings, I note right away that the concert is somewhat different than I had expected. I had assumed that we would see the same ensemble that performed a few days ago as part of the Mystic Music Festival. That performance had featured the famous Persian classical singer Ali Reza Ghorbani accompanied by ney, setar, and bendir. Tonight's concert, though, has the less typical lineup of two tar-s and three bendir-s and has a more overtly spiritual, rather than

classical, character. Two of the three bendir-s are ornately decorated, one with elegant Arabic calligraphy, the other with a sepia image of a whirling dervish. In front of the musicians is an altar with a portrait of the Shiite saint Ali surrounded by candles. Despite the reverent atmosphere, there are video cameras and people taking flash photography everywhere, and one Persian cameraman is even hovering around on stage filming the musicians and the altar, irrespective of the audience. No one seems particularly disturbed, though, and the musicians carry on flawlessly without even taking notice.

When the tar-s move from a duet into a full ensemble piece, the audience remains subdued, somewhat like the Turks at formal concerts, but as the performance progresses into a series of vocal works, the spectators begin to sing softly and clap gently along with the musicians and a few close their eyes and bounce their heads back and fourth. Soon it seems that most people in the audience are performing *zikr*-like motions and a few have obviously slipped into gentle trance states. An elderly man sitting behind me wearing full dervish dress bows his head down to his knees and starts swaying it emphatically back and forth, while across the hall, I spot a Western backpacker doing much the same, but in a less exaggerated manner. Most dramatically, one woman in a white headscarf, whom I had seen bowing up and down in her seat with her palms facing up, now begins to tremble, slowly at first as if crying, and then more and more erratically. She seems to be struggling to contain her ecstasy, covering her ears with her hands and then pushing her shaking arms outward as if to stop the sound of the music. One of the cameramen runs to her to capture the scene on film, while a number of the women around her watch her to make sure that she is alright, but leave her be.

After a few minutes, the ensemble finishes its set and turns the stage over to a solo singer accompanying himself on setar. One man stands up to rearrange the bendir-s that the previous musicians had abandoned haphazardly on their chairs and makes sure that the image of the whirling dervish is upright and lit by the candles. A little later, someone turns down the lights, leaving only the candlelight reflecting from the frame drum to illuminate the room (Figure 63).



Figure 63: Bendir Decorated with a Whirling Dervish (Konya, December 17, 2004)

In the meantime, another man has taken it upon himself to walk around and lift his hands up in the air so as to encourage the audience to sing along to the choruses of the songs. Although I do not speak any Farsi, I can make out the words “Mawlana” and “Shams” mixed in with the obligatory “Allahu” and “Ali.” At the end of the concert, the old dervish behind me stands up and hoarsely, but passionately sings a long melody, with those around him either singing along quietly or occasionally intoning the mystical syllable “Hu.” Afterwards, my friend and I stay up late into the night conducting

interviews, having lengthy conversations about the Mevlana with the pilgrims, and even manage to join an impromptu jam session with some of the musicians.

December 17, 2004 Konya

Arriving at the main gate of the Mevlana Museum, I realize that while we are not by any means late, my friends and I should have gotten here much earlier as the shrine is already beginning to get rather crowded. We had taken our time after lunch conducting interviews and talking about Rumi and the festival, and had even paused on the way over to film one of the Persian journalists singing the Mevlana's *gazel*-s on the side of the road. Now, we are being told by the museum workers to proceed all the way past the tombs and go into the former *sema* hall. I had hoped to sit up front near the shrines of the Mevlana and his son because this is where the main proceedings of the so-called "Candle Ceremony" are going to take place, but with so many people already clustered around them, my chances do not look good; in fact, I have a hard time even just pushing through the throngs of pilgrims to get into the *semahane*, and in the process I get completely separated from my friends.

Fortunately, I soon find a spot on the floor next to a woman I recognize from the *dergah* but have not yet had much of a chance to talk to. She invites me to sit with her and we have a nice long conversation about Sufism as we wait for the ceremony to start. I take the opportunity to ask her about what to expect this afternoon, but she does not seem know too much more than I do. While the candle is a common enough motif in the Mevlana's writings symbolizing the light of Allah and mankind's burning desire to be reunited with Him, I do not recall having ever heard or read about a specific ceremony

named after it. Nevertheless, dozens of lit candles hang from the spiral-decorated dome above us and encircled the room all the way around. I presume that the ceremony commemorates the Mevlana's passing, but I am unsure why it is being held in the afternoon and not at sunset or later in the evening when legend holds that the Mevlana's soul finally ascended to meet his Beloved.

The ceremony is taking quite some time to get started as the museum workers are still struggling to accommodate the hundreds of pilgrims who want to get into the building. Those of us who had been sitting have all been asked to stand and we are all now tightly packed together. Sometime around 3:15 p.m., I faintly hear a free meter vocal piece that sounds vaguely like the *nat-i Mevlana*, followed by recitations from the Koran, and a series of chants. Although I am facing the Mevlana's tomb, I cannot see or hear very well from this distance. I raise my video camera above the congregation like a periscope, drawing the attention of the Turks and Persians around me who also want to see what is happening up front, but there does not seem to be much going on; still, I leave my camera up because some appear grateful that they can at least see the sarcophagi on the pullout display on my camera. Presently, the congregation pronounces a series of "amin-s" to the prayers being chanted and soon begins to communally repeat the word "Allah" in a sudden crescendo and accelerando, closing their eyes as they vigorously shake their heads. After a few more short prayers, the ceremony ends with congregational pronouncements of the syllable "Hu."

Although most of the supplicants disperse as soon as they can from the crowded shrine-museum, many continue to linger on afterwards. Persian pilgrims in particular seem keen on loitering about, talking, meditating, or listening to the preprogrammed ney

*taksim* soundtrack that fills the *semahane*. In celebration of the Mevlana's Şeb-i 'urs (wedding to his Beloved), one woman hands out Iranian money and candy enclosed in white nuptial wrappings. A few others cower in the corners convulsing in trance states.

Meanwhile, I find my friends and see that they have joined a group of Persians gathered around a man reading from a book of the Mevlana's poetry in Farsi. As I approach, I can hear that his recitational style is highly rhythmic and is characterized by strong emphasis on the cadences occurring on each half of the distich. His narration over the ametrical ney *taksim* backdrop causes some to weep or rock back and forth on the floor. Those pilgrims who are not sitting in rapt audition move about with their video cameras and mobile phones recording the performance. We stay for quite some time listening to various readers, but one man in particular stands out as the most captivating. He recites in a highly enthusiastic manner, emphasizing the asymmetrical and compound rhythms with his hands, and he slowly works himself into an ecstatic state, swaying, jumping up and down on his knees, and breathing heavily and deeply in a *zikr*-like fashion. The trancing draws the attention of the museum officials who, trying to preserve the secular character of the "museum," several times come to warn him to calm down and read in a more a restrained and quite tone.<sup>377</sup> Eventually, we are all forced out of the museum, though many of the Persians simply relocate outside, where they would remain all night reciting poetry and singing until sunrise.

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<sup>377</sup> Actually, recitation of the Mevlana's verses at his shrine seems to be quite an ancient practice. Already during the time of Sultan Veled, one Seraj al-Din-e Masnavi-khwan lived at the Mevlana's shrine and was employed to recite the *Mesnevi* there. See Lewis 432-33.

December 17, 2004 Konya

It has been a very full day. Indeed, it has been quite a busy week as I have run around all over the city trying to document as much of the Mevlana Festival as possible. Oddly, although I have slept little over the past eight days, staying up late every night attending performances, cataloging recordings, and writing field notes, I am not in the least bit tired; I must be feeding off of everyone's *tasavvuf*. With all the events commemorating the Mevlana's Şeb-i 'urs tonight, I hardly know which to attend before I have to catch an early morning bus back to İzmir. After spending over an hour at the overcrowded *dergah* of Nuri Baba, a group of us decide that with all the heat and all the people still waiting to take part in the *zikr* ceremony that perhaps it is time to move on. Having heard that there might be another *zikr* or a recital at the carpet show we had been to the night before, we make our way there just in time for the *çay*, *lokum*, and music.

The Afghan musician Seyed Abdul Haq is preparing to give a short recital of instrumental pieces on rubab. As he tunes, the mixed gathering of locals, tourists, and pilgrims from around the world greet one another and share tea and sweets. Referring to the lengthy tuning process, Seyed explains that just as the body needs food, so the soul needs music, and just as it takes time to cook food for the body, so too does it take time to cook food for the soul. One of the mystics stands up and says that for Seyed his rubab is not a musical instrument, but a "praying instrument," and the musician adds that there is a Sufi play on words that refers to the instrument as a "ruh-bab," drawing from the Arabic word for spirit (*ruh*).

Sitting cross-legged under various wall hangings with images of whirling dervishes and the Mevlana, he begins to play an *alap* in *raga Bhairavi* (Indian *raga*

*Bhairava*) before moving into the main composition in *Tintal*. As he begins to play, one of the French tourists puts out a recording device in the middle of the floor, but unlike the Persians, Seyed does not allow any taping, apologizing and saying that he plays only for the Mevlana. The congregants sit in silence in the intimate tourist setting, listening with reverence as he travels through the *raga* with his eyes firmly shut. I find it rather appropriate to be spending the evening commemorating the Mevlana's final journey by listening to a migrant musician from the same land from which the saint had come. After the performance, we sit for a short while in *sohbet*, eating and drinking tea while talking about music, religion, and our travels. Soon, one of the mystics announces that it is midnight and that we were going to commemorate the moment with *görüŝmek*. Forming a large circle, we intone the syllable "Hu" and then break up into a complicated spiral so that we can greet one another spiritually by touching temples, kissing hands, and staring into each other's eyes.

**CHAPTER EIGHT**  
**CAUGHT IN MOTION:**  
**CONCLUSION**

This chapter concludes this dissertation. Organized in four sections, it surveys the wealth of Mevlana-related developments taking place at the time of this writing and locates the dissertation within the world of Mevlana studies. The first section serves as an anecdotal postscript to my fieldwork experience in Turkey in 2004 and 2005 and describes recent tourist advertisements in the U.S. that feature Mevlevi *semazen*-s and that may yet prove to be significant contributors to the continued renaissance of Mevlana culture. The following section centers on the dizzying panoply of activities being scheduled in the name of the Mevlana Celal ed-Din Rumi and his devotees as Turkey anticipates the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. In the penultimate section, I review the salient arguments and main contributions made in this dissertation and then briefly survey the current state of research on music for the Mevlana in the final section, highlighting potential areas for further investigation.

**“Welcome Home” — Caught in Motion**

March 13, 2007      College Park, Maryland

Waiting at the College Park Metro station for the shuttle bus to the University of Maryland campus, I hold my breath as a Washington D.C. metro bus spirals toward me. At such times of impending vehicular disaster, I am reminded of how I was once struck by a slow-moving car in Bornova while walking down the sidewalk of an empty road. This event was particularly ironic considering how I had survived every street crossing I

had ever made in Turkey unscathed by adopting the jaywalker's motto of "close your eyes and open your heart" I had learned in Egypt. This time though, instead of my life flashing before my eyes, I see a large tourist advertisement for Turkey on the side of the bus as it whizzes past me. Displaying colorful images of three iconic Turkish scenes, the ad makes me instantly nostalgic. On the far left side of the poster is a detail of the famous library of Celsus at Ephesus, while at the right the distinctive stone-crested *peribaca-s* ("fairy chimneys") of Kapadokya dart upward into the central Anatolian sky. Caught in motion at the very center of the ad are a number of dervishes whirling in what appears to be an old caravanserai.

The advertisement is only one peripatetic element of a new marketing campaign promoting Turkish tourism. The comprehensive project also includes television commercials, one of which I have seen airing on CNN on Sunday mornings. The TV spot features a winding *Çingene*-style ("Gypsy") melody on the clarinet and major Turkish buildings and icons slowly transmuting one into another as the camera pans around freely. Both the melody and ad culminate at the moment when the sail of a boat in the Mediterranean Sea metamorphoses into the spinning white tunics of Mevlevi dervishes. As the whirlers' arms and skirts unfurl, the words "Welcome Home" emerge and the clarinet delicately settles into a tranquil cadence. Wondering how much these ads will be able to increase Turkish tourism and what further impact this will all ultimately have on Mevlana culture, I hop on a different bus a few minutes later and get back to the business of dissertation writing, now that I'm back "home."

## Music and the Mevlevi in the Year of the Mevlana

The commercials described above represent only one small aspect of an ambitious series of programs and initiatives currently being implemented by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism that center on the Mevlana and his whirling dervishes. The first such large-scale promotion of Mevlana culture occurred in 1973 when on the occasion of the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mevlana's death the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization declared that year the Year of Rumi. At that time, commemorative stamps were issued (Figure 64), a conference was held in Ankara, and *sema* performances were given in Konya and abroad. Commemorations of the Mevlana have only become more extensive since then.



Figure 64: 1973 Commemorative Stamps featuring Whirling Dervishes, Küdüm Players, and the Mevlana

After adding the *sema* to its list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in October 2005, UNESCO has once again sought to preserve and reinvigorate Mevlana culture by declaring the year 2007, marking the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, another Year of Rumi (Figure 65).

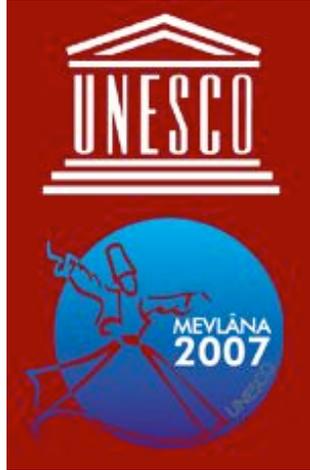


Figure 65: UNESCO Mevlana 2007 Emblem

Under this banner, a bewildering array of celebrations have been scheduled across the world and in Turkey, where seemingly every cultural event occurring there this year has been linked, officially or otherwise, with the Mevlana and the Year of Rumi.

Although I am unable to confirm at the time of this writing whether many of the following events actually transpired, the festivities reportedly were to begin on December 17, 2006, the day commemorating the Mevlana's 733<sup>rd</sup> Şeb-i 'urs.<sup>378</sup> Following the official ceremonies in Konya, the so-called "Mevlana Love, Tolerance, and Culture Train" was to depart for a three-month expedition across Turkey and Europe. Traveling through Ankara, Eskişehir, Afyon, Bilecik, İstanbul, and Edirne before continuing on to sixteen countries in Europe, the train evidently was to carry troupes of musicians and *semazen*-s who were to perform both on board and at various train stations along the way. The train had also been conceived of as a traveling museum and was intended to house exhibits featuring translations of the Mevlana's writings, Mevlevi cuisine, artwork, and period attire in addition to promotional materials for tourism in Turkey. A silk carpet

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<sup>378</sup> "Culture Train to Promote Mevlana and Turkey in Europe," *Turkish Daily News*, July 7, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=48182>>. See also İstanbul Convention and Visitors Bureau, "Mevlana Train to Tour Europe," *İstanbul Bulletin*, September 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.icvbulletin.org/trnews18.htm>>.

bearing the likeness of the Mevlana was also to be weaved on the journey and presented by the Turkish Prime Minister to his Spanish counterpart in Madrid as a gift of peace.

Other *sema* troupes have planned similarly extensive worldwide tours that include performances in such previously atypical venues as Mexico, Poland, and Portugal.<sup>379</sup> Meanwhile, numerous official conferences, *sema* presentations, and Sufi music concerts have also been scheduled in such major cities as Chicago, New York, Washington D.C., London, Berlin, Geneva, Rome, Cairo, Damascus, Dushanbe, New Delhi, Jakarta, Melbourne, Sydney, and Tokyo. In France, the UNESCO headquarters in Paris is expected to host a discussion panel on the Sufi saint in September, while in Germany, the Frankfurt Book Fair has planned an exhibition focusing on his writings as well as his life and times.<sup>380</sup> In the Netherlands, the Year of the Mevlana has been received with even more enthusiasm as the release of commemorative coins, calendars, and documentaries complement an extensive year-long schedule of spiritual programs and performances of music and *sema*.<sup>381</sup>

Yet, nowhere is the Mevlana's birthday being more elaborately feted than in Turkey, where his name has on occasion been attached to the most unlikely of events and activities. Among the major curiosities and anomalies include a Mevlana chess tournament coinciding with the 2006 Mevlana Festival,<sup>382</sup> a Mevlana fashion show that

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<sup>379</sup> Kemal Çakirgöz, *Rumi 2007: 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*, Copyright Kubbe Production 2006, accessed May 1, 2007 <<http://www.rumi2007.net/>>.

<sup>380</sup> "Mevlana to be Commemorated around the World in 2007," *Turkish Daily News*, October 27, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=57575>>.

<sup>381</sup> *Mevlana800Info: 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Birth Mevlana Rumi*, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.mevlana800.info/>>.

<sup>382</sup> "Mevlana to be Commemorated with Comprehensive Program," *Turkish Daily News*, November 30, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=60433>>.

will also tour Europe and the U.S.<sup>383</sup> and the reintroduction of a forgotten dessert from the Gelibolu Mevlevihane, now called the “Mevlevi,” about which the researcher-confectioner declared, “My aim is to share this dessert, which has mystical attributes, with the Turkish people and then with people around the world.”<sup>384</sup> Added to these is the release of an animated cartoon movie intended to bring the Mevlana’s message to children,<sup>385</sup> the production of a movie about the Mevlana to help revitalize the Turkish film industry,<sup>386</sup> the creation of a Mevlana television project and a musical,<sup>387</sup> and the broadcasting of a Mevlana documentary on the major national television station (TRT).<sup>388</sup>

Most commemorations, however, follow more traditional means. A four-day symposium held in İstanbul and Konya (May 8-11)<sup>389</sup> and the issuing of still more commemorative coins and stamps both hark back to the 1973 Year of Rumi, while the performance of hundreds of *sema* ceremonies throughout the year in both Turkey and

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<sup>383</sup> “Fashion Show Inspired By Mevlana’s Philosophy to Travel around the World,” *Turkish Daily News*, December 13, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=61550>>.

<sup>384</sup> “Forgotten Delicacy Sweetens 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cuisine,” *Turkish Daily News*, April 18, 2005, accessed February 11, 2007 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=10995>>.

<sup>385</sup> According to a state official, the animated film has generated great interest from abroad and there are plans to distribute the cartoon worldwide to in twenty differently languages in order to “contribute to the promotion of Turkey in terms of tourism.” See “Mevlana Cartoon to be Broadcast around the World,” *Turkish Daily News*, October 20, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=57153>>. A longer fifty-two episode animated series based on the *Mesnevi* has also been planned but, as far as I am aware, has not yet materialized. See “Mevlana’s Love Beckons All to Konya,” *Turkish Daily News*, December 17, 2005, accessed September 15, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=30813>>.

<sup>386</sup> “Turkey Could Resurrect the Silver Screen, Says Paradigm President,” *Turkish Daily News*, January 22, 2007, accessed February 11, 2007 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=64474>>.

<sup>387</sup> “Author Reveals Vibrancy of Elders,” *Turkish Daily News*, February 28, 2007, accessed March 1, 2007 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=66939>>.

<sup>388</sup> “Mevlana to be Commemorated around the World in 2007,” *Turkish Daily News*, October 27, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=57575>>.

<sup>389</sup> “Mevlana to be Commemorated around the World in 2007,” *Turkish Daily News*, October 27, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=57575>>.

around the world testifies to the degree to which the Mevlevi musical tradition has been reinvigorated since then. In Turkey, countless additional whirling shows are scheduled to be performed throughout the year beyond the standard weekly programs at the Mevlana Cultural Center in Konya, the thrice weekly shows at the Şirkeci Train Station in İstanbul, and the biweekly ceremonies at the Mevlevihane in Galata. Added to these are commemorative concerts featuring other Sufi music as well as various concerts of Western classical music such as those held in February by the İzmir State Symphony Orchestra<sup>390</sup> or those presenting new compositions discussed in the previous chapter.

This increased musical and ceremonial activity in 2007 and in the past few years has purportedly generated greater interest in other aspects of Mevlevi and Mevlana culture among foreign visitors. Citing the need to meet tourist demand, the Konya municipal government recently announced plans to create a new living Mevlevi museum near the Mevlana's shrine. Calling it the first of its kind anywhere in the world, one Konya government official described the concept as follows:

A group of workers will portray a family and show their daily life by splitting chores, praying, providing the necessities... basically impersonating the Mevlevis. Tourists who come here at designated times in groups of 20-30 will pay a fee and get a breath of Mevlevi air.<sup>391</sup>

Also under the pretext of further stimulating tourism and cultural patrimony, the Turkish state has begun a number of significant restoration projects that will oversee the renovation of several historic Mevlevi *tekke*-s across Turkey and in neighboring

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<sup>390</sup> "Mevlana to be Commemorated around the World in 2007," *Turkish Daily News*, October 27, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=57575>>.

<sup>391</sup> Quoted in "Live Mevlevi Museum Near Mevlana Culture Center," *Turkish Daily News*, May 18, 2005, accessed February 11, 2007 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=13373>>.

countries.<sup>392</sup> The Mevlevihane in Gelibolu (Gallipoli), which is the largest of its kind in Anatolia, has already reopened and the Yenikapı lodge in İstanbul, which was damaged in a fire in 1997, is currently being restored as a Mevlevi museum. Other *tekke*-s in İstanbul are likewise slated to be restored and converted into libraries and research centers, though precedent leads me to believe that they will undoubtedly also serve as venues for *sema* performance. Tellingly, the Republican People's Democratic Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) has opposed these projects on account that they violate the 1925 ban.

The current government, however, has overall been quite enamored of the Mevlana of late and continues to justify its support of Mevlevism through such projects on economic and political grounds. Fearful of what effect the stigma of religious intolerance and a spate of recent terrorist attacks on synagogues, Western banks, and tourist centers may have on Turkey's prospects for membership in the European Union, the government has been eager to adopt a more liberal attitude and actively promote the Mevlana's messages of peace, tolerance, and coexistence. In the wake of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent worldwide struggle against fundamentalist Islamist terrorism, the Mevlana's teachings have been seen as all the more vital. Thus, in the Year of Rumi, the municipal government of Konya planned to send one million Mevlana-themed postcards with the slogan "Mevlana's Invitation for Peace" to influential political and cultural figures in almost 175 countries.<sup>393</sup> Along these lines, the Konya government has

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<sup>392</sup> "Tekkes – Living Spaces for Mystic Sects," *Turkish Daily News*, February 4, 2007, accessed May 1, 2007 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=66117>>.

<sup>393</sup> "Worldwide Activities to Highlight Konya and Mevlana," *Turkish Daily News*, April 11, 2007, accessed April 12, 2007 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=70285>>.

also established the International Mevlana Peace Prize to honor individuals who have contributed most to world peace.<sup>394</sup>

It is in this web of international Islamophobia, E.U. politics, tourism economics, and UNESCO patronage that the Mevlana has been thrust upon the world as a guide for all humanity and that his devotees in Turkey have been able to take the biggest steps toward their rehabilitation. Child *semazen*-s are now regularly featured in the main public shows in Konya and they perform, according to one report, “with the awareness of its spiritual aspect and not merely as a dance performance,” thereby ensuring the next generation of Mevlana devotees.<sup>395</sup> Meanwhile, the Mevlana Festival continues to expand, growing from eight days in 2004 to eleven days in 2005, to eighteen days in 2006 and 2007.

Yet, without question the single most significant development to arise from UNESCO’s 2007 Year of Rumi has been this more subtle statement appearing recently in the Turkish press regarding the Konya Ministry of Culture and Tourism:

The ministry officials said new events could be included in the program and that, as the ministry, they supported activities to be held by nongovernmental organizations to commemorate Mevlana.<sup>396</sup>

In the world of Turkish cultural politics, this invitation is virtually tantamount to an official reinstatement of the Sufi *tarik*at-s, or at least as close to it as the Mevlana’s devotees have ever been in the past eighty years. It is unlikely that this more liberal climate will dissipate within the near future; rather with the growing religious

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<sup>394</sup> “Mevlana to be Commemorated around the World in 2007,” *Turkish Daily News*, October 27, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=57575>>.

<sup>395</sup> “Mevlana’s Love Beckons All to Konya,” *Turkish Daily News*, December 17, 2005, accessed September 15, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=30813>>.

<sup>396</sup> “Mevlana to be Commemorated around the World in 2007,” *Turkish Daily News*, October 27, 2006, accessed December 18, 2006 <<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=57575>>.

consciousness occurring throughout the country and the increasing influence of religiously rooted political parties, the Mevlana's followers will undoubtedly continue to move forward for many years to come.

### **Coming Full Circle: An Offering to the Mevlana**

The number eight is considered to be an incredibly auspicious number. As Annemarie Schimmel explains,

Already in antiquity it was regarded as a remarkable, lucky number: it was thought that beyond the 7 spheres of the planets the eighth sphere, that of the fixed stars, was located. As a "number of gods" it is found as early as in ancient Babylon...[where it was associated with Paradise]. The connection of 8 with Paradise continues through the ages: the Muslims believe that there are 7 hells and 8 paradises, since God's mercy is greater than his wrath.... Eight appears as a second beginning, on a higher level, the fulfillment of what the heptad had prepared and completed.... [And] it seems that the eightfold division of the path that leads to eternal bliss is a rather universal concept.<sup>397</sup>

In addition, the octagon, according to Sufi thought, not only symbolizes all of these sacred elements, but it is also esoterically understood to be the one shape that most resembles a circle without actually being one (see Chapter Two). Thus, I come full circle here in the eighth chapter to discuss the major themes and contributions of this dissertation, which whether by an act of auspiciousness or coincidence comes to light at the dawn of the Mevlana's eighth century and is accordingly dedicated to him and to his followers.

This dissertation has been guided by the central themes of ethnography, motion, and devotion. The first of these was a major concern for me even before I began my fieldwork. Underwhelmed by the amount of ethnographic detail and specificity in the

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<sup>397</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 156-59.

existing literature on Mevlevi music and ritual, I was eager to document actual living practice and not rely only on ancient histories and generalities to make broader points and conclusions about music and culture. Going into “the field” to document what I had come to understand was a moribund tradition, I was pleasantly surprised and then daunted when I discovered that Mevlevism is not only resurgent in Turkey, but is also experiencing a worldwide renaissance. Actually, the Mevlevi do not really exist today in the way that we have come to know them through old romantic travel journals and idealistic Sufi poetry; one wonders if in fact they ever did exist in the way these writings describe. The *tarikāt*, which has been outlawed for almost a full century, is now an international cultural foundation more than a Sufi order in the traditional sense; meanwhile, the Mevlevi, rather than being cut off from the world confined to their cloisters, are engaging with it in new ways as they seek to spread the teachings of their founding saint around the globe.

As I came to understand this current situation more fully during my fieldwork, I realized that, more precisely, all the activity taking place is not being done so much on behalf of “Mevlevism” or even “Sufism,” terms that in the end do not seem to mean very much to the faithful, but in the name of the Mevlana Celal ed-Din Muhammad Rumi. Indeed, it is the Mevlana, more so than any specific order, that is experiencing the greatest rebirth in Turkey and around the world and those who are helping to bring this about are not necessarily “Mevlevi” or even “Sufi.” This situation on the ground forced me to reformulate my research and move beyond such outmoded and ultimately divisive labels, for as Franklin Lewis notes,

Despite Rumi’s close association with the Mevlevis, rival orders like the Nimatollahis, the various branches of the Naqshbandis and the

International Association of Sufism, which hold ecumenical conferences on Sufism in the West, not infrequently appeal to Rumi and hold him in reverence.<sup>398</sup>

Thus, I shifted my research focus while still in the field from “Mevlevi music” to “music for the Mevlana” and in so doing I discovered a much bigger world of devotional music than had hitherto been documented. This is a world populated by wandering musicians of all types from touring professionals to pilgrims and from trancing devotees to tourists. I realized that if I was going to produce the most detailed and most accurate ethnography possible, I had to account for all these types of travelers and their modes of transport, and that I had to start including the tourists and Westerners in my video recordings and not try to film around them. As James Clifford articulates so well, ethnography too often has “privileged relations of dwelling over relations of travel.”<sup>399</sup>

Past ethnographies have tended

to marginalize or erase several blurred boundary areas, historical realities that slip out of the ethnographic frame. ... The means of transport [for instance] is largely erased.... The discourse of ethnography (“being there”) is separated from that of travel (“getting there”). ... Generally speaking, what’s hidden is the wider global world of intercultural import-export in which the ethnographic encounter is always already enmeshed.<sup>400</sup>

My attempt to “rethink” Mevlana culture as a site of “dwelling *and* travel,” to borrow again from Clifford,<sup>401</sup> emerged as I began to study the Mevlana’s writings, Sufi theology, and devotional music more deeply. I soon discovered themes of travel everywhere and observed that travel both informed and was a part of a wider Sufi

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<sup>398</sup> Lewis, 520.

<sup>399</sup> Clifford, 22.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 23

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 31.

aesthetic of motion. However, I wondered how useful such a broad aesthetic would be as an analytical tool for music. As I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, motion is evident or findable in just about everything from vocal texts to melodic modulation, rhythm, overall structure, dance, trance, and so forth. In the field, I worried that this aesthetic had more to say about the culture than “the music itself,” as it was too broad to allow for distinctions between Sufi forms and other types of music, but as I came to realize at the Mevlana Festival and later through my study of popular music, this universalism is precisely the point. Sufism is nothing if not a universalist endeavor, and if there is to be anything that defines a kind of music as “Sufi,” then it must be something that is also widely applicable.

Indeed, the only limitation on what can be Sufi music concerns the element of *tasavvuf* (“spiritual essence”), which I have suggested is itself tied to notions of movement. Sufism seeks to direct the supplicant toward spiritual unity with the One God and maintains that music is itself the vehicle that provides the quickest, most direct route to Him. Thus, for a kind of music to be Sufi it must be able to function devotionally, it must impart *tasavvuf*. As I have shown in this study, performance of virtually any type of music can meet this requirement so long as it references those emotions and concepts in the performer or listener.

One of the major contributions of this dissertation, therefore, is the reassessment of what constitutes “Sufi music.” While Jean During places the emphasis on intention and hence on the performer,<sup>402</sup> I shift the focus to interpretation and thus expand his definition to include also the listener or devotee. This has allowed me to take into account other forms of music that are not typically understood to be Sufi or devotional in

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<sup>402</sup> See During, 1999.

nature, but nevertheless functioned as such while I was in the field. Thus, another important facet of this dissertation is the analyses it provides of musical forms beyond the standard Mevlevi classical repertory of the *sema* ceremony, namely music of the *zikr* ceremony, popular music, and non-Turkish music.

These analyses demonstrate the ubiquity of the aesthetic of motion and offer a deeper understanding of how aesthetics and worldview not only shape and become manifest in cultural praxis, but conversely how cultural praxis informs aesthetics and worldview. In addition, this dissertation, in its focus on the aesthetics of motion, also provides a better understanding of both the interconnectivity between music and such physical forms of movement as gesticulation, dance, and trance, and of its relation to broader elements of social mobility like pilgrimage, tourism, and globalization.

Ultimately, the focus on all these various elements that comprise the aesthetics of motion has allowed for a more thorough ethnographic account of Sufi musical practice than has until now been possible.

### **Beyond Static States: An Offering to Ethnomusicology**

In the spirit of the aesthetics of motions that permeate the musics, ceremonies, and cultural practices that have been the focus of this dissertation, it is not my intention to conclude with a full stop, but to impart rather a sense of forward motion, much as the closed circle implies perpetual movement, by discussing briefly here some potential avenues for further investigation on Mevlana culture and other topics.

First and foremost, there remains the ongoing documentation of Mevlana culture as it continues to unfold in Turkey and around the globe after UNESCO's Year of Rumi.

It is likely that this year's festivities will lead to the further intensification of Mevlana-related performances, activities, and projects in the near future and it remains to be seen just what impact, if any, this will all ultimately have on the Sufi orders of Turkey and their devotional practices. While it is unlikely that their official standing will change, there may yet be further liberalization that allows the various *tarikats* to continue expanding their activities and musical repertoires. Included in this is the potential growth of Sufi popular music as well as the further use of non-Turkish musical forms in devotional contexts; undoubtedly both categories would be highly revealing studies in and of themselves. Additionally, a more exhaustive study of the music used in the traditional *zikr* ceremony would also be an extremely valuable addition to the scholarly literature.

Also welcome would be ethnomusicological studies of other Sufi *tarikats*, many of which remain wholly undocumented. Most of these orders have music associated with specific saints and poets aside from the Mevlana Rumi that merit attention and an investigation of any of these would serve to complement the present study. In particular, the poet-saint Yunus Emre, to whom I have referred on occasion, has had numerous poems set to music, including now also popular music, though this repertory has not been systematically examined. Beyond Turkey, an ethnomusicological study of the music used by the European and North American Sufi groups seems especially appropriate at this time as they begin to strengthen their ties with the Turkish *tarikats*.

Finally, several areas of potentially fruitful investigation also emerge from the theme of the aesthetics of motion. One area that requires further concentration not just in ethnomusicology, but in other fields of the social sciences as well is the study of tourism

from the perspective of the tourist, who too often is either negatively typecast or regarded as ignoble. More specifically pertinent to the field of ethnomusicology is the need for continued study of the interrelationships between music and the various forms of social and physical movement. This will encourage music scholars to rely more on such fields as social anthropology, dance ethnology, and ethnochoreology and will propel ethnomusicology forward in its ongoing quest for unity with other academic disciplines.

APPENDIX:

LIST OF MAKAM-S USED IN THE ŞEDARABAN AYİN  
OF MUSTAFA NAKŞI DEDE

*Nat-ı Şerif*

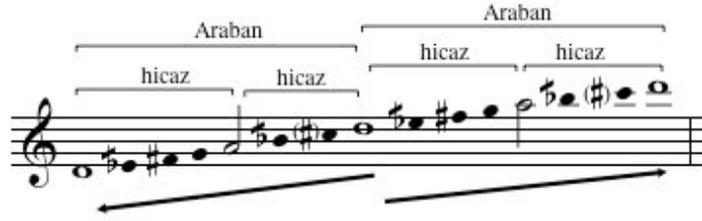


*Makam Rast*

*Taksim*

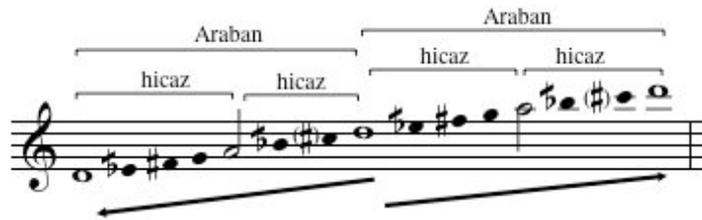


*Makam Rast*



*Makam Şedaraban*

*Peşrev*

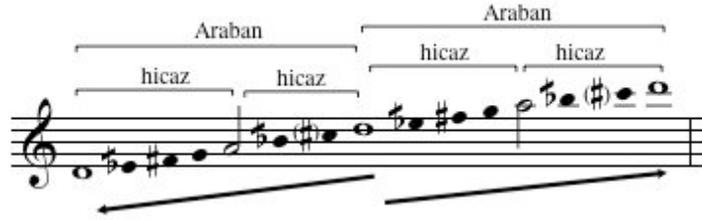


*Makam Şedaraban*



*Makam Rast*

## First Selam



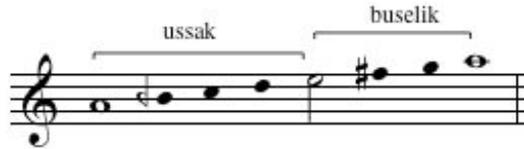
*Makam Şedaraban*



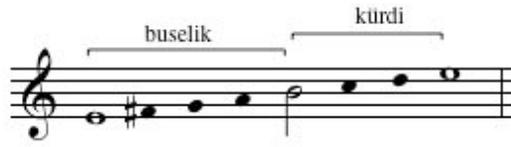
*Makam Rast*



*Makam Hümayun on yegah (D)*



*Makam Hüseyini*



*Makam Nihavend on aşiran (E)*



*Makam Nihavend on düğah (A)*

## Second Selam



*Makam Nihavend on hüseyini (e)*

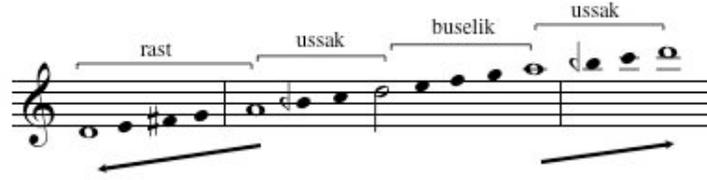


*Makam Nihavend on düğah (A)*



*Makam Rast*

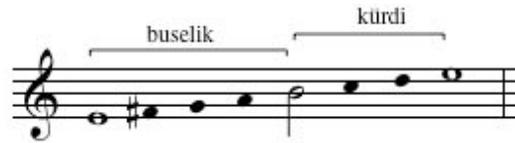
## Third Selam



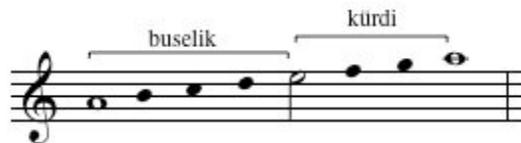
*Makam Uşşak*



*Makam Nihavend on hüseyini (e)*

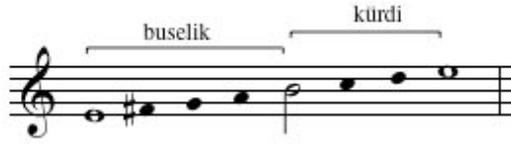


*Makam Nihavend on aşiran (E)*



*Makam Nihavend on düğah (A)*

**Fourth Selam**



*Makam Nihavend on aşiran (E)*

**Son Peşrev**

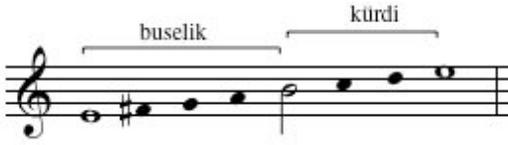


*Makam Hüseyini*

**Son Yürük Sema'i**



*Makam Kürdi on aşiran (E)*



*Makam Nihavend on aşiran (E)*

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