

The Influence of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's Thought on *Samā'* in Sufism¹

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Abstract

From the beginning of mysticism and Sufism in Islam, the devotional traditions and poetry into the form of dhikr along with dance and music entered in worship ceremonies of Sufis and gradually, a kind of mystical ritual formed which known as Samā'. According to the historical evidence, Samā' have been controversial issue in Islam and Sufism, and caused long term disputes and debate between religious scholars and Sufis. In this regard, some of them commanded the prohibition of Samā' and music even as haram or illegal. Compared to the above situation, Mawlānā's viewpoints and his measures have had crucial role on developments of Samā' in Sufism even in Islamic civilization. He believed that Samā' is not only permissible in Islam, but it is a necessary religious practice as a spiritual step. After Mawlānā and by the formation of Mevlevi Tariqa the Samā' stabilized among his followers as its inseparable part in mystical rituals, and continued by thrive different forms of musical performance in Mawlawiya rituals at that time and afterwards. A textual and attributive review, this paper is a library-based case study and historical research using qualitative method with an inductive approach.

Keywords: Mawlānā, Influence, Mevlevi Tariqa, Samā', Sufism.

¹ Some transliterations of Arabic words are as follow: (Th=ث), (Dh=ذ), (ā = ا), (aw=و),)' = ع). Abbreviations: A = Arabic, P = Persian, T = Turkish. -é = Suffix connector meaning "of".

Introduction

Following the spread of Sufism in various regions, especially in Islamic countries, the attention of historians, especially the researchers, was drawn to the Sufi groups as a case study. In fact, in recent decades, *tasawwuf* (Sufism), especially the Mevlevi Tariqa, and their mystical rituals has been one of the main interests of Islamic studies. But there is no comprehensive study on the role of Mawlānā in *Samā'* for exploring its religious music and mystical dimensions is lacking in the existing researches. Thus, the focus of this research firstly, would be on a discussion about the formation of the *Samā'* in Sufism and its traditions like its significance and functionality on mystical rituals. Secondly, the role of Mawlānā in this process in its different aspect, in terms of theory and practice, as well as its mystical philosophy.

Several important questions, which require more clarification, are addressed in this study, as below; how *Samā'* has been formed in Sufism? Why *Samā'* was the main controversial issue? What is the Mawlānā's viewpoints and his influence on the *Samā'*. According to the above questions, this paper examines, the historical background of *Samā'* including location and manner of *Samā'*, its formation as well as the controversy on the performance of *Samā'* are investigated, in addition to a brief introduction of Islamic mysticism and Sufism. Since music forms an inseparable part of *Samā'* therefore, any debate and investigation on *Samā'* in Islamic mysticism has direct relation with the subject of music. For that reason, it is necessary to introduce the situation of *Samā'* and music even concisely until the Mawlānā period, afterwards, we will discuss Mawlānā's thoughts. Acquaintance with *Samā'* situation among Sufi groups before innovating Mawlānā doctrine, will help us to distinguish his mystical method with other ones which have been shaped under certain conditions. Also, investigating this issue will shed some light on the significance and difference of Mawlānā's credo on using music in *Samā'*.

This research would contain some historical reviews of by referring to some of the most first-hand sources including primary treatise and hagiographic manuscripts that have been written by narrators contemporary with Mawlānā, and secondary sources like books and articles of scholars also other experts discussions have been used as well.

Key Definition

The term “Sufism” is literally originated from “*suf*”, the term *suf* was first applied to Muslim ascetics who clothed themselves in coarse garments of wool (*suf*).² The English word Sufism is used to designate to a set of practices in the Islamic religion, and it is employed to translate the term *tasawwuf*, which means literally “wearing wool” also and far more commonly, means belonging to the faith and doctrine of the people called the Sufis’, or trying to become a Sufi’.³ This term have been used interchangeably with the word “mysticism”. Islamic mysticism was first called “*Sufismus*” in Latin, then “Sufism” in English.⁴

Samā’ (A; lit., “hearing” “audition” [not related to the Arabic word, “*Samā’*” meaning “sky”]; spelling in T: *Sema*, *Semā*). The term which appears predominantly in Islamic Mysticism and Sufism texts is the concept of *Samā’*. It is an infinitive, like “*Sam*” ‘which means “hearing” often refers to the thing heard, like hearing music; also like *istima*, (listening) that belongs to old Arabic even in the meaning, “a singing or musical performance”.⁵In mystical expression dictionary, *Samā’* means a kind of song that changes the frame of mind of the listeners.⁶ *Samā’* among the Turkish people, means the collective dance

² R. J. Austin, “The Sufi Orders in Islam”. By J. Spencer Trimingham”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* (New Series), 105(01), (1973), 58-59. p.1.

³ Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (n.p.: IB Tauris, 2012), p. 3.

⁴ Ibrahim Gamard, ‘Why Gurdjieff’s “Fourth Way” Teachings are not Compatible with the Mevlevi Sufi Way’, website *Dar-Al-Masnavi*, retrieved on 26 February 2015, <https://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/mevlevi-vs-gurdjieffism.html>

⁵ D.B Macdonald, *Encyclopedia of Islam First Edition* (n.p.: E. J. Brill and Luzac.) p. 120.

⁶ Seyed Ziyoddin Sajjadi, *Farhang-e Mustalahat-e Urafa va Mutasawwefe* (Iran,Tehran: Ketab Forushi-e Buzarjumehri (Mustafavi), 1990), p. 225.

performed by followers of Mevlevi orders with music which is known as the whirling dervishes.⁷

***Samā'* in Sufi Traditions**

In Sufi ceremonies, common people such as, craftsmen, traders, villagers, whether rich or poor, were gathered together, with no privileges; there were friendly relations between them. Sufis' words were more consistent with the public taste, since they were dissatisfied with the jurist consults and *Muḥaddithīn* words, even disregarding philosophers words too. The Sufis who were more temperamentally and spiritually sensitive than their fellows, based on this necessity, could not be apathetic to fine arts like music and dance, which have direct impact on human soul. Accordingly, the devotional aspects of mysticism and Sufism turned into a collective ceremony along with primitive dance. Subsequently, some types of performing arts especially, music, and poetry into the *dhikr* (remembrance of God) form entered in worship ceremonies of Sufis and was spread quickly among the followers of Sufism as a religious belief, and gradually, a kind of mystical dance was formed known as *Samā'*. In Sufism, *Samā'* refers to listening of the music, singing, chanting, and measured recitation designated to bring about religious emotions and *wajd* (ecstasy).

According to the main manuscripts of Sufism, the early form of *Samā'* appeared around the third century of the Islamic civilization (9th AD) and prevailed from the period of Abu- Sa'id Abi al-khayr (d.1049) in Khorasan (Iran)⁸. Along with the formation of *Samā'*, a religious place was founded for praising and worshiping God and doing mystical rituals which was gradually known as *Khānaqāh*. The most important function of *Khānaqāh* has been the performing *Samā'*.

⁷ S. Ayduz, I. Kalin, and C. Dagli, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 207.

⁸ Abd-al Hosein Zarrinkob, *Arzeshe Mirase Sofiyeh* (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1968), 94.

***Samā'* and Music Controversy**

There is no doubt that music with lovely melodies and various rhythms had a significant role in shaping *Samā'* and Sufis recognized the importance of this role very well, none the less, music in Islam is among the most controversial arts, this theme that whether music is permissible or does not match the principles of the Islam, had been under controversies for a long time, in this regard, Schimmel (d.2003) says, one of the most important reasons of attacking *Samā'* is related to the issue of listening to music.⁹ Thus, *Samā'* also was a controversial subject and was vigorously contested among Islamic preachers, and even some Sufi theologians. The controversy of *Samā'* beings as early as the ninth century followed by a rich literature in the twelfth century, on the subjects existed until the *Hanbalites* come into power.

The difference of opinion regarding *Samā'* can be viewed as part of a larger controversy which exists between the Sufis and the legalists, namely the Sufi support of the Neo-Platonism “*eros*” doctrine, and the *Hanbalite* - orthodox support of the “*nomos*” doctrine. The “*eros*” doctrine espouses that the soul is divine and is therefore man’s connection to God.¹⁰

The scope of these debates range from an absolute rejection of *Samā'* to its acceptance, with a focus on conditional implementation and a more detailed discussion about religious, scientific and technical affairs. Great theologians predicate their arguments based on references to the holy Quran or Hadith and the analogous interpretations and explanations put forward by the opponents of music and its proponents.¹¹

Generally, debate of *Samā'* and music divides into three categories including lawful *Samā'* unlawful *Samā'* and permissible *Samā'*.

⁹ A Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (n.p.: North Carolina press, 1975).

A Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 179.

¹⁰ Arthur Gribetz, “The *Samā'* ‘Controversy: Sufi vs. Legalist” *Studia Islamica* LXXIV/74:43-62 (1991), p. 52.

¹¹ Amnon Shiloah, “Music and Religion in Islam,” *Acta Musicologica*, vol. 69, Fasc. 2 (1997), *International Musicological Society*. p.145.

Some of Islamic lawmakers who are considered as opponents of *Samā'* argued that Islam prohibits any forms of music either vocal or instrumental, because it is not entirely devotional to God. They believe that music can intoxicate human senses, and distracting the faithful away from God, such as Ibn Abi al- Donyā (d.894), in his treatise known *Zamm al-Malā'hi* (the book of the censure of instruments of diversion), Jamal al-Din Abd al-Rahman al-'Jawzī (d.1200) in *Talbis Iblis*,¹² Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328), in *Majmū' al-Rasā'il al-Kubrā*,¹³ Ibn al- Ḥajjaj (d.1336) and Faghih Ibn Jama'ah (14th AD).

Opponents of *Samā'*

Some Islamic preachers and lawmakers (*Faghih*) believe that Islam bans all types of music. Based on their understanding and interpretation of Quran and hadith, they commanded the prohibition of *Samā'* and music as *Haram* or illegal, they cited some verses of Quran which refer to unethical issues such as; (هو و لعب) bacchanalian, (قول زور) futile speech or nonsense (قمار) gambling, and so on, which could be descriptions of music. One of them is the sixth *āyah* (verse) of Surah- *Luqman*, the noble Quran which talks about some individuals that for the purpose of distracting others, utter nuisance (*Lahv al-Hadīth*).¹⁴

ومن الناس من يشتري لهو الحديث ليضل عن سبيل الله

Another verse of Quran which refers to the music is the thirtieth *āyah* of surah Hajj;

فاجتنبوا الرجس من الاوثان و اجتنبوا قول الزور

Avoid the real curse, the idols and get distant from vain speech such as lie, unwarranted witness and the indecency speech and lyric.¹⁵

¹² Ibn Jawzī, *Talbis Iblis*, Arabic Treatise (Cairo: Maktabah al-Mutanabbi, n.d), p. 222.

¹³ Taqī ad-Dīn 'Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah, *Kitab al-Samā' wa al-Rakhsu, al-Rasā'il al-Kubrā* (Cairo: Mohammad Ali Subih, 1996), p. 295-330.

¹⁴ Holy Quran, Luqmān 31:6.

¹⁵ Holy Quran, al-Ḥajj 22:30.

According to some other Quranic interpretations by Sunni and Shia scholars, there are some other verses which have been documented against the music, as follow; some of others surah of Quran such as, verse of 36th of Surah *Isrā'*, verse of 55th of Surah *Qaṣāṣ*, verse of 3th of Surah *al-Mu'minūn*, last verses of Surah *Jum'a*, verses of 9th of Surah *al-Mūnāfiqūn*, verses of 10th of Surah *al-Jum'ah*, verses of 12th of Surah *al-Tur*, verses of 64th of Surah *al-Anbiyā'*, verses of 36th of surah *Muhammad*, and verses of 20th of Surah- *al-Hadīd*; the life of this world has been metaphorically described as being "*Lahv o-La'ab*" (futile and entertainment). As observed, in none of the verses the illegality of music or dance been specified. In fact, Quran is referring to abstinence of inanity, frivolous, false entertainment and futile. According to the Will Durant (d.1981), in Quran the word *Samā'* or the word music has not been mentioned explicitly.¹⁶

Orthodox Islam is not sympathetic to music. They believe that music can intoxicate human senses, distracting the faithful away from God. In this regard, musical instruments are the primary targets of ban on music. A large variety of vocal musical forms are not regarded as music, such as Quran recitation, and *adhān* (the call to prayer) is also in this category.¹⁷

Ibn Abī al- Dunyā (d.894), a prominent theologian and jurist wrote an important treatise about proscription of music in Islam, which is known *Zamm al-Malā'hi* (the book of the censure of instruments of diversion). This book is composed of a sequence of sixty-eight hadiths with occasional comments made to clarify certain abstruse statements.¹⁸ The writer forbidden all types of music either vocal or instrumental and resembled it to sins like lying and drinking alcohol. According to his viewpoints, the instruments specifically mentioned as forbidden are the *mizmār*

¹⁶ Esmaeel Pour. A, *Mosiqi dar Tarich va Quran* (Iran, Tehran: Self publisher, 1989), P.134.

¹⁷ Bruno Nettl, V. Danielson, Ruth M. Stone, et al., *The Garland Encyclopaedia of World Music: The Middle East* (New York: Garland Pub., 1998), 6:768.

¹⁸ Amnon Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam* (n.p.: British library Scholar Press 1995), p.34.

(ney- reed flute), the *ud* (lute), the tanbur (Pandora) and all the other stringed instruments as well as different kinds of drums.¹⁹

Jamal al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-’Jawzī (d.1200) in *Talbīs Iblīs*, tried to gather a lot of information and decrees from different sects of Sunnah. He also discussed viewpoints of Sufis and rejected all convictions of Sufis even Ghazālī’s thoughts. al-Jawzī concludes that all Sufi traditions like *ghinā*, *Samā’* and *vajd* are illicit and misleading.²⁰ Moreover, Islamic lawmakers who are considered as opponents of music, such as Ibn al- Ḥajjāj (d.1336) Faghih Ibn Jama’ah (14th AD) and Ibn Taymiyah (d.1328), in different books argued that Islam prohibits any forms of music, because it is not entirely devotional to God. For example, Ibn Taymiyyah, in *Majmū’ al-Rasā’il al-Kubrā* elaborated on different aspects of *Samā’* and consequently he believed that *Samā’* is a satanic act.²¹

Moderate Stances on *Samā’*

Some thoughtful Muslims and clergymen have had different attitudes, they believe that using music in Islam depends on conditional situations, and that Islam only prohibits non-devotional music. In fact, music and dancing are forbidden for secular or entertainment purposes. In his treatise, *Al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*, Abū al-Qāsim Qushayrī (d.1072) states that: the *Samā’* of poems recite song with a fine voice is in principle “*Mubāh*” (permissible) when the performer does not possess “*Haram*” (illicit) belief and does not undertake *Samā’* of anything which is condemned by the “*Shari’a*” (religious law) neither give way to his mundane passions nor to entertainment. Furthermore, there is no contravention in the audition of poetry, for poetry was sung for the prophet (PBUH) who did not discourage the singing.²² Qushayri also states that: *Al-Shāfi’ī* did not consider *Samā’* illicit

¹⁹ Amnon Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam*, p.147.

²⁰ Ibn Jawzi, *Talbis Iblis*, Arabic Treatise, p.222.

²¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Kitab al-Samā’ wa al-Rakhsu, al-Rasā’il al-Kubrā*, p. 295-330.

²² Abū al-Qāsim Qushayrī, *Tarjume-ye Rissale-ye Qushayriyya*, Pp.591-2. Also see; Lenord Lewisohn, *The Heritage of Sufism, Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi* (London: one world publication, 1999), p. 1:118.

(*haram*), though considering it reprehensible (*makruh*) for ordinary people.²³ Besides, it is narrated that, *Al-Shafi'i*, maintains that music is permissible as long as it does not undermine the honor of manhood and that prohibited is the kind that is performed with bad intention and instigate evil.²⁴

Ibn Rajab (d.1392) also took a moderate stance, describing two categories of singing; profane and sacred, he condemns the former and approves the latter. however, he maintains that all musical instruments are forbidden.²⁵ In his book, *al-Lahv va al-Malāhi* (book on diversion and musical instruments), Ubayd Allāh ibn Khurradadh Bih (d.911) defended the religious lawfulness of audition, noting that from a philosophical standpoint. Another preacher, Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (d.940) in his book the *Iqd al-Farid* (unique necklace) also defended the audition, his discussion centered around the legality of singing, rather than the permissibility of music in general.²⁶ Other Islamic jurists and preachers disagree with prohibition of *ghinā* in all situations, such as, In his treatise, *Kitāb al-Samā'* Abū 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Sulamī,²⁷ Muhaqqiq, in *al-Mukhtaṣar*, al-Ṭūsī, in *al-khalāf*, Allami Helli, in, *Mukhtalef al-shia*, Muhaqqiq Sabzevari, in *Kefāyeh*, Muhaddith Buhrāni, in *Hadaeq*, and Faqih Najafi, in *Javahir*. they believed that *ghinā* can be permissible depending on rituals like wedding ceremonies.²⁸

Defenders of *Samā'*

Contrary to the opponents of music and *Samā'*, the viewpoint of using music among the Islamic mystics and Sufis is basically

²³ L. Lewisohn, *The Heritage of Sufism, Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi*, p. 1:118.

²⁴ Sefik Can, *Fundamentals of Rumi's Thought* (USA: Tughra Books., 2014), p. 208.

²⁵ See, Roy Choudhury. M.L. "Music in Islam", *Journal of the Asiatic society of Bengal*, XXXIII/2 (1957), p.43-102.

²⁶ Leonard Lewisohn, "The Sacred Music of Islam: Sama' in the Persian Sufi Traditions", *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, vol.6. (1997), p.4.

²⁷ Ikbal Ali Shah Sirdar, *Islamic Sufism* (India: Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli, 1979), p.266.

²⁸ R. Huseinian, *Ghinā' wa Musiqī dar Fiqh al-Islāmī* (Iran; Tehran: Suroush, 1995), p.101, also see; Muḥammad Ḥasan Najāfī *Jawāhir al- Kalām*, vol.22, p.49.

different as defenders of *Samā'*. In fact, Muslim mystics or Sufis were the most adamant advocates of *Samā'* and music. Theosophists believe that spiritual pleasures from *Samā'* and its source originate from the beginning of creation and our spirits percept the joy of this *Samā'* from the day of eternity and divine bonding with souls and spirits still remember its memories and even the skies are rejoiced. Thus, most of the great Sufis have accepted the permissibility of *Samā'*, like Abū Sa'īd ibn Abū al-Khayr (d.1049),²⁹ Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d.1111),³⁰ 'Abd al-Qādir Jaylānī (d.1166), Ibn al-'Arabī (d.1240).

In this regard, some premier manuscripts which are written about *Samā'* are *Al-Lumā' fī al-Taṣawwuf*, by 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī al-Sarraj al-Ṭūsī (d. 988) A part of the book deals with the view that the human voice is a thing of beauty and a divine gift and thus, it is pleasant to God when it is heard.³¹ Abū Bakr al-Kalabāzī (d. 990-995), the author of *Al-Ta'aruf li Madhahib al-Tarrof Le Mazhab al-Taṣawwūf* that is a widely- read book, attempts to explain Sufi terminology and beliefs by commentary on two hundred and twenty Hadiths of particular interest to Sufis.³²

Other treatises are including *Kashf Al-Mahjūb*, by 'Alī ibn Uthmān al-Hujwirī (11th AD), *Manāzil al-Anṣārī*, by 'Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī (11th AD), *Bawārīq al- 'Ilm* by al-Ṭūsī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, by Ibn al-'Arabī (d, 1240) which explained the situation of *Samā'* in Sufism and the conditions that make it permissible. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, quoted a story taken from the *Musnad* of Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal in which Abyssinians were dancing and playing tambourine in the prophet presence while chanting "Muhammad is an upright servant". Hence Tusi argues that if anyone says dancing is forbidden, that is

²⁹ See; Ibn Munawwar, *Asrar al-Tawḥīd*, p. 186 & others.

³⁰ See; Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol.4.

³¹ Naṣr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *al-Lumā' fī al-Taṣawwūf*, ed. Renold Elin Nikelson (Leiden: E.J. W. GIBB MEMORIAL, 1914), P. 267-310.

³² Jamal J. Elyas, "Sufism", *Iranian Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3-4 (1998), p. 597.

an acknowledgment from him that the prophet was present at what is forbidden (dance) and confirmed others in what is forbidden.³³

Mūhammad al-Ghazālī in the prominent book known *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* says, know that hearts and consciences are treasuries of secrets and mines of jewels, there is no way of extracting such hidden things save except by audition to poetry and music (*Samā'*).³⁴ He believes that, “Those who perform *Samā'* shall not see anything other than Almighty's beauty in cosmos and *Samā'* divine love and spiritual passion in front of the Lord. In fact, Ghazālī accepted *Samā'* and music in Sufism and his viewpoints on music have had a great influence on Sufi traditions.³⁵

Mawlānā as Great Defender of *Samā'*

Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī (d, 1273) known as Rūmī, also he is widely known as Mawlānā and Mevlānā in Turkey, which literally means “our master”.³⁶ Mawlānā's first teacher was his father, but after his death, the meeting with Shams Tabrizī was the greatest influence on Mawlānā's personality. Many documents about Mawlānā's life such as *Resāla-é* (treatise) *Sepahsālār*, depict him as a religious intellectual and Islamic scholar, but he suddenly turned to a Mystic after meeting with Shams-é Tabrizī.³⁷ Shams encouraged Mawlānā to emancipation from all of things and any dependence. Shams bestowed love to him, after that, Mawlānā became a lover of God. Mawlānā never did *Samā'* before meeting Shams. According to encouragement of Shams, he

³³ Leonard Lewinsohn, The Sacred Music of Islam: *Samā'* in the Persian Sufi Traditions, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, vol.6. (1997), p.26.

³⁴ Duncan Black MacDonald, “Emotional Religion in Islam, part I,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1901), 195-252. (A translation of Ghazali's book on *Samā'* from *Iḥyā'*.), p.199. Also see; Al Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 2, p. 237.

³⁵ Al Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, vol. 2, p. 237.

³⁶ Mawlānā was born on (1207) in the Balkh (a part of Iran in the past). concurrent with Mongol invasion, when Mawlānā was twelve, his father *Sultan al-Ulama*, left the Balkh with his family, and following to the travel in Iraq, Mecca and Syria, finally they dwelled in Konya on Turkey.

³⁷ Feryidun Ibn Ahmad Sepahsālār, *Risāle Sepahsālār* (treatise in 1312 AD). ed. Mohammad Afshin Wafāei (2nd ed. Iran, Tehran: Sokhan publisher, 2008), p.56.

began *Samā'* and continued to do so in all his life as a way and tradition.

Mawlānā is one of the greatest poet which his teachings are based on Islam and Quran, he always expressed his feelings and views through poetry. Mawlānā regard himself the slave of Quran and the soil under feet of Prophet Muhammad.

Mawlānā is considered as mystic who made dancing a central element in his Sufi doctrine. He believed that music is not only permissible in Islam, but it is a necessary religious practice as a spiritual step. In fact, the most fascinating aspects of Mawlānā's mysticism is using both vocal and instrumental music in his sacred dance and audition séances i.e. *Samā'*.³⁸ The importance of music in the thinking of Mawlānā can be seen in the very frequent appearance of musical imagery in his mystic and poetic works like *Mathnavi* and *Divān-é* (poem book) *Shams-é Tabrizy*. Mawlānā emphasized in his poetry in many different ways that music uplifts the human spirit to higher spiritual realms. Mawlānā, relied on three elements of music, love and *Samā'* in his thoughts on Sufism. He admires music very much and introduces it as a supreme art. This sage knows that truth is greater than that to be uttered in words and letters, only for this reason he stresses more on music than poems. He thinks of music as a unity between humans.³⁹ Mawlānā in the fourth book of *Mathnavi*,⁴⁰ in an important passage on *Samā'*, expresses the platonic notion and mystical idea that music is the food of love or nourishment of the soul.⁴¹ he says:

Samā' (music) is the food of lovers;
The strands of dispersed imagination,
In it gain concentration.
The fantasies of the inner psyche in music find strength;

³⁸ Walter Feldman, *Music of the Ottoman Court: Makam, Composition and the Early Ottoman Instrumental Repertoire*, vol. 10, VWB-Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung (1996), p. 8.

³⁹ Golpinarly, *Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn*, T. Trans. Sobhani Hashempour (Iran, Tehran: Pazhoheshgah-e Ulum Ensani VA Mutaleate Farhangi, 1984), p.330.

⁴⁰ Nur Al- Din Abd al-Rahman Jāmi (d.1492) believed that the *Mathnavi Ma'navi* is considered as Qur'an in Persian.

⁴¹ A Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p.182.

No, transcend strength, by the wail
Of the flute and horn, take form.⁴²

Mawlānā regards *Samā'* as the human emancipation from the corporeal bondage and material, worldly possessions. The appearance of these movements seemed to be some kind of dance, that is why the religious legalists and bigots have been considering *Samā'* against the dignity of Muslims. But, Mawlānā did not regard *Samā'* and music in the mystic ceremonies against the religion, because he believed that they awaken a love of God and divine ecstasy in the soul, and that the relationship between the spirit and music is a divine secret. Therefore, dancing and music were to be forbidden only when they are used in order to arouse worldly desires.

Mystical and Metaphorical Viewpoints

All of Mawlānā's poetries are full of symbols taken from mystical dance and music. For him, the dance was a life-giving movement and thus, a part of the heavenly dance in which the stars and the angels take part.⁴³ Mawlānā's view of music is the metaphorical and extra-terrestrial, he believed that basically, music does not belong to this world, music belongs to the world that we came from and the origins of these songs that we express, comes in fact, from God which we have heard them in heaven before our worldly birth and we remember these songs from there. In the *Mathnawi* he says;⁴⁴

“We all have been from generation of Adam, we have heard those melodies in paradise”.

Thus, Mawlānā believes that if we say that this music is forbidden, we doubt the God, whereas God does not perform prohibited actions. He says that what we know as music is “cosmic music” and its direct creator is God, in fact, the Lord is the

⁴² Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi, Nicholson Tr, and A. Reynold, *The Mathnawi of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi* (IV, 742-45) (Turkey, Konya: Tablet Publication, 2007), p. 740.

⁴³ A Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 318.

⁴⁴ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi, Reynold A Nicholson, *The Mathnawi of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi*, p.470.

greatest musician.⁴⁵ Thus, he not only believes that music is permitted, but maintained that music and *Samā'* are two vehicles to reach the Lord. Mawlānā's thought was musical; he believed every movement can be similar to the *Samā'* and knew that all creatures from the tiniest solar particles up to huge stars in the sky see themselves swirling in a dance.⁴⁶ Schimmel (d.2003), explains that why Mawlānā's whole work especially *Divān-é shams* is permeated with musical imagery:

He sees that everything, still under the spell of the primordial music, is dancing: the atoms spin around their centers, the planets turn around the sun for in listening to music, and the soul leaves its normal orbit and enters higher spheres.⁴⁷

Mawlānā's description about musical instruments introduces his Mystical and metaphorical viewpoints about music. He regards singing and melody as a hidden message to the world, the message that recalls us the heavenly tones that we have become accustomed to before arriving to this world.⁴⁸ As Mawlānā says:

We have taken these beautiful sounds and melodies from the whirling of the heavens. These pleasant sounds that people produce with musical instruments or their voices, are taken from the rotation of the heavens.⁴⁹

Mawlānā believed, in music, there are sounds that come from the beyond. Some things are awakening in our hearts when we listen to the music. Beautiful voices and melodies take us away from ourselves, we forget ourselves. It is as if we scape the cage of

⁴⁵ K. Mohammadi, *Musighi va Sama-e Keyhani* (Iran, Tehran: Najm-e Kubra, 2009), p.39-118.

⁴⁶ Schimmel A., *Mawlana, Diruz, Emruz, Farda*, tr. Muhammad Taraf (Iran: Tehran Basirat, 2010), p.214.

⁴⁷ Annemarie Schimmel, "The Role of Music in Islamic Mysticism" In *Sufism Music and Society, In Turkey and tMusighi va Sama-e Keyhani*he Middle East, *Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul Transaction*, 10: 9-17 eds. Anders Hammarlund, Tord Olsson and Elisabeth Oezdalga (Istanbul: Numune Matbassi, 2001), p.15.

⁴⁸ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi, Nicholson Tr, and A. Reynold, *The Mathnawi of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi*, p. 470.

⁴⁹ Sefik Can, *Fundamentals of Rumi's Thought* (USA: Tughra Books, 2014), p. 203.

the body, extending our wings toward the heavens to be cleansed. We become a different being.⁵⁰

The Sheikhs' congregation asked Mawlānā why Drum and kettledrum are beaten on *Eid* (feast) festival and what is the secret of it, he replied that, horn and drums are beaten for those who are hard of hearing to wake them up from negligence sleep and this meaning has been taken from blowing the horn (refer to the *Sur* in Quran) in the day of judgment (doomsday) that the day of judgment is a feast for some individuals and day of fear for some others.⁵¹ He believes that the reed's (*ney*)⁵² sound is a fire flare because it originates from love and burns, melts and burns the audience with the pain of fire. Mawlānā in *Mathnavi* says:

Listen to the *ney* (reed) how it tells a tale,
Complaining of separation,
Saying, “Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed,
My lament has caused man and women moan.”⁵³

The supreme verbal expression in the mystic poets of the *Samā'* can be found in the ecstatic lyrics of the *Divān-e Shams Tabrizi* by Mawlānā, whose order was to become known as the “whirling dervishes”. “Under his teachings, music and dance”, as Fritz Meier puts it, “intermingled to create so indivisible a unity that the dances were performed as rituals in praise of God and as stimulants to an exalting experience of inner harmony”. In this Ghazal, Mawlānā describes the Sufi concert's startling therapeutic effect on the spirit.⁵⁴

The message of *Samā'*
Samā' - what's that? From lords of mystery
A missive dispatched to us-for hearts in enmity,
A note from them of calm serenity. The blossoms bud
from wisdom

⁵⁰ Sefik Can, *Fundamentals of Rumi's Thought* (USA: Tughra Books, 2014), p. 204.

⁵¹ Holy Quran, al-Naml 27:87.

⁵² *Ney* is one of traditional wind musical instruments.

⁵³ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi, Nicholson Tr, and A. Reynold, *The Mathnawi of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi*, p. 10.

⁵⁴ Leonard Lewinsohn, The Sacred Music of Islam: *Samā'* in the Persian Sufi Traditions, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, vol.6. p.28.

Its music heralds dawn just as the crow, Of the spirit-cock
blazons morning's glow;
Like Mars's kettle-drum. The body senses from the
player's pipe and lip!
By "I breathed in him my spirit"⁵⁵ it's fit
Such "breath" be food and wine as well.⁵⁶etc.

Samā' appears in various forms in the poems of Mawlānā, is like the sky ladder that the eager and joyful soul ascends through it until it joins the beauty of lover. *Samā'* is not a worshipping motion with time limitation, in fact the splendor of the beloved is so great that the whole universe is engaged in dancing and rotation.

The Influence of Mawlānā on *Samā'*

Definitely, the viewpoints and influence of Mawlānā about *Samā'* and music in comparison to other jurists, lawmakers or even mystics is basically different. Mawlānā freed himself from the dogmatic view on the prohibition of music; that is why musical instruments were used at Mevlevi ceremonies.⁵⁷ Moreover, music in Mawlānā mysticism is used by himself not only theoretically but also practically, which is the most important difference between him and other mystics. Thus, Mawlānā is presumed as a professional musical expert, as he mentioned some musical expressions and the names of twelve musical scale (*pardeh*),⁵⁸ in

⁵⁵ An allusion to the following passage in the Quran (Quran, al-Hijr chapter, verse 28-31) "And remember when they Lord said unto angels: 'Lo! I am creating a mortal out of potter's clay of black mud altered. So when I have made him and have breathed into him of my spirit, do ye fall down, prostrating yourself unto him. So, the angels fell prostrate, all of them together. Save Iblis (Satan), He refused to be among the prostrate.'" translation by M. pickthall.

⁵⁶ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, *Divani Kabir* or *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi* (shams poem's book), ed., B Furuzanfar (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1999), 1734.

⁵⁷ Ursula Reinhard, *The Garland Encyclopaedia of World Music, the Middle East* (New York. London: Routledge, 2002), 6:769.

⁵⁸ The term *Pardeh* is Persian and in terms of music means song or musical interval also it was a kind of musical system, this scale was known in Iranian theoretical music before formation of *maqām*.

his poems such as; “*Huseyni*”⁵⁹ “*Rāst*”⁶⁰ “*Sepāhān*”⁶¹ “*Irāq*”⁶² “*Hijāz*”⁶³ “*Rahāvi*”⁶⁴ and so on.

Mawlānā also, was familiar with musical instruments and their names have been mentioned in some of his *Ghazal*,⁶⁵ such as: “*ney*”⁶⁶ (reed-flut) “*chang*” (harp) “*daf*” (hand percussion) “*surnay*” “*rabāb*”⁶⁷ (wind instrument) and “*duhul*”⁶⁸ (kettledrum). Mawlānā can be considered as a musician, according to the one Sultan Valad’s quatrain poem, he even was *rabāb* musical instrument player very well.⁶⁹ Mawlānā ordered the change in the structure of four-square *rabāb* to hexagonal form, and Sultan Valad has attributed *Rabāb* instrument to Mawlānā.⁷⁰

Besides, Mawlānā himself not only supported *Samā’* and music intellectually but he was a professional doer of *Samā’*. When a truly beautiful melody that Mawlānā heard, a deeply meaningful or an exciting event was enough to influence him and came to ecstasy, then he starts whirling and engaged in lyrics singing *Samā’* without considering the time and location like home, streets and schools. Aflaky (d.1360) noted that Mawlānā was intoxicated because of the excess of *Samā’*, he was hugged by the singer and said *Salawat* (peace to Muhammad) while he was

⁵⁹ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, *Divani Kabir* or *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi* (shams poem’s book), Qazal. 2963.

⁶⁰ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, *Divani Kabir* or *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*, Qazal 457.

⁶¹ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, *Divani Kabir* or *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*, Qazal 457.

⁶² Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, *Divani Kabir* or *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*, Qazal 457.

⁶³ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, *Divani Kabir* or *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*, Qazal 2494.

⁶⁴ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, *Divani Kabir* or *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*, Qazal 2963.

⁶⁵ Abd al-Baqi Golpinarly, *Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din* (Sobhani, Toufiq. Trans.) (Iran, Tehran: Pazhoheshgahe Ulume Ensani va Motaleate Frhangi, 2008), p.330.

⁶⁶ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi, Nicholson Tr, and A. Reynold, *The Mathnawi of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi* (IV, 742-45), 10.

⁶⁷ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi, Nicholson Tr, and A. Reynold, *The Mathnawi of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din Rumi* (IV, 742-45), 470.

⁶⁸ Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, *Divani Kabir* or *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*, Qazal 1825.

⁶⁹ Golpinarly, *Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din*, T. Trans. Sobhani Hashempor, p.332.

⁷⁰ Sultan Valad, *Rabāb Nameh* Hand-written treatise, ed. Ali Sultani, No. IUK.FY. No. 1375, 16, p.2. see; Golpinarly, *Mawlānā Jalāl al-Din*, T. Trans. Sobhani Hashempor, p.331.

revolved.⁷¹ A famous story is quoted in *Manāqib al-‘ārifin*, that when Mawlānā crossed the goldsmiths' market by hearing the sound of their hammer hitting, Mawlānā heard the word like Allah, Allah, Allah, in the rhythmic sound, he used to expose to the effect of their rhythm and started whirling and he continued doing *Samā'* so to the evening prayer's time.⁷²

Mawlānā's interest in music was so obvious that it had filled all Konya, thus, music was considered the integral element of *Samā'* and a key element of Mevlevis mystical ceremonies. For example, *tanbour* was played during *Samā'* as sacred musical instruments, and *ney* (reed-flute) was also existing then, even washing up for prayer (ablution), people could hear *rabāb* sound and his heterodoxy in doing *Samā'* gradually became a tradition.

Mawlānā had transmuted *Samā'* as a kind of habit. He did *Samā'* where he could and sometimes Mawlānā's *Samā'* sessions and dance lasted for hours and even for days. Sometimes, Mawlānā was sitting in Çelebi's garden and *Samā'* was continued from dawn to afternoon also at some occasions, Mawlānā was engaged in *Samā'* for seven days and nights. Ahmad Aflāki (d.1360) has narrated a story, in which he claims that Mawlānā performed *Samā'* for forty days.⁷³ His whirling caused the bigots, who only considered religion as a set of superficial rules, to criticize him, and they even called him crazy.⁷⁴

The Continuity of Mawlānā's Way

After Mawlānā, his mystical viewpoints and musical way continued to exist and thrive among his followers and were spread in Sufism throughout the next centuries. By the formation of Mevlevi Tariqa, the music also flowed in this path; and First successors of Mawlānā especially, his son Sultan Valad, had a crucial role in propagation and preservation of *Samā'* and music. Other mystics and poets followed his example both in applying the

⁷¹ Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Aflaky, *Maniqib al-‘Ārifin*- treatise in 14th AD, ed, Tahsin Yazychy (Iran, Tehran: Dunyaye Ketab, 1983), p. 412.

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 429.

⁷³ Aflaky, *Maniqib al-‘Ārifin*- treatise in 14th AD, pp. 294, 406.

⁷⁴ Aflaky, *Manaqib al-‘Ārifin*- treatise in 14th AD, vol. 1, p. 89.

symbolism of dance and music in their poetry and by performing *Samā'* with their disciples.⁷⁵

Gradually, one common place was formed for praising God and doing *Samā'* which names *Mevlevi-khāna* (Mevlevi House) or *Tekke*.⁷⁶ These places had a crucial role to organization and development of *Samā'* because one part of that was designed specifically for doing *Samā'* known *Samā'-khāna* and another part allocated for musicians and singers known as "*Mutrib-khāna*".⁷⁷ Hence, *Samā'* was formed as new shape based on music and Mawlānā's poems by accompaniment of musical players and singers. Women were allowed to engage in *Samā'* rehearsal and sometimes they could engage in *Samā'* by playing drums and reed-flute in male sessions or also were allowed to watch *Samā'* from behind the fences of ladies part in *tekke*.⁷⁸ Aflāki writes that Sharaf Khātun, the daughter of Sultan Valad and the lady Arifi khush laqā Qunawi both of them had many disciples and they held *Samā'* sessions in the parks, gardens and houses such as the period of Mawlānā.⁷⁹

Alongside with the development of Mevlevi Tariqa, the methodical expansion of *Samā'* began to thrive from the time of Mawlānā and spread in the Ottoman Empire. In the Ottoman times, a visit to one of the *Mevlevi-khāna* of Constantinople was a touristic attraction comparable to the Acropolis of Athens or the pyramids in Egypt.⁸⁰ The ritual *Samā'* in Mevlevi groups was performed by dervishes in a circular form by the accompaniment

⁷⁵ A Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p.185.

⁷⁶ As T. Barihuda, (1946) writes, there have been around two hundred, or more *Mevlevi-khāne* throughout the entire history of the Ottoman Empire like: Belgrade, Aleppo, laziqiyya, Mecca, Sham, Tabriz, Bagdad, Antakya, Hums, Trablus (Tripoli), Denizli, Spyros, Medina, and Mosul. See; T. Barihuda, (2015, Nov 19). The Mevlevi order aims to make a person a better Muslim", Retrieved from; <http://www.semazen.net>. Also see: 'Abd al-Bāqī Golpinarly, *Mawlānā Jalāl al- Dīn*, p.430- 431.

⁷⁷ Researcher's Personal Observation, (December 15. 2015), Mevlevi Museum. Turkey: Konya.

⁷⁸ 'Abd al-Bāqī Golpinarly, *Mawlānā Jalāl al- Dīn*, 368.

⁷⁹ 'Abd al-Bāqī Golpinarly, *Mawlānā Jalāl al- Dīn*, 326 &365.

⁸⁰ Walter Feldman, "Music in Performance: Who Are the Whirling Dervishes," B. Nettl, et al., *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: The Middle East* (Vol. 6) New York: Garland Pub., 1998), p.107

of music with long dresses and white loose skirts, which are known as *āyin-e sharif* or whirling dervishes.

As Schimmel says:

This mystical dance was noted by the first European visitors to the convents of the Mevlevis, the whirling dervishes. For the Mevlevi Tariqa is the only order in which this whirling movements has been institutionalized.⁸¹

Hence, this Tariqa was active throughout five centuries in the Ottoman Empire especially in Anatoly region and was developed further over the Islamic countries. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and following its defeat in the World War I, and due to factors such as the secularization reforms of Turkey the Sufi orders outlawed by a government decree of December 1920. Although the Mevlevi *tekkes* and their activities are still illegal in Turkey, some of them survived clandestinely, and *Samā'* ceremony is holding on Mawlānā's grave in Konya (Turkey) as tourism attraction every year.⁸²

Conclusion

After formation of Sufism, because the music has been had a significant role in shaping *Samā'* in Sufi rituals, thus, *Samā'* was a controversial subject among Islamic preachers, and even some Sufi theologians. Although the views and opinions of mystics who agreed with *Samā'* helped to resolve the religious barriers of using music in religious ceremonies, but they had no official organization (Tariqa or sect) to perform *Samā'* practically. Thus, the role of Mawlānā in expanding music and *Samā'* in Sufism is of high importance, because, while some opponents strictly forbid music and dance, Mawlānā believes that *Samā'* is not only permissible in Islam, but it is a necessary religious practice as a spiritual step.

Under Mawlānā's guiding, music and dance intermingled to create a unity so indivisible that the dances were performed as

⁸¹ A Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p.179.

⁸² Author's Personal Observation, (December 16. 2015), Mawlānā's Anniversary (Shebi Urus), Mevlevi Shrine, and *Samā'* ceremony hall, Turkey: Konya.

rituals in the praise of God and as stimulants to an exalting experience of inner harmony. Mawlānā stabilized *Samā'* among people, besides this, the most important influence of Mawlānā compare to other mystics is the endurance and continuity of his musical viewpoints as a new mystical way on performing *Samā'* in Sufism. In fact, the most fascinating aspects of Mawlānā's mysticism is using both vocal and instrumental music in his sacred dance and later on, his mystical traditions continued in the form of *āyin-e sharif* as ceremony of whirling dervishes in Mevlevi Tariqa.

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