

## Sufis Of Chishtia Order And Narration Of Qawwali During Sultanate Period

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### Abstract:

This paper examines the narration of various sayings of the early *Chishti Sufis* about *Qawwali* music during the period of Sultanate of Delhi. In this research a qualitative analytical method is applied to highlight the contribution of *Chishti Sufis* in the form of their sayings about *Qawwali*, as they rendered enormous services to transform the then existing Indian music into *Qawwali*, which greatly influenced the face of Indian music and touched the hearts of Indians and became a reason to propagate *sufi* Islam during the medieval era. Among all *Chishti Sufis*, the role of *Hazrat Amir Khusrau*, as an icon of Indian arts including poetry, music and transformation of Indian music into *Qawwali* brought a revolution in the field of *Qawwali* music as a specific genre of music in subcontinent. The question that will be dealt in this research work is that how the *Qawwali* Music evolved in the narrations and sayings of *Chishti Sufis* and their disciples during Sultanate Period, especially the period of *Hazrat Amir Khusrau* which marked the peak time of the *Qawwali* music in subcontinent?

**Key Words:** *Chishtia, Ghina, Qaul, Khusrau, Qawwali, Mazamir, Inqabaaz, Faqar,*

### Introduction: What is Sama (Qawwali)?

Singing in a melodious voice is called *Ghina*<sup>1</sup> and *Sama* means listening to the words that are sung in a melodious voice. The word *Qawwali*<sup>2</sup> is derived from the Arabic word *Qaul*<sup>3</sup> which means to speak or describe. Thus, *Qawwali* comes to the meaning of something that is sung, elaborated or repeated over and over again in a particular style or arrangement. There is another very important word, the *Qawwal*<sup>4</sup> which means, the one who elaborates or sings verses and *aqwals* (sayings) of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) and verses or poems of the *sufis* in the specific gatherings of *sufis* and their disciples in a certain prescribed style which ultimately leads the listeners to attain a state called *halool*(merger). There are two types of *Sama*, one is *Bil-mazameer* (*Sama* with musical instruments)<sup>5</sup> and the other is *Bilaa-mazameer* (*Sama* without the accompaniment of musical instruments).

### Manners for Sama (Qawwali)

According to *Sufis*, the *sama* or *Qawwali* required some specific pre-requisites to be followed while sitting for or enjoying the activity of *Qawwali*. The *Sufis* focused the rituals and manners of *ikhwaan, makaam and zamaan* for it.<sup>6</sup> Historically, *Qawwali* evolved over a long period. *Qawwali* took birth in sub-continent during the thirteenth century during the age of *Hazrat Amir Khusrau*. It is a pure Indian-Muslim art that has arisen from this soil. It was born and developed in *sufi* shrines. *Amir Khusrau* (1253-1325) is considered to be the originator who transformed *Qawwali* from Indian music. The authenticity of his art can be observed and seen that even after the passing the time of centuries, this art is alive in present. There is a huge section of people and population which likes it.

In the subcontinent, the *Sufis* not only improved their spiritual purity and prosperity by organizing *Qawwali*, but also enchanted and subjugated the hearts and minds of the local Hindus. By the way, the prophetic method and method of pure gaze or pure companionship is the real secret and reason for the spread of religion, but the environment and the ecstasy should be considered in the light of meditation from the companionship of the sheikh to the concept of the sheikh and then the direct path of the Prophet (SAW). The early Indian saints united the people by bringing them to the path of conduct, while the local Hindu population, suffering from economic, social oppression and caste oppression, received the blessing of sight, prayer and wealth from the *khanqahs*, which was also required by religion and *faqar*. *Qawwali* is permissible, to know the mystery of music, one must first believe that it is the call of the suffering hearts more than a science and art.

There are lyrical moments of introspection amid economic and social trauma. It is not only a natural and objective form of inner connection but also a means of serving creation and delighting God's creation.<sup>7</sup> In his 20th *Majlis*, *Hazrat Khawaja Nizamuddin Aulia*, made it clear about *Qawwali* that was a suitable sound, how can it be forbidden? If it is for the sake of truth, then it is desirable. If it's criteria is towards mischief, then it is forbidden.<sup>8</sup>

### Literature Review:

Hazrat Syed Ali bin Usman *Hajveri* in his book, *Kashaf Ul Mahjoob* argues that *Sama (Qawwali)* is more preferable and superior than seeing (*basarat*). If a superficial person says that *sama* is only to the extent of news (*khabar*), while seeing (*basarat*) is the cause of view (*naẓara*). He says if *basarat* of God is better than *sama* or if the power of sight is considered superior to *sama*, then the answer to this is that humans know only by *sama* that they will be blessed with seeing (*basarat*) God in heaven. The hindrance that occurs in the validity of *basarat* through the intellect would also be removed by using the power of *sama*. Because

the intellect accepted by *sama*, the news (*khobar*) of the Messenger so that the vision (*deedar*)- Otherwise, there is apparently no argument- will be blessed and the veil (*hijab*) will be removed from the eyes so that they can see God. The author further elaborates, that in this sense, *Sama* is better than *basarat*. Apart from this, the injunctions of the Shariat are also dependent on *sama*, because if there is no *sama*, it cannot be affirmed or negated. Prophets preach the message of truth and people listen to it and accept it and become their followers and guardians. Even to show a miracle, its truth is told and people wish to see the truth after *sama*. Despite these arguments, if someone denies the excellence of *Sama*, then he denies the Shariat and the facts, and he is deliberately negligent in the matter of *sama* and keeps the truth hidden. The author of the *Kashaf Ul Mahjoob* gives a very short space to *Qanwali* as an art of Indian music. The current research focuses on the detail of the narration of *Qanwali* during sultanate period.

In his book, *Fawa'idul Fanwaad*, Ameer Hassan Alaa Sijzi discusses and writes about the *malfoozat* of his mentor and *murshid* Hazrat Khawaja Nizamuddin Aulia in detail. As his disciple, this collection of *malfoozat* was written by him in the capacity as disciple of *murshid* in the 13th century AD. It is a collection of sayings on various aspects of his mentor's life. In these *malfoozat* of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, who was running the central system of *Chishtia* order in Delhi, a complete package of norms has been elaborated to run a *dargah* in detail. What his mentor said on every occasion, has been described in very brief style. In this collection, Ameer Hassan Alaa Sijzi wrote about his poetic sense like *Amir Khusrau*, as he possessed a certain color in Persian poetry and gained great fame as a disciple of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia. In this book, the author has also described various accounts of the *Chishti* teachings practically performed by the spiritual guide. However, this collection does not throw light on the narration of the all *Chishti Sufis* on the subject of *Qanwali*. This book does not deal with the complete details of the art of *Qanwali* during the period of successive *Sufis* of *Chishtia* order. The collection does not elucidate the description of Hazrat Amir Khusrau's work on Indian music and *Qanwali* music.

Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhadith Dehlvi's *Akhbaar Ul Akhbar* is a famous work written by him, which contains the authentic sayings and narrations of about 300 saints and *sufis* of subcontinent. In this work, the heartwarming stories of the pious lives of *sufi* scholars and *ulemas* have been written with thorough research. Apart from being a valuable historical and scientific masterpiece, this book lacks as a rich collection on the narration of *Qanwali* music during medieval times. Though this book is collection of words of wisdom, advice and pure teachings, it does not fulfill the requirement as complete narration on *Qanwali* music as a single work.

Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, the author of *Aab-e-Kausar*, describes the religious and intellectual development of pre-Mughal India, speaks in a specific way about the *Sufis* of Delhi Sultanate period. In this book, the author pays tribute to the services of the *Sufis* of the *Chishti* order in a comprehensive way, but has not written a detailed review regarding the practice of *Qanwali* in the history of the subcontinent. This book is a great historical masterpiece on the achievements of Delhi Sultans and the lives of *Sufis*. But even so, it does not elaborate on *Chishti sufis* narrations about *Qanwali* music. Despite being a research manuscript, this book cannot be said to be a comprehensive and detailed manuscript on the music and *Qanwali* of the subcontinent.

Rashid Malik in his book *Amir Khusrau ka ilm-e- Moseeki*, states that Indian music history is lost in the mists of the past. Most of what the Indians know is based on anecdotal stories of gods and goddesses. Here and there we come across the names of Sanskrit texts about which it is very difficult to determine the period in which they were written. Nor can any specific information be obtained about their authors. The language of these *Granth*s, is difficult to understand even for today's Sanskrit scholars. He says that for the public and the elite, whether they are interested in music or not, it is a matter of faith that *Qanwali* is a genre invented by Hazrat Amir Khusrau. *Qanwals* consider themselves among the special devotees of Hazrat Amir Khusrau. Writers are also adamant that the current form of *Qanwali* is the invention of Hazrat Amir Khusrau. In this book, the author has discussed in detail about Amir Khusrau's knowledge of music, but despite this, there is no detailed discussion on the sayings of *Chishti Sufis* about *Qanwali* in it. And it is felt that there is a need for a more systematic research on the narrations of the *sufis* of the Sultanate of Delhi.

### Research Methodology

An analytical method of research is utilized for this research work to substantiate the role of the early *Chishti Sufis* for the promotion of the art of *Qanwali* music in form of their narrations in subcontinent, for the new pattern of this genre of music which attracted the maximum Indian audiences and transformed their faiths. For this current research, primary and secondary data is used which is collected from the libraries and online sources. The strength of the research is however, the original works of the *Chishti Sufis*, both in form of their *malfoozat* and autobiographies and poetry. The secondary sources were of great importance and help for substantiating the arguments and information.

### The Chishtia Sufis and Narration of Qanwali Music

The effect of music on human nature is an indisputable fact. Music is a reflection of human nature. Religion, *Faqr*<sup>9</sup> and creation of *Qanwali* in the Indian Sub-continent is the evidence of this fact. The *Sufis* warmed hearts with a balanced combination of mystical words and melodious sounds. As a result, the union of music caused a revolution in thought and vision. Through *Qanwali*, the facts of the universal phenomenon of the soul-touching impact of music and love were revealed not only on the human body but also on the inner beings of all Indians. With the burning flame of love, the scum of falsehood was reduced to ashes. This was a matter of the era when the creative abilities of the Muslim nation were at their peak. Through their practical deeds and actions, *Sufis* did not conquer the territories. They conquered hearts and minds.<sup>10</sup>

The *Sufis* had even taken up the task of promoting Islam and spreading the religion through songs and music, which is a heartwarming example of contemporary *ijtihad* and an eternal example in the entire religious history of Muslims. Amir Khusrau gained such control over the music composed in the genes of the Hindus that even today Muslims enjoy the position in the

field of music as teachers and Hindus are students to the extent of the Indian subcontinent. The Sufis took up the task of turning hearts of the native Hindus away from the worldly desires with the help of *Qawwali*, which can be credited as an evolution in the field of arts in Islam.

The saints and *sufis* of the *Chishtia* order, carried out the work of spreading Islam in the Indian subcontinent through music and *Qawwali*. The nature and quality of their work was very beautiful.<sup>11</sup> In sub-continent, real message of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to convert the hearts with soft spoken words and gentle acts was channelized by the strong enthusiasm of these *Sufis* and *Faqirs* of *Chishtia* order. Their outlook, grace and persuasive voice brought about the Islamic revolution in the minds and souls of Indians. The credit for making Muslim music as an innovation, in the Indian sub-continent undoubtedly goes to *Hazrat Amir Khusrau*. The present form of *Qawwali* is also form of his continuous grace being the fore-father of *Qawwali* music in Subcontinent.

Under its influence, where on the one hand a person reaches the heights of *Wijdaan* (knowing about an event or object without any conscious effort), on the other hand, he can also sink into the depths of error. Therefore, the sanctity or justification of *Qawwali* has been a serious issue in different Islamic schools of thought.<sup>12</sup> Among the *sufi* orders of subcontinent, the *Chishtia Sufis* were the main initiators of *Qawwali* while some other orders like *Soharwardia* and *Qadria* also used this genre but at a small scale.

### ***Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri (1143-1236) and Qawwali:***

The founder Sufi of *Chishtia* order in sub-continent who publicly narrated the ecstasy of *Qawwali* music, was *Hazrat Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri*. He stood on top of the list among his all contemporaries as far as the importance of *Qawwali* music is concerned. *Hazrat Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri* was the pioneer *sufi* of *Chishtia* order in subcontinent. He was the leading *Chishtia sufi* who played a vital role in the propagation of Islamic teachings in subcontinent through *Qawwali*. He adopted and transformed Indian music to attract the Hindu audience for preaching of Islam. He had a great love and passion for *Qawwali*. In his *Qawwali* gatherings great scholars always participated. *Hazrat Khwaja Naseeruddin Chirag Dehlavi* has written in *Miftab-ul-Ashqeen* that *Hazrat Khwaja Ajmeri* said that *Qawwali* was a means of finding out mysteries.<sup>13</sup> Dr. Memon Abdul Majeed Sindhi writes that *Hazrat Baba Farid ganjshakar*, always enjoyed *Qawwali*. *Qawwali* is permissible in the *Chishtia Sufi* order. *Sufi* and saints of early *Chishtia* order have been interested in *Qawwali* and practically enjoying it.

*Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri* popularly known as *Khawaja Ghareeb Nawaz*, had great love for his disciples. *Hazrat Mabbub Elahi Nizamuddin Aulia*, had a deep affection for *Qawwali*. In *Al-Fanwad al-Fawa'id* the subject of *Qawwali* has been mentioned frequently. His mentor, *Hazrat Baba Farid Fariduddin ganjshakar*, has said that the heart is relieved in *Qawwali*.<sup>14</sup> It creates movement in the heart of lovers. Motion is followed by surprise and surprise is followed by *zauq* and *zauq* is followed by faintness.

*Hazrat Khawaja Ajmeri's* grand-disciple, *Baba Farid*, interpreted that a *sufi's* main aim was to achieve Allah's favor. Mystics were those, who always kept themselves silent and absorbed in contemplation. Sufis remained in such states that when they became connected with God, then they were not aware of the things created by God. Sufism was an ethic that was free from the world and its environment, but it never condemned the world. The disciples of the saints were people of love.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, in *Chishtia* order, according to *Hazrat Khawaja Ajmeri* there is an arrangement of *Qawwali* to the extent of the manners as to maintain the purity of religion teachings as well. However, according to the mood, some people listen to *Qawwali* without *mazamir* and often listen to *Qawwali* with *mazamir*. The summary is that *mazamir* are not forbidden in *Qawwali* but are forbidden in case of to avoid the disorders during *Qawwali*.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Hazrat Khawaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki(1173-1235) and Qawwali:***

*Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki* was the second *sufi* of *Chistia* order who was fond of *Qawwali* music. He was the disciple of *Khawaja Gharib Nawaz Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri*. This is stated in *Iqtabasul Al-Anwaar*, that disciple of *Khawaja Gharib Nawaz Moinuddin Chishti*, of Ajmer, *Hazrat Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki*, had received permission for *Qawwali* from his *murshid* and spiritual guide. This was *Hazrat Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki* who entered into a state of ecstasy during the *Qawwali* and passed away after staying in that state for four days and nights. An *urs* was held in *Khanqah* of *Khawaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki* and *Qazi Hameeduddin Naguri* (a companion of *Hazrat Shahabuddin Subrawardi* and a special companion of *Hazrat Bakhtiar kaki* also had a special passion for *Qawwali*) also participated in this event. Coincidentally, the *Qawwals* started singing the couplet of *Hazrat Ahmed Jam*.

کشتگان خنجر تسلیم را

بر زماں از غیب جان دیگر است

Translation: Who are killed by the dagger of submission, they are given a new life every time from the unseen

*Bakhtiar Kaki's* mood changed to such an extent that his companions brought him to his place of residence. As soon as *Khawaja* regained consciousness, he used to express his desire to recite the same poem again with *Qawwals*. He repeatedly listened the same verse and the same condition would again fall on *Khawaja*. The same condition remained on him until the four days and nights and in this state, he surrendered his life on 27 December 1235 AD.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Hazrat Fariduddin Ganj Shakar Masood (1173-1265) and Qawwali***

*Hazrat Fariduddin Ganjshakar Masood* was the third among leading *sufis* of *Chishtia* order. He was direct disciple of *Khanqah* of *Khawaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki* and also fond of *Qawwali*. Even now, on his *Urs* (death anniversary), in Pakpattan, present-day District of Province of Punjab (Pakistan), the *Qawwals* tie harmonium, a musical instrument to their bodies and perform the *Qawwalis* in front of his shrine. This is the tradition in today's Pakpattan.. There is a tradition that, once the Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughluq of Delhi called for *Hazrat Khwaja Fariduddin Masood Ganj Shakar's* disciple *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* to answer in front



of 253 great scholars from all over India during his reign in Delhi. On the matter of addition of *Qanwali* by *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia*. He came and argued in a heated debate in front of the Sultan in Tughlaqabad in the presence of 253 scholars.<sup>18</sup>

*Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* used to present the *hadiths* of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, but the objectors, including Qazi Jalaluddin and Shaykhzada Jam, put their objections, based on the sayings of *Imam-e-Azam Abu Hanifa* (may God have mercy on him). *Hazrat Nizamuddin* gave reference in his favor from the Prophet's life and wanted to seek help from the Prophet's traditions for the justification of listening to *Qanwali*. Upon this, *Hazrat Nizamuddin* said that he was surprised as to why there is a city where the inhabitants prefer the words of a jurist over the hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him).<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, Sultan *Ghiyaz-ud-Din Tughlaq* inquired from *Sheikh Alam-ud-Din*, the grandson of *Sheikh Baba-ud-Din Zakaria Multani*, who was a great scholar and had travelled to Islamic countries. He said that it was permissible for him and it was forbidden for those who listened to the satisfaction of lust and self. He also said that many saints listened to *Qanwali* in Baghdad, Syria and Rome. Some people also listened to *duff* (tambourine, a musical instrument) and *Shabana*, but no one forbidden them.<sup>20</sup>

It is a strange coincidence, that in the words of *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* "why Delhi was so populated that its residents preferred the words of a jurist over the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)" soon became a reality. The followers of *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* said that as soon as Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq declared *Daulatabad* as his new capital instead of Delhi and forcibly transferred the residents of Delhi there, Delhi was destroyed. Then people understood this saying of *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia*.<sup>21</sup>

*Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shukar*'s successor *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* had a painful heart. *Qanwali* has been mentioned on many occasions in his words in *Fawa'id- al-Fawwad*. *Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar* considered *Qanwali* to be the test for a strong man. One day, when asked by *Amir Hasan Ala Sajzi*, he said that among the Sufis who listened to *Qanwali* were capable and qualified for it. One day, *Nizamuddin Aulia* submitted to his guide, *Baba Fariduddin* that a group of saints denied *Qanwali* and considered it forbidden. *Baba Fariduddin* smiled and said that they did not have any taste, that's why they could not listen to *Qanwali*. In a gathering, *Ameer Hasan Ali Sajzi* submitted to *Baba Fariduddin* that when he listened to *Qanwali*, he felt sad and after that got relief from it. During *Qanwali*, worldly desires left his heart and the thoughts of the people of the world did not enter his heart. So *Baba Fariduddin* told the audience one day that during *Qanwali*, the light from the universe descended on the soul.<sup>22</sup>

While staying in the company of *Khawaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki*, *Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar* also developed an immense interest in *Qanwali*. He used to enjoy *Qanwali* from time to time. One day, his condition was inclined towards *Qanwali*, but there was no *Qanwal*. *Nizamuddin Aulia* says that at that time *Baba Fariduddin*'s son-in-law and *Khalifa Badrudin Ishaq* were present. *Baba Sahib* told them to bring the letters and find the letter of *Qazi Hameeduddin Naguri* from it and read it to before him. *Shaykh Abdul Haq Mubaddith* writes that he had just started, reading the letter and a special condition overwhelmed *Baba Sahib*. This condition of *Baba Sahib* was due to his sensitive and inclined nature towards *Qanwali*. Whenever *Qanwal* was not available, he used to listen the recitation of a few lines of *Anwarif al-Ma'arif* and he would be enthralled by them.<sup>23</sup>

### **Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya (1238-1325) and Qawwali:**

*Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* was disciple of *Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shukar*. He was fourth *Chishti sufi* who was fond of *Qanwali*. *Hamid bin Fazlullah Jamali*, the eminent author of *Seer-ul-Arifeen*, narrated the map of *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia*'s gathering of *Qanwali* in the words of *Hazrat Sheikh Naseer-ud-Din Chiragh of Delhi*. Whenever he listened to *Qanwali*, first *Hazrat Amir Khusrau's ghazal* was used to sing. *Hazrat Amir Khusrau* and *Ameer Hassan* used to sit on the right side, and *Khawaja Mubashir* sat on the left. *Mubashir* was the slave of *Hazrat Amir Khusrau*. His voice was very good. *Hazrat Amir Khusrau* and *Khawaja Hasan Alam* were unparalleled in music and their voice was also unique. Two hundred *Qanwals* were fond of *Hazrat Amir Khusrau*. He was so talented in singing that birds came down from their flight after listening to his songs. Whenever *Hazrat Amir Khusrau* recited his ghazals, after listening the verses of *Khusrau*, *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* shook his head. *Khawaja Hassan* and *Khawaja Mubashir* immediately wrote down the poems. Most of the time of his life, *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* remained in a state of ecstasy and listened the *Qanwali*.

According to *Ameer Syed Hassan Alaa Sijzi*, the disciple and compiler of the *Malfoozat* of *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia*, once he asked his *murshid* "was there any specific sense of satisfaction hidden in *Qanwali*? He smiled and said that only the people with taste of music could not enjoy it."<sup>24</sup>

*Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* said "*Qanwali* is a matter of *zaug* and passion. *Qanwali* makes feel the reality of the dignity of spiritual pain and love to listeners. It is not a battle of reason or intellect, but it is a state of *Wijdaan* certainly. Among *Sufis*, *Qanwali* is an obvious state to cure spiritual heartache, which is a symbol and condition of love. In fact *Qanwali* speeds up the *zaug* for search of truth because it leads to *tabaa-e-lateef* (subtlety). As a result, the *Qanwali* arouses the power of passion".<sup>25</sup>

The same trends and attitudes are proven among *sufis*. *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia*, was once questioned by *Ameer Syed Hassan Alaa Sijzi* and revealed upon him the fact that among the Sufis, those who did *Sama*, were capable of it.<sup>26</sup> *Sama* leads to *tabaa-e-lateef* when a Sufis remains in a state of *Inqbaaz*<sup>27</sup> (a state in the Sufism and spirituality when the revelation of divinely events is stopped on the heart of a *sufi* or seeker). In this condition, the seeker's heart is filled with horror and does not feel any worship. This condition occurs after *Inbisat* (a state of spiritual solace in Sufism).

*Ameer Hasan Ala Sijzi* writes that his mentor *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* used to say that *Qawwali* had four conditions. First, the narrator should not be a man, woman or a teenage boy. Secondly, the lyrics should not be obscene. Thirdly, the listener should listen while engaging in the remembrance of God. Fourthly, do not play instruments like *Ching* and harp during *Qanwali*. According to *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* *Qanwali* was permissible with those conditions.<sup>28</sup>

It is narrated by *Hazrat Geesu Daraz* that once it happened that *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* was visiting his room when a woman under the wall sang something first in *Raga Subeela* and then in *Raga Shabana*. *Nizamuddin Aulia* was extremely happy and he threw down his quilt from above, a cloth and whatever he got his hands on. That singer took these things as a reward. *Hazrat*

*Geesu Daraz* says that when a well was being dug in the *darbar* area of *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia*, salty water came out of it. Servants submitted that if its water was sweet, people would have benefited from it. *Hazrat Nizam* asked *Khawaja Iqbal* to remind him of this matter during a *Qawwali* gathering. A few days later, when the *Qawwali* was held, *Khawaja Sahib* reminded him of that well. *Hazrat* asked for a pen and paper and wrote an amulet and gave it to *Khawaja Iqbal* to put in this well. The amulet had to be put in the well so that its water became sweet.

It is narrated from *Hazrat Amir Khusrau* that his mentor *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* was very fond of *Purbi* poetry for *Qawwali*. Listening to *Qawwali* in *Purbi* poetry used to make him feel sad. *Hazrat Amir Khusrau* composed many *Ragas* in *Purbi* language simply because his mentor liked *Purbi* poetry. Perhaps the choice of his mentor was involved in it, that so many *Qawwalis* were presented to the mentor in *Purabi* language.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Hazrat Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) and Qawwali***

It is said that once *Amir Khusrau* appeared in the service of his mentor *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* and requested to pray that his poetry should have that sweetness which was unparalleled. *Murshid* heard the request of his obedient disciple and said "there is sugar kept under the bed, take it out. Eat it yourself and distribute it among the attendees". *Amir Khusrau* did the same and then his tongue got that sweetness that today even after the passage of more than seven hundred years, his sweetness has not diminished. *Khusrau* was awarded the title of *mala-kul Sho-aa-raa* "king of the poets" by a *sultan* of his times.<sup>30</sup> One of his famous poetic couplet is narrated here which is sung by the most of *Qawwals* of every era as sample of his verbal and poetic ability and elevation.

نمی دانم چه منزل بود شب جائے کہ من بودم  
بہر سو رقص بسمل بود شب جائے کہ من بودم

I don't know what house it was, where I was at night  
All around me were half-slaughtered victims of love, tossing in agony.

پر ی پیکر نگاری، سرو قد، لاله رخساری  
سر اپا آفت دل بود شب جائے کہ من بودم

There was a nymph-like beloved with cypress-like form and tulip-like face  
Ruthlessly playing havoc with the hearts of lovers.

خدا خود میر مجلس بود اندر لامکاں خسرو  
محمد شمع محفل بود شب جائے کہ من بودم<sup>31</sup>

God himself was the master of ceremonies in that heavenly court  
Oh *Khusrau*, where the face of the Prophet (SAW) too was shedding light like a candle.

### **Background:**

In 1209 AD, Ghangez Khan attacked Russian-Turkestan with huge armies of Mongols and inflicted various atrocities on Muslims, a man from Russian-Turkestan, *Amir Saifuddin Mahmud*, escaped safely, saved his life and migrated to India.<sup>32</sup> India was ruled by *Sultan Shamsuddin al-Tamish* at that time. Soon, Sultan came to know about the arrival of *Amir Saifuddin Mahmud*, he invited him to his royal court. He included *Amir Saifuddin Mahmud* into his nobles and granted him *Yak-hazari mansab* in the royal court. He fixed a salary of 1200 rupees per year. Owing to his eligibility, God-gifted intelligence, hard work, bravery, honesty and loyalty, *Saifuddin Mahmud* made a special place in the heart of Sultan. *Amir* performed great and outstanding deeds at royal court.<sup>33</sup>

The Sultan was pleased with the excellent services of *Amir Saifuddin Mahmud* and in return for his achievements, he granted *Patiali* (a village) in District Itta as a *Jagir* in the province of Badayun. At that time, *Navab Imad-ul-Mulk* was the ruler of the province of Badayun. He was a very humble and gentle person. He loved *Amir Saifuddin*. After settling in *Patiali*, *Amir Saifuddin* got the idea of marriage. *Navab Imad Mulk* came to know about this. He married his daughter to *Amir Saifuddin Mahmud*. Three sons were born from noble *Bibi*. The eldest son was *Agraiddin Ali Shah*, the second son was *Abul Hasan Yaminuddin* and the third was *Husamuddin Ahmad*. It was the middle son, namely *Abul Hasan Yaminuddin* who came to be known as *Hazrat Khawaja Amir Khusrau Nizami* commonly known as *Hazrat Amir Khusrau*.<sup>34</sup> Apart from the Indian subcontinent, he was the owner of universal fame - who is not familiar with his name today in India, Pakistan, Bangla Desh, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkestan. His name will live forever in the music history of the subcontinent.

*Amir Khusrau* was born in 1253 AD in the town called *Ittab* of *Patiali* district in the province of *Badayun*, on the banks of the Ganges on the highway from *Mathura* to *Ittab*.<sup>35</sup> His father *Amir Saifuddin Mahmud* was martyred in a war at the age of eighty-six years. *Amir Khusrau* was very young at that time, but he was fond of poetry since childhood. It was the reign of *Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud*, son of a generous and famous sultan of slave dynasty the *Altatmash*. *Khusrau's* father name was *Amir Saifuddin Mahmud* and mother's name was *Daulat Naz*. The father was a *Turkish* immigrant and the mother was the daughter of a (*Hindu*) neo-Muslim, black Indian politician. He was surrounded by three brothers and one sister. *Khusrau's* original name was *Yaminuddin Mahmud*, but he gained fame under his pen name.

*Amir* was his hereditary title. He adopted a pure Indian style in his poetry and music. That was the reason, he became very popular. In his art, the countrymen felt the scent of their soil. However, time and circumstances affected it and many changes continued to take place in it. Initially, its language was Persian. Gradually, he wrote poems in other regional languages took

place in *Qawwali* and became the leading poets the age.<sup>36</sup> However, the word *Qawwali* came to be used as the name of a particular genre of music in India music of which the whole credit goes to *Hazrat Amir Khusrau* across the subcontinent.<sup>37</sup> According to *Khusrau*, *Qawwali* refers to a particular style of songs in which collectively, Allah's praise and worship are sung, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is praised and the *Aqwaals* of the Prophet (SAW) and *sufis* are sung in front of people to explain and describe the main themes of *aqwaals*. Music is necessary and accompanied in chorus form. *Qawwali* cannot be imagined without musical instruments. According to ancient traditions, sayings of *sufis* and historical books, *Qawwali* has been practiced in the shrines of *sufis* since long ago in the medieval times in this region. Although its origin is believed to be initiated by *Hazrat Amir Khusrau*, a beloved follower of *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia*, who was a well-known poet of his era as well as skilled in the art of music, but poetry and poems of *Khusrau* earned special place in *Qawwali mahafil* (gatherings) and in the eyes of his spiritual guide.<sup>38</sup>

. Interestingly they used *Qawwali* as a strategy for their internal solace and the propagation of Islam respectively, because the Indian people were fond of the fascination created by the music on their minds since ancient times.<sup>39</sup> Among the teachings of *Chishtia Sufis*, *Qawwali* is placed at the central point to get closer to *Sheikh* (spiritual guide), the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and God respectively. The central idea which leads a disciple to the ultimate journey to reach God via Prophet, is *Sheikh* (spiritual guide). This is why it causes mortality for the listeners and finally results in the union (a state of *halool*) with the ultimate truth. However, there is a beautiful and up-to-date explanation on the permissibility of *Qawwali* by the famous *Chishtia* saint and a poet of *Saraiki* dialect *Hazrat Khawaja Ghulam Fareed*, who said that listening to *Qawwali* was not forbidden in any respect.<sup>40</sup> Many of the *Sufi* orders, do not refuse to listen *Qawwali*. It is certain that *Qawwali* is dominant among many other *sufi* orders. For instance, in the Sufis of *Chishtia* order the genre of *sufi* music is more dominant. It is believed that *Qawwali* is included due to its virtues in the good things of *Sufis*. So whosoever denied it, he did it because of ignorance. *Hazrat Sheikh Bahauddin Naqshband*, the leader of the *Naqshbandia Sufi* Order in Subcontinent, said about *Qawwali* "I neither deny it nor I do this".<sup>41</sup> Therefore, if the pleasures of *Qawwali* do not lead to spiritual journey and inner development of a disciple, then it is forbidden, otherwise *Qawwali* is acceptable (*halal*) to ignite the spiritual taste.

Among the Sindhi disciples of *Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria Multani*, there is still a practice of *Qawwali*. Sometimes he used to work. His guide, *Hazrat Sheikh Shahabdin Umar Suhrawardy*, sometimes used to listen with interest. *Hazrat Abu Najib Abdul Qadir Suhrawardi's* book *Adaab al-Murideen* has a discussion on *Qawwali*. Among the followers of *Hazrat Ghous* in Sindh there is a method of *Qawwali*. This method of *sama* is known as *Samis*. This word is actually a modified form of the word *Sama*. *Qawwali* music is melody, not words. It is rhythm, not arguments. This is the spirit of the soul. Denial of the reality and impact of the art of music is proof of ignorance of real knowledge. *Hazrat Ali Hajwiri Data Ganj Bakhsb*, revealed this fact and says "It is our observation that if infants are crying, they become quiet after listening to the lullaby, but the person who is not impressed by the sound, is insensible and excluded from the class of living beings".<sup>42</sup>

## Conclusion

In nutshell, it can be asserted that the contribution of the *chishti Sufis* in the field of *Qawwali* music, especially through the conduction of their personal *sama* and *Qawwali* gatherings in the lands of subcontinent is highly commendable. In their narrations and sayings about *Qawwali*, they practically became the icons of the delivery of the message of love, peace and harmony in the Indian society. The propagation of Islam through the polite message in form of genre of *Qawwali* music, is a landmark achievement by the *Sufis* in the history of *Sufi* Islam of subcontinent. *Qawwali mahafil* are discussed especially in the *malfoozat-e-Mashaikh-e-Chishtia* of *Chishtia* order of subcontinent. *Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti* himself was a good poet. There was a specific schedule for the conduct of *Qawwali mahafil* in the *dargah*. The *dargah* of his disciple and caliph *Hazrat Qutbuddin Bakhtiar kiki* was in Delhi. He was also a fond of *Qawwali* that in the state of ecstasy, he fell ill and died after four days. Despite the opposition on various fronts, including the scholars of the royal court, the *Chishtia sufis* continued to insist on it. Furthermore, these *Sufis* attracted the Indian public towards fundamental teachings of Islam through their poetic and prose writings in a meaningful and innovative style, which were sung during the *Qawwali* gatherings. It was personal conduct and teachings of the *Sufis*, that tensions of the routine life among peoples, mended their ways to attend the *Qawwali* gatherings and caused a revolution in the mind and the then existing musical art of subcontinent. *Khawaja Moeenuddin Chishti Ajmeri*, a leading light of the *chishtia* order and beloved disciple of the *Khawaja Usman al-barooni*, became a principal source of preaching of Islam through the medium of *Qawwali* and poetry.

He was followed by his disciple *Khawaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki*, a second well-known *sufi* of the *chishtia*, who earned the disciple like, *Baba Fariduddin Ganjshakar*. *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* as disciple of *Baba Farid* led the order in a splendid way and earned magnificent and prolific disciple known as *Hazrat Amir Khusrau*, who served the literature and art of subcontinent whole-heartedly. It is proven that *Khusrau* as poet and artist reached at the peak of artistry not only in the field of poetry but *Qawwali* and music also. *Khusrau* was the author of innumerable verses, *divans* and books of prose. As *masnvi* writer, he rose to such a level that his *masnvis* got transcribed by the esteemed *ghazal*-writer of Persian, al-Hafiz. In the art of *Qawwali* he reached at the zenith.

*Khusrau* proved himself to be the emperor of the art of *Qawwali*. As an artist of his age, his empire of artistry has not been challenged by anyone till date. Probably it was the blessing of the same gratitude which was given to *Khusrau* by his *murshid*, *Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia* that he invented and improvised many *ragas*. He was undoubtedly the greatest musician of almost all times in sub-continent. The country had not produced any speaker equal to him. His greatness was recognized by the world. He was unique in the art of music. Some new inventions and innovations also in form of musical instruments, went to his credit. *Khusrau* gave a pure Indian touch to his music which could be called an example of unity in plurality and imitated by countless successive artists.

## References

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