

Approach of The Early Sufis From 10th Century to 12th Century Towards "SAMA"

Muhammad Tanveer Jamal Chishti

Ph.D. Scholar-History, Department of History & Pakistan Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty Block #1, First Floor, New Campus, Sector#H-10, International Islamic University, Islamabad-Pakistan; Email: mtanvirjamal@gmail.com

Dr. Abdul Zahoor Khan

Ph.D., Head, Department of History & Pakistan Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty Block #1, First Floor, New Campus Sector#H-10, International Islamic University, Islamabad-Pakistan; Email: dr.zahoorkhan@iiu.edu.pk; dr.zahoor2008@gmail.com

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Abstract

Sama is very important and fascinating practice of Sufism. Many of the early Sufis of the tenth to twelfth centuries were firm advocates of the *Sama*. They tried their best to prove that *Sama* is Islamic. For them *Sama* is one of the key modes for obtaining the divine union, solace and spiritual realization. This article is an attempt to shed light on the authenticity and validity of *Sama* as presented the writings of the leading Sufis of the tenth to twelfth centuries. This article will also explore the different degrees of *Sama*. It will discuss the activities and features which (according to the early Sufis of tenth to twelfth centuries) make *Sama* unlawful, and also explore the response of the same Sufis toward the neophytes, novices or common people who indulged in *Sama*.

Keywords: Sufism-Silsillah-Shaykh, Esoteric-Aspects, Spirituality, Meditation, Tasawwuf, Ulema, Sama-devotional-Sufi-music.

1. Introduction

Sufism is the soul of Islamic religion and *Sama* (devotional Sufi music) is its prime character. The Quran and the tradition of holy Prophet (PBUH) appreciated it and some of the companions of the Holy Prophet took part in *Sama*. There is also the positive approach taken toward the *Sama* by various leading Sufis, who declared it as an Islamic and the legitimate one. Sufis like Abu Nasr al-Sarrāj (d.988), Abu Bakr al- Kalabazi (d.990), Abu Talib al Makki (d.996 AD), Abu'l Qasim Abdul Karim Hawazan Al-Qushayri (d.1072 AD), Ali bin Usman al-Hujwiri (d.1076 AD) Al-Ghazali (d.1111 AD) and Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani(d.1166) not only illuminate the different aspects of *Sama*, but also try to explore the prohibition as well as activities which make *Sama* useless and un-Islamic.

The Sufis of this period were not mere ascetics but also theologians, mystic scholars and intellectuals. They produced numerous authentic works on Sufism. Thanks to the same Sufis who discussed issues relating to *Sama* in detail, the auditor hears the spiritual reality, not the mere sound. However, the exoteric *ulema* (*Ahle-e-zahar*) challenged the authenticity of *Sama*.

The most important thing in *Sama* is ecstasy. Ecstasy is truth (*wajdal-haq*) which is achieved through a high level of love with Allah almighty and by sincere devotion. Early Sufis mention three conditions or demands for *Sama*. These include time, place and company. If anyone among them is missing, *Sama* will not prove to be a profitable. There are great deals of literature available on *Sama*. Kenneth S. Avery has produced a monumental work entitled *A Psychology of Early Sufi Sama* (Listening and altered states) (2004). He not only discussed the early Sufi literature related to *Sama*, also presents five leading early Sufis and their approach toward *Sama*, these are al-Sarrāj (d.988), al Ghazali (d.1111), Abu al- Hassan Nuri (d.907), Abu Bakr Shebli (d.946) and al- Qusheri (d.1072). Other important works includes Sayyid Hossein Nasr's *Encyclopedia of Spirituality* (2000) and Anne Marie Schimmel's *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (2003). The former comprises two well researched volumes that are of great importance for all working on Sufism, but which lack a detailed study of *Sama*. The same is the case with the Schimmel's work. Although it is equally remarkable, it only has a very brief discussion on *Sama*. *The Shambhala guide to Sufism* (1997), written by Carl W. Ernst, is another excellent and research oriented work on Sufism as well on *Sama* and it further discusses both the primary and secondary sources.

2. SAMA (Devotional Sufi Music) in Islam

Literally, '*Sama*' means "hearing", 'to hear with the ear of the heart'. It is also defined as physically "listening" to anything that could increase your spiritual level. However, the term *Sama* is used when listening to the Holy Quran, Sufi poetry or devotional music as well. The *Sama* belong in particular to the Chishti School of thought, but there are evidences proving that some companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) both liked and participated in *Sama*, and that even the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself took his pleasure in the *Sama*, as well as with the state of ecstasy that descended upon him (Schimmel, 1975, pp.344-363). He had fallen into ecstasy on the night of Me'raj, when he heard the beautiful voice call "Come to me, "come to me," and he lost his turban while in his ecstasy. (Hussaini, 1980, p. 442)

The people of Hejaz declared that singing poetry with sweet voice was permissible, while the Sufis and their predecessors also affirmed the practice. Among these latter was Hazrat Anas bin Maalik, and Ibne Jareh also declared it *halal* (permissible). Furthermore, Imam Shafi did not condemn it as *haram* (forbidden), but termed it *mukroh* (disliked) for the common people. (Al-Qushayri, 2007, p. 343)

3. SAMA and Views of Sufis from 10th to 12th Centuries

The early Sufis and Islamic theologians were advocates of *Sama* and regarded it as the best practice or source of achieving spirituality. Scholars like Al- Sarrāj (d.988), Al- Kalabazi (d.990), Abu Talib al-Makki (d.996), al- Qushayri (d.1072), Ali bin Usman (d.1076), al Ghazali (d.1111), Abu Najib Suhrwardi (d.1165) were all firm supporters of the *Sama*, while the Sufi Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani (d.1166) among other was also advocate of the Quraanic *Sama*. For the early Sufis *Sama* was not only *halal* or permissible but *wajib* (a required religious practice). (Lewisohn, 1997, p. 2)

3.1 Abu Nasr al-Sarrāj al-Tusi and SAMA

Abu Nasr Abdullah bin. Ali bin Muhammad bin Yahya al-Sarrāj was born in Tus. He was one of the leading Sufis in the history of Islamic mysticism. He belonged to a family of mystics wrote many books which are not available now, (Al-Sarraj, 1914, p.5) except his master piece *Kitab al-Luma' fil Tasawwuf*. Beside Sufi sources, he primarily relied on the holy Quran and the tradition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He died in 988 AD and was buried in Tus.

Kitab al-Luma' fil –Tasawwuf is one of the most important (Khalil, 2011, p.8), earliest and fundamental works on Sufism (Avery, 2004, p.11). In this book Al- Sarrāj discusses *Sama* in detail. He has a very systematic approach and complete grip of his subject. Al-Sarrāj divided *Sama* in different sections such as the importance of sweet voice, *Sama* according to Quran, the tradition of Holy Prophet (PBUH), views of the Sufis, the degree of *Sama* and the type of auditors as well. In discussing the sweet voice he argued that Allah almighty appreciate the sweet voice and disliked a bad one: "And walk moderately and lower your voice to some extent. Undoubtedly in all voices, the most hideous voice is of an ass" (31-19). The Holy Prophet (PBUH) liked to hear the holy Quran chanted in a melodic way with beautiful voice. Allah almighty paid more attention when listening the holy Quran in a beautiful voice then did a man attending his best female musician. Moreover, the ancient people used the attractive voice as a tool for treating many diseases, especially melancholia. In Damascus, al-Sarrāj visited one of his friends, a man named al- Duqqī who had told him that he personally met a Negro slave and due to his sweet voice, his master lost his entire animal as the animal died due to ecstasy. Al- Duqqī himself fell down onto the ground due to ecstasy while listening to the same slave (Avery, 2004, p.69). Al-Sarrāj in his whole chapter *Kitab al-Sama* (book of audition) tried his best to prove that *Sama* is consistent with the true nature of Islam as well as to Islamic Sharia. He provided a very systematic work on this, attempting to demonstrate this in many different ways.

He discussed views of other leading Sufis who supported of *Sama* to define the exact nature and importance of the *Sama*. Dhun al- Noon, the Egyptian (d.861) [one of the leading Sufi and contemporary of Abu Yazid Bistami] was an advocate of *Sama*. According to him, *Sama* is an esoteric knowledge that being revelation to anybody who attends to it with full devotion. On the other hand, if he listen it with physical desire he is guilty of a heretic act. Although some Sufis condemned *Sama* (Audition) he did not pay them much attention in his whole chapter *Kitab al-Sama* and devoted only a single only statement of Abu Ali al-Rudhabari who wanted to eradicate *Sama* forever.

Al- Sarrāj discussed the permissibility and validity of *Sama* in the Quran and tradition of Holy Prophet (PBUH). Later on his successors, scholars like Abu Talib al-Makki, al-Hajweri, Al-Ghazali, followed the same policy. *Sama* is not *zakar* or poetry which creates un-Islamic passion or desire in the heart of a man, but it is a *kalam*, or rhyme that generates fear and enhances one's affiliation with Allah. Al-Sarrāj presented following *ayah* and traditions in his approval of *Sama*.

"And in your selves; what, do you not see"? (51-21). "We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within

themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness"? (41-53) "And as for those who had believed and done righteous deeds, they will be in a garden [of Paradise], delighted". (30-15). Al Sarrāj then presented some traditions of Holy Prophet (PBUH) to prove the validity of *Sama*. Hazrat Ayesha recalled that she had a slave girl, singing to her in her house, and that she carried on singing when the Holy Prophet (PBUH) entered in the house. But the girl ran away when Hazrat Umar entered, and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) smiled when Hazrat Umar asked the reason. Recounting this event, Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) later recalled that when Hazrat Umar said that he would not move from there until he listened to the same song which was heard by the Prophet of Allah, the Prophet (PBUH) then called the girl back and she sang the song (Al-Sarraj, 1914, pp.68-70). Moreover, it is fact that many of the Holy Prophet's companions recited poetry, Abu Bakr (d.633A), Bilal (d.655), and Aisha included. Fourteen verses are quoted from the famous poem, Banat Sa'ad, which Ka'b b. Zuhayr recited in the presence of the Prophet (PBUH). Holy Prophet (PBUH) himself said "Wisdom is sometimes to be found in Poetry." Malik bin Anas, a very famous companion of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and other people of Madina appreciated *Sama* or the music. Imam Shafi declared that *Sama* was permissible. The common people can also participate in *Sama* but avoid the musical instruments mentioned by Holy Prophet (PBUH) like the flute (*degdegi*), bow wires (Al-Sarraj, 1914, pp.70-71).

Latter on al- Sarrāj described the different degrees of *Sama*. In his views there are three type of *Sama*. The *first* type of *Sama* is for disciples who are trying to evolve their spiritual level. A *second* type is for more advanced mystics (*siddiqin*), and they listen only to those specific *Sama* which are very appropriate to their temperament. The *third* type is the gnostic (*arifin*). It is the highest category and these Sufis remain silent even within their ecstasy. Al- Sarrāj also discusses the three characteristics of auditors or of those who attend the *Sama*. The *first* are the followers of realities and have direct contact with Allah. Group *two* comprises those who depend on their spiritual feelings and they have a divine or esoteric knowledge. The *third* group is the poor (*fuqara*), (Al-Sarraj, 1914, pp.71-73) who have renounced completely the worldly life and materialistic approach. Among these the last group is the best and the nearest to Allah.

Besides defining these characteristics of auditors' al-Sarrāj also designated different groups in terms of preferences. Among them one popular group is made up of those who prefer to listen the Holy Quran. Later on, some popular Sufis such as Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani also preferred to listen holy Quran (Jilani, 1972, pp.658-661). In this regard, that group also cites both the Quran and the tradition of Holy Prophet (PBUH). "And recite the Quran with (aloud) in a slow (pleasant tone and) style. (73-4) they further quote "those who believed (in the oneness of Allah-Islamic monotheism) and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah Almighty. (13-27). "Those who listen to the word (good advice *la ilaha illallah*) and follow the best thereof" (39-18) "Allah has sent down the best statement in a Book (this Quran), its parts resembling each other (in goodness and truth) (and) oft-repeated. The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from it (when they recite or hear it). "Then their skin and their heart soften to the remembrance of Allah". (39-23) "whose hearts are filled with fear when Allah is mentioned" (22-35) and "We send down of the Quran that which is a healing and mercy for those who believe" (17-82). Moreover, the popular *ayah* of the auditors of holy Quran is "Every soul will taste death" (Al-Sarraj, 1914, pp.70-75)

For listeners to the Quran (Quraanic Audition) there are two types of *Sama* as well as of auditors. *First* group who listen it carelessly and without any attention. For such auditors the holy Quran says "And do not be like those who say, "We have heard, while they do not hear." (8-21)The *Second* group however, listens to *Sama* with their full concentration and devotion. For such people Allah almighty says "And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say, "Our Lord", we have believed, so register us among the witnesses." (5-83)The ecstasy belongs to the latter degree of *Sama*, or to the *Second* group of people. Companions of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and Sufis equally fell in ecstasy. In such ecstasy a listener sometimes dies (Al-Sarraj, 1914, pp.72-73). The auditors of Quran also quoted the tradition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to prove their argument.

After auditors of the Holy Quran comes a second group the listener to poetry and odes. This group is the largest and emerged as the dominated one due to the Chishti school of thought. According to them, it is impossible for a human being (man's heart) to bear the holy Quran as it is uncreated and the direct Word of God (Al-Sarraj, 1914, pp.71-74). As Allah say "if We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of Allah And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought."(59-21) Often and above, all else a man feels ecstasy and delights when he listen Holy Quran chanted in sweet voice and in melodic tone. For some auditors of Quraanic *Sama*, ecstasy is due to musical and sweet vice. The auditor of music or poetic rendition still found the same ecstasy in these forms but there impacts are less dangerous and daring (Al-Sarraj, 1914, pp.73-75). Al-Sarrāj presented a number of examples and stories about different leading Sufis illustrating the poetic *Sama*. It is better for the common people that the poetry and odes of music will not be profane but Islamic and spiritual. However, the Sufi was not disturbed by the negligence of poets or their poetry as well.

There are some Sufis as well as *Ulema* who to some degree dislike *Sama* and poetry as well as musical intonation of holy Quran. They pointed out some traditions of Holy Prophet (PBUH) in which he said "A good Muslim leaves alone what does not concern him" some Tabi'un Sufi scholars also denounced *Sama*. For them, it is too dangerous for the common people. But for Sufis it is permissible. One group argued that *Sama* is allowed for those Sufis who totally detached from worldly affairs and who through strict meditation, had gained a complete grip or control over their physical self (*nafs*), although some others listened *Sama* while also indulging in worldly affair. These critics finally concluded that for themselves, it was impossible to follow either of these groups: the former is begun too much high in spirituality while latter is very distant from divinity (Al-Sarraj, 1914, pp.76-78).

3.2 Abu Talib Al-Makki and SAMA

Shaykh Abu Talib Muhammad bin Atiya Harsi Makki was a renowned scholar as well as a Sufi. He was born in Persian province named Jibal, but received his education Makkah where he settled while in his teens. There he became a student of Abu Sa'id Al-Arabi (d.957) a popular disciple of Junyad (d.910). Latter he spent some time in Basra before moving to Baghdad where he died in 996 (Khalil, 2011, pp.8-10). Al-Ghazali (d.1111) appreciated and recommended his works. Hazrat Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi (d.1234) had honored him for his book *Qut al-Qulub*. Talking of *Sama*, he recognized Hazrat Abu Talib as a renowned theologian, as being very pious, and as one of the leading esoteric Sufi (*Ahle-batin*). He was fully informed about Sufi teachings and his argument is authentic and valid (Suhrawardi, 1891, p.250). Abu Talib al-Makki was not only a leading early Sufi but he also was a very prominent theologian. His *Qut al-Qulub* is recommended as the third most important early book on Sufism (Khalil, 2011, pp.8-11). Moreover, *al-Ta'arruf* and *Kitab al-Luma'* the scholarly works while, *Qut al-Qulub* is moral source.

Al-Makki discussed well the role of poetry in *Sama*. The emergence or the beginning of the eminent Sufi poets and Sufi poetry occurred in the eleven and twelfth centuries. That is why all these early Sufis had paid such great attention to poetry when talking about *Sama*. Sufi poetry is considered as one of the best heritages of Sufism (Ernst, 1997, p.182). Al-Makki insisted that the only thing that is impermissible in the *Sama* were *Kalam* (poetry) that dealt with worldly desires and lust, although he admitted that anybody listening to *Sama* with his concubine or wife might also be subject to covetousness and sexual or worldly emotions. Examples of such *Sama* are some those of the Tabi'un, but anyone who listened *Sama* that brought one to the path leading toward the beloved Allah Almighty, and to enlightenment, should speak in plain words so as to reveal the grandness of Allah Almighty. Such *Sama* were judged permissible, but were allowed only to those who had a particular authority regarding *Sama*.

It is very important and at the same time, obligatory for an auditor to make an ablution and dressing clean clothes. The vital aspect of the *Sama* of Sufis and ascetics is ecstasy. A Sufi had ecstasy in his heart. This is because it is through that ecstasy, that one may reach the point of grief (*Maqam-i-hazen*), or the point of appreciation (*Maqam-i-Shooq*), or the point of fear (*Maqam-i-khoof*), or the point of love (*Maqam-i-Muhabat*). There were some Sufis for whom *Sama* was used as a food or diet, and some among them ate nothing because of the *Sama*, and instead busied themselves in meditation, even though the body required food to give it energy for the ecstasy of the *Sama* (Al-Makki, 1988, pp. 221-222).

People listening to *Sama*, during the period of Hazrat Atta bin Abi Rabah (d.737) until today, do so on such sacred days as that of *tashriq*, when Allah Almighty ordered his people to worship. As well, they perform *zakar* on those particular days, which no theologian will declare to be an unlawful. Furthermore, some Sufis did their *Sama* in the secret places. Their numbers include among these were such companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as Hazrat Abdullah bin Jafar, Hazrat Abne Zubair, and Hazrat Mughareh bin Sheba, all of whom held *Sama* (Al-Makki, 1988, pp. 224-225).

3.3 Al Qushayri and the Sama

Abu'l Qasim Abdul Karim Hawazan Al-Qushayri was an eminent theologian and Sufi. He was born in 986 AD in Ostawa. Simply as Abdul Karim, and known al-Qushayri after his predecessor Qushayr b. Ka'b. He died in 1072 and is buried in Nishapur, having written some fifty-one books (Nguyen & Chiabotti, 2014, p. 395). Although most of these have vanished due to Moghul incursions, his *Risalah al-Qushayriyya fi ilm al-Tasawwuf* is no doubt a great contribution for Sufism and gained popularity during his lifetime. Copies reached far and wide and it is considered to be one of the key sources the Sufis and their practices (Shahsavari, 2010, p. 280). It played a vital role in the culmination of Sufism as well as in the compilation of Sufi methodological works. In his *Risalah* he not only gave brief biographies of eighty-two leading Sufis, but also described the basic fundamental principles of Sufism, as well as of Islam in general. Furthermore, his *Risalah* and some of his other books exist including *Latā'if al-Ishārāt* (his translation of Holy Quran), *Al-Shawāhid* (his conversations, compiled by his son Abu Nasr) and *Principle of Sufism*.

Like other early Sufis, al-Qushayri also maintained that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions had shown an interest in poetry. The reason for this is that if the poetic *Sama* proves to be an Islamic and the Quraanic *Sama* has automatically been so proved, the ecstasy would be equally effective in both the earlier and latter *Sama*. Al-Qushayri More and less provided same information as it was given by al-Sarrāj.

Listening to poetry or songs is lawful and cannot be seen as violation of the *Shariah*. Poems were read before the holy Prophet [PBUH], who had listened to them and made no objection to them. Since it is allowed to praise Allah without a sweet voice, then it is also lawful to do so in the lovely voice. Any *Kalam* (verses or poetry) which encouraged people to perform worship and meditation and which compelled them to avoid sin and bad deeds, such a *Kalam* also should be considered *mustahib* (the liked one) in Islamic *Shariah*. When the *Ansari- Madina* (Helpers of Prophet) sang the verses: "We have pledged our allegiance to Muhammad in [his] struggle (jihad) as long as we are alive," the Holy Prophet (PBUH) replied them in the same poetic style. As he said "O God, there's no life except that of the Hereafter, be benevolent to the Helpers and the Emigrants". Moreover, like al-Sarrāj Al-Qushayri also maintained that Maalik bin Anas and all the people of Hijaz permitted songs (Al-Qushayri, 2007, pp. 342-344). Hazrat Ayesha recalled that on the day of Eid, some slave girls were sitting with her and singing about the battle of Buath (fought between Aus and Kharaj of Madinah tribes in 617 AD) and was accompanied by the tambour (*duf*). After some time Hazrat Abu Bakr arrived and scolded the girls, saying that these were the devil's tools in the home of Prophet of Allah. But the Holy Prophet (PBUH) asked him to let them continue, because that day was a festival of Eid (Al-Qushayri, 2007, pp. 344-345).

The above mentioned tradition as proving to prove that music is *halal* while played with tambour or *duf* (Al-Ghazali, 2001, p.645). Furthermore the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said: "The distinction between the lawful and the unlawful is the playing of the tambour (*al-duff*)." Although Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d.855) did not like the drum (*tabla*), he still argued that the *duff* is acceptable and permissible at all. Music and poetry are not against the Islamic *Shariah*. Another popular tradition of the Prophet (PBUH) that favors music as well as the musical instrument of the *duff* is that Amir Ibn Sa' d, who found Thabit Ibn Sa'd (one of those who fought in Badr) at a wedding at which two young girls were singing and playing the tambours (*duf*). When Amir asked why the latter don't stop them, Thabit Ibn Sa'd answered that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) permitted us to do this (Al-Jawzi, 2014, pp. 350-351).

Hazrat Ayesha added that at a marriage ceremony of *Ansar* of Madinah, Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) asked me why she should not send the singing girls along with them, because the *Ansar* of Madinah are very fond of music, and among them there is a tradition of *ghazal*. You should have sent some girls to recite these verses "We have come to you, we have come to you greet us and we shall greet you" (Al-Qushayri, 2007, p. 344). When Abyssinian children were dancing and playing in the mosque on the day of Eid, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) allowed his beloved wife Ayesha to watch (Al-Ghazali, 2001, p. 643). Before the arrival of the Islam, poetry and poets already had won great renown among the Arabs. Poems were recited in war and at fairs, festivals, and so on. But this poetry often belonged to women, and was full of vulgarity, immorality and decadence. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) only prohibited that type of poetry. Meanwhile, Hazrat Hassan bin Sabit (d.674), Hazrat Zahuar bin K'ab (d.683) and Hazrat Abdullah bin Rawah (d.628) were all poets of the holy Prophet (PBUH).

3.4 Ali bin Usman al Jullabi al Hujwiri and the SAMA

Ali bin Usman al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri (d.1076/469), popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, laid the foundation of Sufism in the Indian Subcontinent, which was later on popularized by Shaykh Muin al- Din Chishti (d.1235). The former died in 1076 and is buried in Lahore.

After al-Sarrāj's *Kitab al-Luma'* al-Hujwiri's *Kashf al Muhjub* is the second Sufi work in which *Sama* has been discussed in full detailed. Ali bin Usman preferred hearing the *Sama* oversight or vision. The *Shariah* and the Prophets had been based on hearing. So anybody who disapproved of the *Sama* was thus denying the whole of Islamic law as well (Al-Hujwiri, 1911, pp. 393-394). Like al-Sarrāj (d.988) al-Qushayri (d.1072) and al-Ghazali (d.1111), Hazrat Ali bin Usman (d.1076) also cited the Quraanic audition as being the best *Sama*.

In Hujwiri's view, there are two types of auditors or listeners. The first used *Sama* to increase their devotion and their *Sama* either belonged to the Quraanic verses or moral poetry. These are the true Sufis or ascetics. The second group listened *Sama* to satisfy their physical selves. These latter listened to an immoral and vulgar poetry. That group had not taken the right path. According to al-Hujwiri this division (right and wrong) came into being during the period of Prophet David (Daood). He had such a sweet voice that not only humans, but the beast and birds also visited him whenever he started to recite the holy book Zabur. For misleading the right group Iblis invented immoral poetry and some musical instruments such as flute. In this way David's followers divided into two. One followed him and second started to follow Iblis-the devil (Al-Hujwiri, 1911, pp. 402-403).

3.5 Al-Ghazali and the SAMA

Abu Hamid Muhammad, popularly known as al-Ghazali, was a leading Islamic philosopher and intellectual, as well as a Sufi. He was born at Tus in Khurasan in 1058. When his father died he was a child, and was educated under Shaykh Yousaf al-Nassaj. Al-Ghazali was only 34 years old when took charge the Jamiya Nizamiyya Baghdad (Smith, 1983, pp. 19-20). He wrote a number of books, the most important of which being *Ihyallum-Id-Din*, *Kimiyya-i Sa'adat*, *Menhaj al-Abedeem*, *Elm al- Kalam*, *Haqiqat-i-Ruhelnsani*, *Rodhiatul Talebeen*, *Mukashifat al-Qulub*, *Bidayat al-hidayah*, and *Mizan al-'amal*. When the Imam al-Haramyn read his book *Kitab al-Manhol*, he said that this one book of al-Ghazali was more important than all of his own works (Shakoh, 1959, p. 212). He died in 1111 AD and was buried in Tus, in Iran.

Al-Ghazali argued that only the exoteric *Ulema (Ahle-e-zahar)* prohibited the *Sama*, and that they were unaware of the secret that the love of Allah reveals in the heart of a man. These *Ulema* believed that love, friendship and affection were possible only with the same gender, or among homosexuals. The exoteric *Ulema* therefore insisted that Sufi claims of the adoration, love, or *Ishaq* with Allah Almighty were simply false. When someone asked them to define what was meant by the love of Allah being vital for a man, they replied that this meant simply to worship and follow the law of their Almighty Allah (Al-Ghazali, 2001, p. 641).

Al-Ghazali maintained that the adoration of Allah Almighty overwhelms a person's heart and reaches the level of love, and that *Sama* therefore is obligatory for that person. The *Sama* of the Sufis falls into that category. The *Sama* played a very vital role in increasing and enhancing a person's relation with Allah, and Sufis often acquired the highest spirituality through *Sama*. It was *Sama* that purified their hearts and freed them from all evils, just as fire purifies silver. By itself, worship and meditation (*riyazat*) do not remove prejudice and evils from the human heart in the way they are removed by *Sama*. Many companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), along with the people of Makkah and Madinah took part in *Sama*, among whom were Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar (d.687), Muwiyah (d.681) as did Sarri as-Saqti (d.867), Dhal al Nun Misri (d.861), Harith al Muhasibi (d.857), and Ibne Askalani (d.1448) (Al-Ghazali, 1993, pp. 163-164).

Al-Ghazali discussed in detail the role of *Sama* as an important tool of the Chishti order. Of course, the *Sama* was best suited to those whose hearts is filled with the love of Allah. For a man who fell in love with a girl, the *Sama* is useless. Al-Ghazali made the same case for *Sama* as did the Chishti Sheikhs. In addition, he discussed things that would make *Sama* illegitimate or unlawful. For example, women should not sing *Sama*, some musical instruments (the Majamir, Autar and Kubah) must not be used, [the *daf* or tambour is allowed], and un-Islamic poetry (*Kalam*) is banned (Al-Ghazali, 1993, p. 650). Teenagers (beardless boys), expressing immoral desire while listening to *Sama*, and offensive or profane talk are also banned (Al-Ghazali, 1993, p. 169). All this apart, in his works Al-Ghazali described in great detail the role of wisdom, (*fahm*), ecstasy (*wajid*) and movement (*harkat*). Form al-Sarrāj down to al- Ghazali the majority of the Sufis except for Abu Sa'id Abu al-Khayr (d.1048) were agreed that the common people, as well as novices or neophytes are not allowed in *Sama* (Lewisohn, 1997, p.11). The reason is that the neophyte is not as competent of controlling himself in ecstasy, and there is thus a good chance that he may die. Another reason is, while the lust and love for worldly affairs remained within their heart, *Sama* may not be prove to be good for them. Their lust and physical desires would be increased while listening to *Sama*. But in al-Ghazali's view, anybody who denied the Sufi's *Sama* along with their ecstasy, did so only due to their short sightedness (Al-Ghazali, 2001, pp. 649-650).

Moreover, al-Ghazali described the seven types of songs that were considered to be lawful. Among them, the *first* are the songs of pilgrims; the *second* and *third* belong to the songs of warriors on the battlefield; the *fourth* are the songs of lament, related to mourning over past sins and bad deeds; the *fifth* are the festival songs, like those for Eid, marriages, birthdays, and so on; the *sixth* are the songs of lovers, these are songs which enhance one's relation with Allah, [although songs that relate to women or sexual love are unlawful] and the *seventh* are those songs which help one to know Allah Almighty. These include songs that we find only in *Sama*. In such songs (*Sama*) a man's spirituality is increased and he should be led to witness the secrets of Allah Almighty. This is both the goal and the final stage for a paramour or lover of God, and it is obtained only through the *Sama* or songs (Al-Ghazali, 1993, pp. 166-169). *Sama* also demands a proper time, place and brethren (zaman, makan and ikhwan). As far as time is concerned, it must not be at prayer time or during a meal, or when you are mentally or physically disturbed. 'Place' like time is also very important in *Sama*. *Sama* is not to be held in a street, or a road, nor in dark, dirty places and also not in the house of a tyrannical person. With regard to brethren, the non-Muslim must not be allowed into *Sama*, and worldly people, false believers and gossipers are also banned [(Ernst, 1997, p. 182) & (Al-Ghazali, 2001, pp. 665-666)]. In order to achieve full divine benefit in *Sama*, it will start when the Sufi's hearts enjoys their purity and considered they will give full attention to *Sama*. The best place for *Sama* is *khanaqah* (hospice) mosque or any other sacred place. While for the last demand (brethren, ikhwan) the company also should be made up of ascetics, Sufis and people who are detached from the worldly affair (Lewisohn, 1997, pp. 8-10).

3.6 Shaykh Abu Najib al-Suhrwardi and SAMA

Abu Najib Suhrwardi was born in 1097 AD in a town named Suhrward in the Persian province of Jibal. He was founder of the Suhrwardi order, which latter on was popularized by his nephew Shaykh Shahab al-Din Umar, (d.1234 AD). Shaykh Abu Najib studied in Baghdad and belongs to Shafi school of thought. He also taught *fiqh* for some time in Jamiyya Nizamiyya of Baghdad. Where he died in 1165 AD. Although he did not produce many works, his book *Adab al-Muridin* is notable attempt and contribution for Islamic mysticism. He supported famous groups of *Sama*, including those based on the Holy Quraan, versions of poetry and he cited *ayah* from Holy Quran and poetic verses in its support.

Abu Najib Suhrwardi identified three groups of listeners that are to be found within the realm of *Sama*. The first are those who make contact with Allah Almighty during *Sama*, and who hear the voice of God. Secondly, there are those who have thought long on their situation, place and time and finally, there are the Sufis whose hearts are free from worldly desires, and who listen to the *Sama* with the purity of their hearts and who find their beloved Allah Almighty in the *Sama*. These people are termed as being the most capable of listening to the *Sama* (Al-Suhrwardi, 1975, pp. 63-64). Although *Sama* had been remained controversial, but at the same time were the most popular aspect of Sufism (Ernst, 1997, p. 179) Abu Najib cited the same tradition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as had been advanced earlier by Ali bin Usman al-Hujwiri of Hazrat Ayeshah's a slave girl [(Al-Suhrwardi, 1975, p. 61) & (Al-Hujwiri, 1911, p. 401)].

Hazrat Dhun al- Noon Misri (d.861) a very renowned figure of Islamic mysticism was born in Egypt in 796. Like al-Hallaj he was arrested on a charge on heresy. After his release, he returned to Cairo, where he died in 861. When he came to Baghdad, people had asked to him to obtain for them permission to listen the *Sama*, and this he did. In response to an invitation from Shiraz Hazrat Abdullah Khafif (d.982) came in along with his preceptor Hazrat Sheikh Ahmad bin Yaya. When they heard the *Sama* there, Sheikh Ahmad fell into ecstasy (Al-Suhrwardi, 1975, pp. 61-63).

3.7 Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani and the SAMA

Hazrat Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani was a founder of Qadriyya *Silsilah*, and the founders of the many other Sufi orders had remained in his company and obtained their divine knowledge from him. He himself was a descendent of Hazrat Hassan bin Ali, and was linked to the Junaidiyya Sufi Order. Born in 1078/471in Jiyal a village located on a popular mountain named *Jodi* in Iraq, which was believed to be the mountain where the boat of Prophet Noah had landed (Chishti, 2010, p. 562). He is popularly known as Hazrat Ghous al- Azam

Although the Qadiri Sufis do not like the *Sama*, Hazrat Ghous al-Azam still did not reject it. He supported the first group of *Sama* described by al-Sarrāj and known as Quraanic audition or *Sama*. Although he argued that it was proper either to deliberately or unintentionally ignore a song, he maintained that if someone heard *Sama*, then he should sit down to listen with respect and devotion. When he heard the *kalam* of *Sama*, he imagined that it was the voice of whom that had recited the Holy Quran, and in his mind made it an address to the Allah Almighty (Jilani, 1972, p. 658). Indeed, Hazrat shah Abu al M'ali Qadiri, a leading Qadiri Shaykh in the Subcontinent, mentioned an occasion when Shaykh Umar Bazar, Shaykh Ali, Shaykh Baqa, and Shaykh Abu Sa'id Fatawi went to see or visit their own Shaykh, so Hazrat Ghous al-Azam called the Qawwals and asked them to perform *Sama* (Sial, 2010, p. 387).

4. Conclusion

This investigative and analytically historical examined research explores the *Sama* as one of the most well-known characteristics of Sufism (mysticism/spirituality) and is in accord with the will as well as strength of character of Islam. It represents true and factual nature of Sufism as well as of Islamic asceticism. The early Sufis were not the pioneers of this practice, though this practice had some roots in the early Islam. Furthermore, it is permissible whether one should hear the Holy Quran in musical intonation or poetry as well. *Sama*, undoubtedly, is one of the main sources of achieving the divine unification and amalgamation.

However, the sources endorse that musical instruments such as flute, bongo drum (*Tabla*), etc, should not be used in *Sama*. Side by side, the poetry or *kalam* should be in compatible by means of the true natural world of Islam. For this practice, a code of conduct should be followed, like neophytes, novices or common people have no place for listening *Sama*. Nonetheless, they may participate and involve themselves if they could carry out the obligations, compulsions and requirements of *Sama*. For them, it is also essential to join their preceptors to listen *Sama* having prior permission from their spiritual masters.

Despite the fact that in Sufi's traditions, *Sama* is decidedly cherished, some other schools of thought (like the Salafis and Ahl-e-Hadith) totally at odds with this tradition and even declared this practice un-Islamic. The critics

challenge the authenticity of *Sama* by referring to some verses of the Holy Quran and Traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The originality of *Sama* as per practice of the early Sufis has been considerably distorted because of the negligence on the part of the auditors or the audience and also by adopting *qawali* as a profession in modern time, which is considered against the golden principles of the Sufi doctrine.

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