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

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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- Kalabazī (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 Jillani(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- Qusheeri (d.1072).Other important works includes Sayyid Hossein Nasr’s Encyclopedid 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 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- Sarraj (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 Jillani (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-Sarraj al-Tusi and SAMA**

Abu Nasr Abdullah bin. Ali bin Muhammad bin Yahya al-Sarraj 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’ fiil 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’ fiil –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- Sarraj discusses Sama in detail. He has a very systematic approach and complete grip of his subject. Al-Sarraj 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 ass” (31-19). The Holy Prophet (PBUH) liked to hear the holy Quran chanted in a melodic way with beautiful voice. Allah almighty appreciated the sweet voice and disliked a bad voice.

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- Sarraj 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-Hajveri, Al-Ghazali, followed the same policy. Sama is not zakr 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-Sarraj 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 Ayeshah 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) than 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.6334), Bilal (d.665), 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 (degdeg), 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 Jillani also preferred to listen holy Quran (Jillani, 1972, pp.658-661). In this regard, that group also cites both the Quran and the tradition of the Prophet 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 presence of Allah Almighty. (13-27). “Those who listen to the word (good advice la ila ha ill allah) 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 ecstatic 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 become 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 Shahabaldin Suhrwardi (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 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 zakr 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 as Al-Qushayri after his predecessor Qushayr b. Ka’b. He died in 1072 and is buried in Nishapur, having writing 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 Latâ’if al-Ishârât (his translation of Holy Quran), Al-Shawâhid (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 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 Zubahur 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 Kitāb 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 Ihyâ'ul-ld-Din, Kîmiyât-i: Sâ'adat, Menhaj al-Abdeeen, Elm-al-Kalam, Haqiqat-i-RuhelInsani, Rodhiatul Talebeen,Mukashifat al-Qulub, Bidayat al-hidayah, and Mizan al-‘aml. When the Imam al-Harâmyn read his book Kitab al-Manhof, he said that this one book of al-Ghazali was more important than all of his own works (Shakhoh, 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), Muwiayiah (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 to be used, [the duf or tambour is allowed], and un-Islamic poetry (Kalâm) 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 (wajd) and movement (harkat). Form al-Sarrâj 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, ikhwân) 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-Suhwardi and SAMA

Abu Najib Suhwardi was born in 1097 AD in a town named Suhward in the Persian province of Jibal. He was founder of the Suhwardi 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 Jamiiyya Nizamiiyya 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 Suhwardi 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-Suhwardi, 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 Ayesha’s a slave girl [(Al-Suhwardi, 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 Khaffif (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-Suhwardi, 1975, pp. 61-63).

3.7 Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jillani and the SAMA

Hazrat Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jillani 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 Junaidiya 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 Ghaus al-Azam

Although the Qadiri Sufis do not like the Sama, Hazrat Ghaus al-Azam still did not reject it. He supported the first group of Sama described by al-Sarräj 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 (Jillani, 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 Ghaus 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.

References

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