

THE MEANING OF MUSIC IN THE SUFISM SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

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Abstract: the article is dedicated to one of the important problem connected with the Sufism, which is the most spiritual part of Islam, and the music ability influences upon the man’s spiritual development. Urgency of the problem is founded on that, that contemporary mankind steps aside from the meaning and purpose of one’s own being on the Earth, and that is why interprets the art and music only and exceptionally as entertainment and relaxation the man from the humdrum (cultureless) existence.

Key words: music ability, Sufism, spiritual

I. INTRODUCTION

In the article on the example of Khazrat Inayat Khan’s works is giving an explanation of music sense and purpose on the Earth, connection music and Universe, likeness some side pieces of music and unbounded Cosmos, in foundation of which there is HARMONY. Therefore, the man can harmonize his own inside vibration by the use of music, helping himself on the endless evolutional stairs as well as all the living things on the Earth and all the world.

“In a cave of secrecy, on the day of persecution,
I read the sweet Quran,
Suddenly an angel of comfort
Having flown, he brought me a talisman”.
(Pushkin A.S.)

"The grandeur of the dance of light spheres and round dances
We cannot comprehend while we are wrapped in ashes
Sorrows and separation. And only faith is sweet
I can bring back that harmony and joy”.
(Rumi J. “When the tambour rings”)

Sufism, as a phenomenon of philosophical and religious thought, occupies an important place not only in the history of eastern countries and peoples professing Islam, but also of the entire human society as a whole, since it is an expression of the spiritual aspirations of man. In consideration of the modern humanity has largely turned into a consumer society, i.e. a consumer society of purely material values, having lost its life guidelines, the innermost meaning and purpose of its internal spiritual organization, the need to direct human thought to spirituality increases many times over.

This is all the more important because the artistic activity of man in general, and art, in particular, which, it would seem, should make up for the lack of spirituality in society, and guide humanity along the path of understanding the purpose, objectives, and meaning of one’s existence, becomes entertainment or distraction of a person from all the hardships of life and everyday despondency. Therefore, we believe that the presented article is a very important and necessary help for those individuals who are not limited to their purely biological being, but strive to know the innermost Truth, which is revealed only to a pure person who seeks the Truth in himself, and not himself in the Truth.

The famous Indian Suphia, or Sufi Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882-1927) wrote: “Sufism has no and never had a beginning, and it never arose as a historical phenomenon, it always existed, because light was always the inner essence of a man. In its highest manifestations, this light can be called the knowledge of God, divine wisdom – Sufism”. [1, 9]

In other words, there has never been a time when at least one of the representatives of the human race on the Earth planet did not strive to comprehend the Light, i.e. Divine Essence, Divine Principle, and Divine Love and Wisdom, and this is Sufism. On the basis of this, it becomes clear that the Sufis themselves understand Sufism precisely as a person’s desire to comprehend the Divine Truth without connecting this desire for Truth with a specific religious denomination and a limited, vulgar understanding of religious faith.

We can say that in these simple words of Hazrat Inayat Khan, in fact, the very essence of Sufism is stated. For the author of the above words very accurately and subtly speaks not only of light, as the inner essence of every person who is able to see a spark of a burning flame in himself and other people, but also that this light, or fire, or flame is the Divine Principle and the Divine Manifestation that exists in a man himself.

It is not surprising that the highest spirituality of Sufism, its inner integrity and moral purity, which attracted the attention of all those suffering the knowledge of the Truth, facilitated and guided them along the path of searching for the meaning of human existence. Therefore, the Sufis call their own brother any person who has devoted his life to the search for spirituality, i.e. Divine Wisdom, and this is the Truth.

The word “Sufism” itself, as the researchers believe, has several interpretations, or meanings, each of which has an equal right to exist both in Sufism itself and in theoretical studies of Sufism, because it contains a piece of Truth, to which, as noted, seek the best representatives of the human race.

So, some researchers believe that the word “Sufism” comes from the name of Mount Jafa. At the top of this mountain were the seekers of the Spiritual Path, who were the first to hear the call of the Prophet Muhammad and respond to it. Along the way, we note that, according to the Sufis themselves, they were also the first to heed the words of Jesus Christ, and given the time difference of 700 years between the life of the Savior (1-rst century AD) and the Prophet Muhammad (570-632), it turns out that Sufism arose long before the emergence of Islam itself. In other words, Sufism, as a desire to comprehend the Truth, has always existed in human society.

Others believe that the term “Sufism” is derived from the word “safa,” which means “pure.” For the Sufis professed the pursuit of spiritual purity and perfection, without which the knowledge of God is impossible.

Another scholar saw the origin of the word “Sufism” in the Greek word “σοφός”, which means “wise,” where wisdom was understood to mean Divine Wisdom, which every Sufi sought to achieve. Already on the basis of this, it becomes clear that Divine Wisdom has little in common with what we put in the concept of earthly wisdom. For earthly wisdom is often of a purely pragmatic, even economic nature. While Divine or Cosmic Wisdom is associated with a completely different level of development of the spiritual consciousness of man, not always understood by ordinary people, immersed in the illusion of material existence, which in India is called Maha Maya, i.e. the Great Illusion. The vast majority of modern mankind lives in this deceptive evidence, which is not the true reality of the eternal and infinite Spiritual World, being Maya, an illusion of our physical senses that mislead humanity.

Finally, the fourth saw the origin of the word “Sufism” from the Arabic “Suf”, which means camel hair, because according to legend, seekers of the Spiritual Path wore coats of coarse camel hair. In the hot climate of the East countries, wearing such raincoats was a real test, not to say torture, because the coarse wool irritated the skin, dug into it, sometimes causing deep wounds on the body, thereby causing suffering that every neophyte had to go through to kill his own flesh.

Moreover, no matter which of the listed interpretations of the concept of “Sufism” we take, it already contains those high moral standards associated with the desire for internal (spiritual) and external (physical) purity, wisdom and asceticism, which contribute to the promotion along the Spiritual Path in search of Divine Truth and Divine Wisdom. And if the neophyte shows sufficient perseverance in achieving the goal, sooner or later he reaches it.

Many Sufi orders use music to serve God, since there is no direct prohibition on it in the Holy Quran. However, only one of them, Chishti, devoted itself to the search for Divine Wisdom almost exclusively through the performance of music and poetry.

There is an interesting old Sufi legend about the origin of the term “music”, which was brought by Hazrat Inayat Khan. It is said that when Moses prayed on Mount Sinai, he heard the Divine Command expressed by the words Muse ke, which means “Moses, listen”, or “Moses, hear”. The revelation that came upon him

consisted of tone and rhythm. Moses did not know what was called the name of the Divine Sound he has heard, and decided to call it the same words that God addressed him, i.e. Music (Muse ke).

That is why music began to occupy such an important place in the teachings of Sufism that it came to people from the Divine Source. According to the Sufis, people are so fond of music because it depicts, or expresses that Secret Principle that is in the soul of every person, and that is felt, intuitively seen by people. Sufis believe that everything that our physical organs of vision see is Beauty created by God. And the Beauty that we perceive from the nature around us, as well as from the man himself, which were created by the Higher Principle, and the Creation of His hands, this is music, in whatever form or quality we (music of the world) perceive.

In other words, the Sufis were among the first to point out that music sounds everywhere and always. In every stone, quiet or violent movement of the sea wave, in gusts of wind and the sound of rain, in thunder and lightning, in the songs of birds and the roar of animals, in the poetic work of a man and in the picture he painted, MUSIC sounds everywhere. Therefore, a person is connected with the Cosmos surrounding us precisely because of the music, because there is common ground between music and space that allow us to consider music as a manifestation of the Cosmic or Universal Law. Among these common ground there are Rhythm, Harmony, Intonation and Movement. One could say that music is the space in miniature.

All that we see, and all that we are not able to perceive with our physical vision and hearing, but, nevertheless, are captured at some other level of our body, is a manifestation of rhythm, harmony, intonation and movement. Be it the change of a day or season, the revolution of the planets around its axis, or the passage of a comet, the opening of a flower bud or cell dissolution, there are rhythm, harmony, intonation and movement. According to the Sufis themselves, that which painting cannot express, is said by poetry, but that which poetry cannot explain is in the music!

It is no accident that all the Great Spiritual Teachers of the mankind, religious reformers and prophets, in one way or another, were associated with music. So, the legendary prophet of India Narada was also a great musician. God Shiva, according to legend, invented an old Indian musical instrument – veena. God Krishna is always portrayed playing the flute. The Hindu beauty goddess Sarasvati plays the veena. The Greek god of the sun and the patron of the arts, Apollo, holds cithara in his hands. The mythical Orpheus of the ancient Greeks, thanks to the musical art and secret knowledge of the tone and rhythm obtained at the temple initiation, could command the hidden forces of the nature. A great many such examples are available in the cultures of different countries and peoples.

Music penetrates further than any other impression of the external world surrounding us can penetrate into the inner being of a man. According to the Sufis, the beauty of music lies in the fact that it is not only the source of creation of the entire manifested Universe, of the entire Universe, but also a means of its absorption. In other words, the Sufis are convinced that the world was created by music, and with the help of music the world again and again returns to its original source, which gave birth to it. As evidence of the creation of the Universe through music, one can cite the words from the Gospel of St. John, where there are the following lines: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” [2, Ch.1,1]. What is a word? A word is a sound, i.e. vibration of the sounding body. And this is the music, which is based on the vibration of strings, or bundles of the human voice!

As for the end of the Creation of our visible world, Hazrat Inayat Khan cites a famous tradition that it is in the scriptures of all world religions. According to this legend, “Doomsday” will sound the sounds of trumpets that will herald the whole world about the “end of the world,” or rather, the end of the current epoch in which we live, and the transition of the mankind, the planet and all the life on the Earth to a higher, refined level of spiritual development.

We emphasize that Sufis, like many philosophical teachings of the East, speak of the cyclical nature of the creation of the manifested Universe, which means the periodic creation of the material world in which we live, and its same periodic absorption. That is why, according to the Sufis, music is associated both with the beginning of the creation of the visible, manifested Cosmos, and with its end, in which the sounds of trumpets will sound.

As far as there is such a similarity between the Cosmos as an expression and the Creation of the Divine Principle and music, we can consider the Cosmos as Divine, Cosmic Music of the Creator, and music in space in miniature. As already noted, the Cosmos has such qualities as harmony, rhythm, intonation and movement, alternate with peace. Music also like Cosmos, personifies harmony, is a rhythmic and prosodic language, and is in motion, which is interleave (or alternate) with pauses.

In addition, both in Space and in music, there are such features as vibration and tonality. So far as a person lives in the manifested Universe, and he is not only a vibrating system himself, but he is constantly surrounded by the vibrations of the other people, as well as the different objects, plants, animals and the planet itself, music as a form of the art is an important part of human life on the Earth. For music is able to help each individual to enter harmonious consonance with the world around him, and with all the infinite Cosmos, which is not only a manifestation of harmony, but is harmony itself.

As Hazrat Inayat Khan wrote in his beautiful book "The mysticism of sound and music": "Music is a miniature of the harmony of the whole universe, because the harmony of the universe is the life itself, and a person being also a miniature of the universe, shows harmonious or inharmonious chords in his pulse, in heartbeats, in its vibration, rhythm and tone. His health and illness, his joy and inconvenience, all speak of music or the absence of music in his life. But what does music teach us? Music helps us train ourselves in harmony, and that is the magic, or mystery behind music. When you hear music you like, it tunes and brings you into the harmony with life. Therefore, a person needs music; he is aspiring to music". [3, 188]

In other words, a person, like any creature in the Universe, is music itself, for a person's breath is music, a pulse is music, a spoken or thought word, and movement is all music that sounds both inside and outside of a person. But man has done something more than all the other living things on our planet — the composer man has heard music that sounds everywhere and recorded it. Thus, the composer made it possible to hear this Divine voice of the Universe, which is sometimes called the Voice of Silence, for any person who does not yet have the corresponding abilities, or the gift to hear harmony, the music of the world in which we live.

Why do we need this harmony, harmonious relations with the world around us? Sufis believe that every biological and non-biological creature in the manifested Universe, whether it is a stone, plant, animal or person, has its own tone or pitch of sound, which is associated with the frequency of its vibrations, and which contributes to a single orchestra called "Space Music". It is the frequency of vibrations that allows a particular being to enter one step or another of the evolution of a single Universal staircase. It is clear that if this or that person is not in harmony with the life, he introduces low-frequency, disharmonious vibrations into a single space orchestra, which can lead to degradation and self-destruction. Moreover, this can lead to degradation and destruction of our entire planet, which we observe in the modern world.

However, the frequency of vibrations can be changed not only during a gradual, very long evolution which is natural in character, but also through targeted exposure to the organism. Therefore, the Sufis used music to consciously increase the frequency of their internal vibrations during the performance of a musical work or listening to it.

Sufis claim that there are two aspects of vibration – subtle and dense, each of which consists of a huge number of the different levels and nuances. Some of these vibrations are perceived only by physical vision and hearing. There are some more dense vibrations that can only be perceived by the human mind. There are some more subtle vibrations that are perceived exclusively by the human soul.

This Sufi concept allows us to understand why one person can see some subtle spiritual manifestations, and the other does not. Why one follows the Path of Spiritual Knowledge, and the other is drawn to a casino or restaurant. And why one becomes a mystic, comprehending the Secrets of the Universe from within, and the other a skeptic, denying anything and everything that does not fit into the Procrustean bed of his naive materialistic views. Just as it is impossible for a blind person to explain what a blue sky is, or clear to a deaf person what a raspberry ring is, or it is impossible to a spiritually undeveloped creature whose vibrations are quite dense, low-frequency in nature to describe the inexpressible and indescribable sensations that a mystic knows by experiences during execution or listening to Sufi music.

The unity of music and Cosmos was noticed not only by Sufis. There is practically no such esoteric trend in philosophy that would not speak of it, starting from Pythagoras and ending with the modern philosophy of music. Pythagoras called space music – Music of the Spheres, and claimed that every person hears it in his life, but everyday life drowns out the Great Voice of the Universe, forcing him to listen to the surrounding insignificant and inexpressive sounds of the material world.

As the Sufi mystics themselves pointed out, the Music of the Spheres permeates the whole Cosmos, i.e. and us with all our materiality. Thanks to this, music helps a person not only to realize the Great Presence within himself, but also affects all the main components of a person:

1. Music affects the physical body of a person, exerting a healing effect on him. This is due to the harmonization of the vibrations of the human body. If the disease occurs due to the disharmony of vibrations, then the cure can also occur due to bringing the human body into a state of harmony.

2. Music affects the human psyche.

3. Music has a huge impact on the spiritual development of a man.

It is not surprising that Sufi mystics were very sensitive both to music in general and to sound, seeing in the sound such a quality that could either instantly cure a person of the physical or mental illnesses, or lead to a physical death. This quality of sound is again a vibration that can harmonize a person's inharmonious vibrations and thus help him recover, or vice versa.

At the same time, the ability of music to influence the state of human health has been known since time immemorial. We also know about this from the ancient Greek legends and myths about Orpheus, who according to legend not only helped people to recover from physical and mental illnesses by singing and playing the lyre, but even forced trees and rocks to leave their places and follow him. There are also legends about the research of Pythagoras, who preached the great healing power of music, arguing that good music heals a person, but bad music can plunge him into misfortune. It is known Plato's ideas about musical tonalities (modes), some of which instilled courage and honor in a person, while the others – voluptuousness and vice.

Representatives of Sufism, especially the Order of Chishti, developed in sufficient detail the concept of the influence of music vibrations on the internal vibrations of a person. So, the Sufi legend says: somehow one healer was called to the bed of a seriously ill person. The doctor came, listened carefully to the pulse and heart of the patient, after which he said a few words in his ear. The patient, hearing the words spoken in a whisper, instantly recovered. One of the patient's relatives, being a skeptic by nature, began loudly to express doubts about the effective treatment of the doctor. The doctor listened to him for a long time, then he also began to criticize the skeptic man loudly with very rude words. The skeptic was so outraged by the doctor's behavior that in anger and irritation he began to say that the doctor should not use such harsh words, and so insult innocent people. The doctor replied that if his words could lead a skeptic to a state of illness, for according to the doctrine of the Sufis anger and irritation are the illness, why he doubted that the other words could not help him heal his relative.

Sufis believe that since the person is a vibrating system himself, then this system of vibrations may fail because of the various reasons. What needs to be done to eliminate a system crash? To establish it with the help of another vibrator, which is the art of music. It is clear that the more harmonious have the piece of music that a particular person listens to, the greater state of harmony comes to all his internal organs, and this is the state of spiritual and physical health.

When Sufis talk about the importance of musical art for the spiritual advancement of a person, it is about genuine music, which is born in different countries and different nations, and existed in different historical epochs, as a connection between a person and the surrounding space. What is a genuine music? This is music in which the folk and professional composers intuitively or consciously managed to capture and depict the harmonic laws of the Universe.

As far as there is only one Universal harmony, and there can be countless concrete manifestations of it in the world, different peoples in different countries and in different historical epochs, managed to hear and express this unthinkable beauty and harmony. They did it by the means of the artistic expression that have developed under the influence of these cosmic laws, be they the pentatonic of the East, or the homophonic-harmonic system of European musical culture.

Listening to the music, which is not only unable to cure suffering humanity, but on the contrary, leads to complete disharmony, degradation and dullness, most modern humanity is not even able to understand the depths of the abyss in which we all find ourselves. "Thanks to" such music, the vibrations inside a person, instead of becoming thinner, become even more rude and low-frequency than they were before he came to the manifested world. Although such a person has an external form of a man, in his internal essence he is akin to an animal. He is even worse than an animal, because the animal acts on the basis of its genetic program laid down in it by the Supreme Principle, while the human-animal has consciousness and free will. One can only guess where the free will can lead such of a person.

It is no coincidence that out of all the creatures that inhabit our planet, only a man for the most part, is not in the harmony with himself, with his life, and is not in harmonious relations with the whole Universe as a whole. Proof of this statement is the ongoing wars, world terrorism and extremism, as well as environmental problems of our time, which are increasingly declaring that the world is on the verge of a global cataclysm.

Why is the man, being the most intelligent living being on the earth, cannot live in peace and harmony with himself and with the all surrounding reality? This is due to the fact that a man is created with the free will, which allows him to choose his own path. The choice can be successful, and then a person strives for self-improvement of his Spirit, for self-knowledge and harmony with the world. But the choice can be unsuccessful,

and then a person tends to gain exclusively material wealth, material prosperity, for which he is ready to deceive, kill, rob, not realizing that all material wealth is only an illusion of the manifested world.

Such a person is in disharmony with life, because his own egoism does not allow him to understand that the whole Universe is one in his Spiritual Principle, and deceiving another, a person deceives himself, robbing another, he is robbing himself, finally killing another, a man kills his own Divine Principle, which is akin to the whole manifest and not manifest Cosmos, and without which the further existence of this person becomes very problematic.

It is no wonder that many representatives of the modern mankind believe that music is given to us for entertainment. It is no coincidence that Western European science introduced the concept of “a man playing” to show that the main task of human stay on the earth is a game, entertainment that allows you to get away from existing problems, not to think, not to comprehend the world in which we live.

However, if in the earlier historical eras, entertaining music did not have such a total and murderous character for the mankind, in the musical art and the artistic work of the twentieth century has happened a failure of the system that connects a person with the surrounding space occurred. For in the art of the modern epoch began to manifest such qualities and features that are very difficult to understand or give some rational explanation.

Moreover, there are some features in the modern art which almost impossible to attribute to the art in general. First of all, the Sufis have in mind the total propaganda of evil, violence, cruelty and aggression, which literally flooded the art of the twentieth century and, with some exceptions, became the fundamental “quality” of modern art in human society.

In music, these features of contemporary art began to manifest themselves in the form of total disharmony and cacophony, which despite their quietly frequent use, did not become more harmonious for the audience. It is not surprising that the number of diseases in the modern “enlightened” world has become no less, but much more. A healthy person is not only a relatively rare phenomenon at the beginning of the 21-st century, but over time it can become an anachronism in general.

This circumstance explains why music is above all the other forms of art. It could be said that music is even higher than religion, because music acts on such deep spheres of the human Spirit that it can raise a person’s soul much higher than any sermons, lectures and performance of external religious rituals. Of course, this does not mean that it is necessary to eliminate all religious beliefs and to force all people to listen to music for their speedy spiritual development. All human souls cannot be tuned to the same wave, the same altitude tone, and sound in the same specific tonality. Therefore, if one person benefits from listening to music, because his soul responds to subtle musical vibrations, soars and advances to perfection, then another can feel a spiritual upsurge only under the influence of certain religious norms of behavior and established rules.

So far as Sufis like all esoteric philosophy, believe that a person comes to the earth not for a waste of time, not for fun and good time, but for the sake of self-improvement of his Spiritual Inwardness, music is given to a man as a connection with the Divine Source, from which all the Universe, including a man himself, have taken their rise.

Understanding this quality of music as an art form is especially important now, for many ethical and aesthetic principles are degrading, when people sometimes forget that they bear the proud name of a Man, i.e. a man going through the century, or a man going from one century to another. In the word “man” itself, an endless series of human incarnations is encrypted, which cannot be meaningless. Therefore, as Sufis say, the deep, innermost meaning of the existence of music as a form of art is a combination of a man with the Absolute, with the Cosmic Mind, with the Higher Principle. At the same time, each person comes to an understanding of his unity with the world and all the Universe as a whole in different ways and at different times, however whenever and how people realize this, music will help him.

II. References

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