DEVOTIONAL SOUNDSCAPES OF INDIA

by

JESSICA COUCH

(Under the Direction of Alan Godlas)

ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a brief analysis of the devotional music of India within the musical traditions of Hindustani and Qawwali. Beginning with an investigation into the nature of musical religious devotion, I trace concepts of sound cosmology and ontology in Hinduism and Islam then discuss the function and forms of modern devotional performances. In an effort to demonstrate the status of hybridity in Hindustani music to the global music market, I historically contextualize Hindustani and provide a succinct case study of one of the modern architects of the world music genre, Zakir Hussain.

INDEX WORDS: Hindustani; Qawwali; India; Pakistan; Hinduism; Islam; Devotional Music; Music; Ethnomusicology; World Music;

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DEDICATION

To my brilliant and Beloved daughter Phoebe,
who illuminated my life and gave me the courage and motivation to complete this project.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Spaces Between

Mother India has fostered many children. Of these offspring what we now know as Hinduism and Islam today have grown up as siblings within her breadth. Through thousands of years and countless imperial encounters and developments, India has nurtured the identities and truths of Islam and Hinduism, as well as several others. Her lands and people have inspired two of the worldôs largest religions to cohabit and cultivate a shared cultural identity of ôIndian.ô Indian ethnology that has been cultivated within the interstices of these two devotions represents an example an amalgamative identity that functions effectively in the globalized society.

Hybridity is becoming the modus operandi of the world. Identity cannot function effectively in the face of rapid globalization and interconnectedness confined within the spectrum of homogeneity and heterogeneity. Rather, systems of classifications exist most effectively on a continuum of homogeneity and heterogeneity. One is an Indian citizen, *as well as* a Hindu or Muslim or Jain, *as well as* other incorporating identities. The devotional music of India is an excellent model of these patterns of hybrid identification.

Musicians perform their identities as sonority. Humans *are* sonority as much as they *use* it. In creating music, one constructs a sonic identity based on the meaning that she wishes to illicit as well as what the audience creates. Hybridity is a natural, inherent state of music. Performer and audience alike must synthesize (a hybridized) meaning from form, function, sound and rhythm. The Hindustani musical tradition of India (including the Sufi *Qawwali*

tradition) fuses these components into an amalgam of voice, language and divinity. Additionally, the pedagogical nature of Hindustani highlights the complex but vital composite relationship between *guru* and student, or accomplished musical master and novice, which is reflective of the devotional relationship between That Which Creates Sound/Music and Human Who Hears Sound/Music. This is further reflected in how Hindustani incorporates many voices not into one, but into many equal and representative parts. A prime example of this is in the modern derivation of the Hindustani *jugalbandhi.* From the Sanskrit meaning entwined twins, a performance of two soloists (voice or instrumental) is only deemed a *jugalbandhi* if the duet allows both soloists equal treatment in presentation and culminates in both voices finding a harmonious accord.

Using the theme of the *jugalbandhi*, this thesis seeks to elucidate how one can develop and perform an authentic amalgamative identity in the face of globalization. The patterns of sonic devotion within the Indus River Valley between Hinduism and Islam can give us a comprehensive overview on what it means to embody hybridity, particularly within an art tradition. Through examination of how these identities sense Divinity aurally or how they construct a relationship between sound and meaning within devotional contexts, I am seeking to redefine the status of Indian music to the globalized music market.

The following chapter, *The Hindu's Music,* is a disquisition of the nature of Hindu devotion to Hindustani music. An abbreviated evaluation of sound cosmology and the relationship between Voice and Thought in language supports my musicological analysis of the basic components of a modern Hindustani performance. Chapter 3, *The Muslim's Music¸* contains a brief exploration into the dynamics of permissibility within the contexts of the pervasiveness of music in Islam. I also evaluate the status of sound cosmology within Islam, with

an assessment of the Islamic epistemology of sound and music to follow. Thereafter, I consider the function and action of music in Islam, with a brief summary of the standard Qawwali form. The final chapter, *Jugalbandhi*, deals primarily with the issue of fraternity between Hinduism and Islam throughout Indian history, starting with Sufi contact in the 7th century C.E. A concise comparison between the respective musical traditions of Hindustani and Qawwali will precede the final section of the chapter which is a case study on Zakir Hussain, one of the architects of world music as we know it today.

In his treatise on the *Dawn of Indian Music in the West: Bhairavi*, Peter Lavezzoli succinctly states the reason why music has such power: ñIt seems clear that when we learn about Indian music, or any kind of music, we can learn something about ourselves. Itôs difficult to think of a better reason to study music other than to transform ourselves in the process.ò

Chapter 2

The Hinduôs Music

Music is a lightning vehicle to Hindu liberation. It is a direct and encompassing means for attaining release from *saṃsāra*, the perennial cycle of death and rebirth. What potency exists within the structures of humanly organized sound[1] that allows one the means to achieve *moksha* (release from *saṃsāra*)? The Hindustani musical tradition is a classic(icized[2]) and formidable channel of sonic energy that enhances religious devotion. Sound, and its higher order - music, is a foundation of Hindu devotion.

In this chapter, I will examine the role of sound and music in this capacity, as well as explore the dynamics inherent in the form and function of aural devotion. To accomplish these aims, I will analyze concepts of Hindu sound cosmology, (*OM*, *vāk*, and *Nāda Brahma*) and tonal ontology (*mantra* meditation and Divine Sonic Energy.) In order to elucidate the agency of sound, in its modern devotional sense, I will present a brief musicological analysis of the general forms of a contemporary performance of Hindustani music.

Current philosophies of music are being transformed by the Hindustani perception of the sacred power of sound. This is due to globalization and the world music market. And while modern Hindustani has undergone consumerization and commodification in the Western sense,

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[1] Since this thesis seeks to address the ñsacrednessò of sound, in order to distinguish between natural soundscapes and human-created music in the process of human spiritual development I am employing John Blackingôs definition of music. John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), 26.

[2] ñ[W]hat we now call Indiaôs classical traditions per se are confections of late colonialismð that both Hindustani and Karnatic musics were óinventedô as *classical* [appropriated the title and distinction of ñclassicalò] in the colonial image around the turn of the twentieth century.ò -Katherine Butler Schofield, ñReviving the Golden Age: óClassicization,ô Hindustani Music and the Mughals,ò *Ethnomusicology* 54 (2010): 487 ï 488.

the musical tradition still maintains its ability to connect with the innermost desires for creative release and human transcendence. Though a seemingly individualistic approach to spiritual liberation, Hindustani music, pedagogy, and performance practices are reflective of a great truth of Hinduism: it requires many notes to realize a symphony - a multiplicity of lifetimes to realize the unicity of existence.

Sound cosmology, in its most direct conception, posits that sound from silence is a progenitor the very least of which is an affectation, feeling, or ethos, and the very most of which is the whole creation and the entire cosmos. Put simply, sound cosmology refers to the creation of existence through the catalyst and agency of sound. It assumes a Void through which creation manifests (ex nihilo), and the Void is characterized by silence. The Void, in this cosmological sense, is often depicted as water or a Great Fathomless Ocean. The static, still Waters represent the aspect of the Void or No Beingness that, when activated by some means, issues forth the will of creation in waves. In the PurÜhic sense, the deiform of *Brahma* (as the embodiment of divine creative Will) issues forth from a lotus, the water flower, or from a Great Egg out of the primordial waters. *Brahma* receives the Divine Knowledge from *OM*, and its vibratory essence generates creation in waves. [3]

OM is a rich, resonant concept that has functioned from the earliest of sacred texts, the Vedas, through the modern period, as a powerful agent of intention and meaning. ñMeditatively voicing or hearing the sound [*Om*] could actually reveal the nature of *Brahman* (Existence). Thus the entire Sanskrit syllabary is said to derive from [*Om*], which is the beginning and end of all speech.ò[4] It is the syllable used to begin and end all recitations of the Vedic *mantras*[5], though

[3] Prakriya-pada, *Brahmanda Purana*, translated and annotated by Ganesh Vasudeo Tagare (Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 1983).
[4] Hillary Rodrigues, *Introducing Hinduism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 111.
[5] Auditory instruments of thought.

literal, textual mention of it is strictly avoided. It was believed that the mystical essence of *OM*, its *praṇava* (life-giver and controller), was too powerful to be depicted in symbol.

> Very well, I shall describe to you the supreme character of the mantras, their key letters and the way to use them. This is however a secreté It is by mantra that God is drawn to you. It is by mantra that He is released. By secret utterances are mantras, and therefore not to be published. Their form is not to be written and their features note to be described. (*Parama-Saṁhitā* 6.2-4)[6]

This was later adapted and directly mentioned as early as the Upaniṣads in symbolic form that was infused with the renewed essence of creation and sustenance. Upaniṣadic notions of *OM* were shaped by the idea and divine form of *vāk*.

Vāk is that which infuses the ¯g Veda with sacred power. ñIn trying to thematize the position of *vāk* in the ¯g Veda we find three kinds of referencesé the Goddess *Vāk* as the revealing Word, *vāk* as speech in general, and *vāk* in the symbolism of cows.ò[7] *Vāk* is a Sanskrit word from the root ñutterance,ò or ñvoice.ò It is embodied in the creative Goddess figure *Vāk*, who is consort to the God of Creation *Prajāpati*:

> ñ*Bṛhaspati*! When they (the first poets and seers) set in motion the first beginning of speech, giving names, their most pure and perfectly guarded secret was revealed through love. When the wise ones fashioned speech with their thought sifting it as grain is sifted through a sieve, then friends recognized their friendships. A good sign was placed on their speech. Through the sacrifice they traced the path of [the Goddess V¯k] and found [her] inside the sages. They held her and portioned her out to many; together seven singers praised her. One who looked did not

[6] As excerpted in the introduction of Guy L. Beckôs *Sonic Theology: Hindusim and Sacred Sound* (Columbus, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 1.
[7] Beck, *Sonic Theology,* 25.

> see speech, and another who listens does not hear it. She reveals herself to someone as a loving wife, beautifully dressed, reveals her body to her husband.ò[8]

In other words, *Vāk* as Signification represents an equal partner to the Signifier. The utterance or sound that issues forth from ñfashioned speech,ò or rationalized thought, is held in the same regard as the Revealed Wisdom. The relationship between Reason and Utterance is that of lovers, intimately bound to the Other. *Vāk* also refers to the language of nature, particularly of animals and of sacred cows, intimately bound to Nature.

All three references situate this concept as an amalgam of voice, language, and divinity. To clarify this expansive yet simultaneous role as utterance, oral discourse, and Goddess, *Vāk* actually intones a hymn of herself in the¯ g Veda and thus delineates the scope of her power:

> ñI am the Queen, the confluence of riches, the skillful one who is first among those worthy of sacrifice. The gods divided me up into various parts, for I dwell in many places and enter into many forms. The one who eats food, who truly sees, who breathes, who hears what is said, does so through me. Though they do not realize it, they dwell in me. Listen, you whom they have heard: what I tell you should be heededé I gave birth to the father on the head of this world. My womb is in the waters, within the ocean. From there I spread out over all creatures and touch the very sky with the crown of my head. I am the one who blows like the wind, embracing all creatures. Beyond the sky, beyond this earth, so much have I become in my greatness.ò[9]

These last verses mentioned are particularly suitable within the cosmological myth-symbol of the Ocean, as mentioned earlier. In this perspective, it is no coincidence that both sound and ocean move in waves, the germ of meaning riding a semantic flow. The feminine personification of *Vāk* in the Vedas and the later BrŪhmaNas eventually culminated in theistic and *Tantric* ideas of the feminine power of language known as *Śakti*. By the time of the BrŪhmaNas, *Vāk* was well

[8]¯ g Veda 10.71:1-4. Translated by Wendy Doniger OôFlaherty, 1981.
[9]¯ g Veda 10.125: 3-4 and 7-8. Translated by Wendy Doniger OôFlaherty, 1981.

established as the consort of *Brahma*, or as he is known in the Vedas, *Prajāpati*. ñThe intimate relationship of *Vāk* with *Prajāpati* (mind)é becomes more explicit only when suggested by the analogy of the interdependence of Mind and Speech commonly perceived in the phenomenon of language.ò[10] The two function through one another, are intimately connected and are natural consorts. Their dynamic interplay is what reveals knowledge. Theirs is a divine duet, of *Vāk* and *Prajāpati*, of *Śakti* and *Śakta* (the masculine power), of Sound and All.

It is said that through the use of the primordial vibratory essence, *OM*, *Brahma* unfolded knowledge and creation. Attached to the SŪma Veda, the ChŪndogya Upaniṭad specifically asserts the origin and creative power of *OM*.

> ñ*Prajāpati* (*Brahma*) brooded upon the worlds. From them, when they had been brooded upon, issued forth the threefold knowledge [the three Vedas]. He brooded upon this. From it, when it had been brooded upon, issued forth these syllables: *bhur*, *bhuvah*, *svar*. He brooded upon them. From them, when they had been brooded upon, issued forth the syllable *Om*. *As leaves are held together by a spike, so all speech is held together by Om. Verily, OM is the world-all. Verily, OM is the world-all."*(2.23:2-3)

OM is the primordial sound that, once initiated, agitates and arouses the potentiality of the Void. It is the name of God, the cosmic utterance that triggers creation, sustenance, and destruction all in one. It is the encapsulation of all sounds and the womb through which the Sanskrit alphabet is born, and issues forth into meaning. The one who utters the sacred mantra of *OM* can achieve knowledge and salvation from the cyclical nature of creation. The MuṆḍaka Upaniṭad mentions the metaphor of the Archer to express the direct effect *OM* has on the one who chants this syllable as a sonic meditation; a *mantra*. ñTaking the bow as the great weapon of the Upaniṭad, one should put upon it an arrow sharpened by meditation. Stretching it with a

[10] Sudhendu Kumar Das, *Śakti or Divine Power* (Calcutta: Navabharat Publishers, 1987), 30.

thought directed to the essence of That, penetrate the Imperishable [*Brahman*] as the mark, my friend. The mystical syllable *OM* (*praṇava*) is the bow. The arrow is the soul (*ātman*). *Brahman* is said to be the mark (*lakṣya*). By the undistracted man is It to be penetrated. One should come to be in It, as the arrow (in the mark).ò (2.2:3-4) The MuʎʺIaka Upaniɨad explicitly defines the whole of the syllable and its constructed parts (the sounds A-U-M, and the silence between its next sounding) as the Self, *ātman*. The awakened self is present in the intoning of A, the sleeping self through U, and the deep dream sleep as M. This is mirrored in the vitality that the action of sounding creates ï in breaking silence three components must characterize the sounding: the inspiration/inhalation with intent, the shattering of silence with vibrational agitation, and the expiration/exhalation with the falling away, and the subsequent silence. This is further depicted through the symbolism of the triplicity of the *Trimurti* into Unicity, or Brahman. The triumvirate godhead exists as *Brahma*, who represents the creative aspect of sound, *Viṣṇu* as the sustaining energy, and *Śiva* is the catalyst of its decay and destruction.

In its symbolic or textual representation, *OM* includes a signifier, similar to the Arabic numeral 3, that denotes three sounds in one (intoned as O-O-O-M), and what is known as the *Chandra-bindu*, the semi-circle with a dot upon it. The semi-circle is the half-moon, the *nāda* of its sounding. The *nāda* is the humming, buzzing sound that is created in the decay of the M sound, and hearkens to its Sanskrit root for ñrushing, roaring [water].ò[11] The *bindu*, the drop, the tear connected with *Śiva*, is the point of destruction of the *nāda*, which is the ñreverberating tone of vocal sound.ò[12] The 10th century Kashmiri philosopher KŜemarŲ̈a summarizes the relationship between the *bindu* and *nāda:*

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[11] Joachim-Ernst Berendt*, Nāda Brahma: Music and the Landscape of Consciousness* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1987), 15.
[12] Beck, *Sonic Theology,* 82.

> ñThe *bindu*, wanting to manifest the thought it has of all things, vibrates and is transformed into a [primordial] sound with the nature of a cry [*nāda*]. It shouts out the universe, which is not distinct from itself; that is to say, it thinks it ï hence the word *śabda* [word]. Meditation is the supreme ówordô: it sounds, that is, it vibrates, submitting all things to the fragmentation of life; this is why it is *nāda* [vibration]é Sound [*śabda*], which is of the nature of *nāda*, resides in all living beings.ò [13]

Herein lays the crux of this concept and its relation to devotion, especially within the modern applications. The NŪdabindu Upaniṣad, attached to the Ṛg Veda, outlines the concept of *Nāda Brahma*, through the Yoga of Sound.

Mircea Eliade commented on this ñauditory phenomenaò that was, as he believed, ñcomposed in a Yogic circle that specialized in ómystical auditionsôï that is, in obtaining ócstasyôthrough concentration of sounds.ò Eliade noted that *Nāda Brahma's* ñfinal objective is to transform the whole cosmos into a vast sonorous theophany.ò[14] In its simplest definition, *Nāda Brahma* means ñthe sound is All.ò This demonstrates an ontological construction of sonority and essence, the whole of existence of, with, and by *sound*. As we know today, and as we have known for millennia, the whole of creation is a harmonious unfolding of energy through waves and particles. Although most of these cosmic reverberations are imperceptible to the human (the non-visible portion of the electromagnetic spectrum, for instance), they are ever present in existence.

> ñThe universe is no longer seen as a mechanical system composed of elementary building blocks but rather as a complex web of interdependent relationships. The network of relationships, moreover, is intrinsically dynamic. All forms are associated with processes, all interrelations with interactions, and opposites are unified through oscillationsé Matter, at the subatomic level,

[13] KṢemarŪja, as translated by André Préau, excerpted in Alain Daniélouôs *Music and the Power of Sound: The Influence of Tuning and Interval on Consciousness* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1995), 3.
[14] Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1958), 132-133.

consists of energy patterns continually changing into one another ï a continuous dance of energy.ò[15]

These energetic cycles of the Cosmos are how we see, hear, know, and imagine our world, and we take them for granted. The Yoga of Sound, using *mantra* meditation, *asana*[16], and *pranayama*[17], is a way to align oneself with *Nāda Brahma* and to possess the mystical gnosis of the whole of existence as energy ï the *Brahman* as music of which *ātman* is merely an echo. ñAs *Brahman* pervaded the entire universe, including the human soul at its core, the notion of sacred sound as manifested through chant and music provided a veritable thread binding the human realm to the divine.ò[18]

In the theistic traditions and their devotional movements, known as *bhakti*, Vaishnava, śaiva, and śakta developed identities and rituals associated with sound. The *Nāda Brahma* concept evolved through these traditions and through Tantrism especially. Thus, those engaged in *bhakti* cultivated and combined their respective theistic aesthetics with the sonic philosophy of NŪda Brahma, and therefore legitimized the role of music in Hindu devotion.

Nearly every deity in the Hindu pantheon has some link to music and/or sound. The prime example and pinnacle of this is *Saraswati*, a manifestation or evolution of the Vedic *Vāk*. She is always depicted with a *veena* (a lute like instrument) and she is the patroness of all musicians and sages, repository of all wisdom. *Brahma* uses hand-cymbals, *Viṣṇu* intones the conch, *Kṛṣṇa* seduces the world with his lilting flute. *Śiva* beats the hour glass shaped drum, the *damaru,* during his cosmic dance of Destruction, as the Lord *Natarāja. Śiva* is also depicted as the *bindu*, the tear or the seed of man, on the *OM* symbol upon the female aspect of the yoni,

[15] Fritjof Capra, foreward to *Nāda Brahma: Music and the Landscape of Consciousness* by Joachim-Ernst Berendt (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1987), xi.
[16] Body postures and poses.
[17] Extension of life force, breath.
[18] Guy L. Beck, ñHinduism and Music,ò *Sacred Sound: Experiencing music in world religions*, edited by Guy L. Beck (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 114.

represented by the *Chandra*, or moon, the *Nāda*. These deiforms are merely aspects, facets of the gem, of *Nāda Brahma*. The Sound is God, God is Sound. The Sound is All. All is Sound.

ñSince the Upaniṣads describe *Brahman*, the Supreme Truth, as full of bliss and *rasa* (ñemotional taste, pleasureò), the performing arts, like theatre and music, were closely aligned with religion since their goal was to produce *rasa*.ò[19] To do so, Hindustani musicians have learned to employ the *raga*, transcendental modes of tonal organization that in the Western musical tradition are categorized and termed as ñscales.ò The *ragas* exist within *Nāda Brahma*, like *Ātman* within *Brahman*, and therefore can only be revealed through great meditative and spiritual effort. Meaning ñemotional mood,ò they are primordially characterized by their own distinctive *rasa*, which in this context means flavor, taste, or mood. Each *raga* is meant to organically develop a mood, image and/or an emotionally-charged soundscape, using a particular set of gestures and images,[20] and through notes on the ascent, and a particular set of notes on the descent, not necessarily equal to one another. These, through proper performance, will evoke an affectation, a channel through which the listener can contemplate the Mysteries and unfold them as the *raga* itself develops.

In his discourse on *Śabda* and *Artha*, sound (or Word) and meaning respectively, Swami HariharŪhand SaraswatǭelucidatesŪthe intimacy of developing the relationship of the *rasa* to the *raga*:

> ñThe ear cannot perceive air [which is perceived by the sense of touch], therefore the *Mīmāmsakas* (the exponents of *mīmāmsā*, the philosophical system of Jaimini) consider the air waves [literally, alternations of pressure and decompression], and consequently sounds, are not perceived by the ear as an air vibrationé Sound alone [devoid of all intellectual bearing] cannot

[19] Ibid., 125-126.
[20] Laura Leante, ñThe Lotus and the King: Imagery, Gesture and Meaning in a Hindustani RŪg,ò *Ethnomusicology Forum* 18:2 (2009): 185-206.

be perceived. It is only the materialized idea (*sphota*) in the shape of sound (*dhvani*) that is perceivedé Words have a meaning and a sound, the sound being the only external characteristic through which the meaning is grasped. Still air is opaque to the perception of ideas. When that opacity is removed then it is said that sound, which is the vehicle of the idea, should be considered only as a quality of the idea, that is as an accessory [complementary] phenomenon.ò[21]

A *raga* is a scalar melody composed of at least five notes which vary between ascent and descent. It contains a root note, a foundational, tonic note upon which the whole of the scale builds, and usually a dominant note, realized as a fifth interval above the root. The dominant is always present in the root, perceived within the overtone series. In the Western sense, we would translate this as Do-Sol in solfege, or I-V in roman numeral analysis. In the Indian music tradition, it is conceived as *Sa-Pa*. This is what the drone is created from, and is an integral devotional element in the unfolding of a *raga*.

The drone is the basis upon which the *raga* expands, and is present in nearly every modern performance of Indian music. It is indicative of the perpetuality of the AUM and its ever-presence in all aspects of existence. Notes or *svara* create the mood of the music. *Svara* can be considered whole tonal worlds in and of themselves with a multitude of emotional and aural traits. Each notesô relationship to the drone determines their individual emotional identity. These notes rise and subside within and around the primordial drone. The world within each *svara* consists of subtle microtones that cannot always be aurally perceived. These microtones, or *sruti,* develop a *raga's* individuality where the performer exacts their own personal influence upon the melody/drone relationship. There are said to be 22 *sruti* within each octave (root to root) of a *raga*. However the possibilities can range from 22 to 66 to infinity, lending to the fact that two repeated *sruti* never sound the same. This makes each performance of the same *raga* unique, in

[21] SwŪmi HariharŪhand Saraswatō as quoted in Alain Daniélouôs *Music and the Power of Sound,* 62-63.

its own way. *Svara* become even more personalized by the performer through ornamentation ï manipulation of the original *svara* and emphasis on particular *sruti*, or through polyphony, many *sruti* existing in simultaneity.

Tala are the counterpart of *raga*, and they are most simply conceived of as rhythmic cycles. While the *raga* delineates the melodic sphere of music and sound, *tala* constitutes the sequences of time throughout. They are reflective of the cycles of time in creation and in life. They are as intimate as our own heartbeat and as transcendental as mathematics. *Tala* are a complex system of rhythms that include common to rare patterns of rhythms played repeatedly throughout a Hindustani song.

Some mention of the division of Indian classical music is necessary here, as it plays a substantial role in the propagation of music, particularly in regards to mood or affectation developed for a particular audience and soundscape. Indian classical music is divided between the Indian subcontinent. In the North, Hindustani is the soundscape. *Karnatic* is Southern Indiaôs classical music. For the purposes here, I will only be addressing the Hindustani *sangeet* (ñtraditionò) of Indian classical music, as it is entrenched in communal devotional art that has been widely disseminated and globalized, and represents a key component of cultural transmission throughout the Indus River Valley.

Hindustani music, as it is known today, has grown alongside and has become inextricably intertwined with Persian music, depicted in the legend of Amir Khusrau (c. 1253 ï 1325). Khusrau was a Sufi poet and musician who is said to have bound the musics of the Hindu and the Sufi (mystical sects of Islam.) Much of modern Hindustani and Qawwali are attributed to Khusrau. Despite little historical evidence, several aspects of current Indian musics are ascribed to him, including, but certainly not limited to, the innovation of the *sitar* and *tabla*, the invention

and refinement of the *taranah* (song) style of performing, and the introduction of the *khayal* vocal style, which is still used today, and demonstrative of the links between Hindustani music and Sufi *Qawwali*. In fact, much of the *Qawwali* performed today can be credited to a composition by Khusrau. Thanks to his systemization, purification and combination of the musics of his time, as well as extensive continued patronage by the Delhi Sultanates and Mughal emperors, the extent of Hindustani is huge, yet remains refined. Hindustani music extends from Bangladesh, Northern and Central India to Pakistan. Karnatic is considered by some to be a more indigenous upholding of Indian musical tradition. Because the imperial conquests of the sub-continent of India were limited to the North and rarely moved passed the Deccan Plateau, Karnatic maintained a supposed ñstasisò in tradition. It is worth mentioning that some scholars[22] contend a ñclassicizationò of Hindustani was initiated in the imperial encounter, reaching fruition in the Mughal and British empires.

It is essential to note that *all* of Indiaôs music, created from melody (*raga*) and rhythm (*tala*), has been maintained and developed through oral transmission, and are rarely represented in modern notation of staffs and neumes. This is a reflection of a general distrust in writing down profound, mystical knowledge, and is also conveyed in the oral transmission of the Vedic chants. The role of the *guru* was revered as the One, divine or profane, imparting gnosis to the sincere student or devotee. The *guru-shishtya parampara* is the educational system created to transmit the heard, revealed knowledge from *guru* to student. Therefore it is safe to assert that since the musical tradition was not maintained in a vacuum stasis, a written prison, it grew, albeit slowly and nearly imperceptibly, from each guru to each student to each guru and so forth. Ideas of mood, color, and emotion were gradually ripened into the soundscape we hear today. Hindustani

[22] Schofield, ñReviving the Golden Age,ò 2010.

and Karnatic alike are complex, biological structures, alive and moving in the relationship of sound and meaning of humanity.

Ragas have been attributed distinctive images, characteristics, and performance practices that lend themselves more readily to specific times of day, or specific times of the year. *Sri Raga* is best performed in the evening, beginning at sunset with a solemn, contemplative mood of completion and order, authority and dignified responsibility. *Raga Piloo* is for the second part of the night, just before midnight, and is light and milky like the moon. *Raga Ahir Bhairav* is meant for the morning, just before and after the dawn, and represents the cosmic celebration of the triumph of the Sun and the perpetuity of existence. Within *Bhairav* is contained the mood of mourning, of fading away, of unrequited love, coupled with a stirring feeling of chaos and abandon to the cycles of time.

The structure of most Hindustani music forms is fairly uniform, given different ideas on exposition and development of melody. Any given piece most often begins with a drone instrument, such as the *tamboura*, intoning the tonic and the dominant notes of the *raga*. The lead soloist (usually alone or of two soloists ï lead voices are usually pared down to their most essential voices) spends a few moments absorbing the drone, meditating upon its quality, and its respective *svara* components. The soloist gently echoes the tonic note, usually the first *svara* of the *raga* scale and reveals the complete *raga* in a subtle, unassuming introduction. The soloist is encouraged to take his/her time during the exposition of the *raga*, as oneôs musical intuition can shape the *raga* into a particular color or emotion exhibited by both the original structure of the *raga* and the fluid perceptions of both the musician and the audience. In the *alap-jor-jhala* style, which is most popular to the Western contemporary audience, the *alap* begins once the *raga* has been presented as fully as possible. The *alap* is comparable to the Western notion of an

exhibition section of sonata form. In many cases, the introduction and *alap* are one in the same. The primary purpose is to introduce the *raga* of the song and the melodies or themes upon which the soloist will improvise. These sections are played without the percussionist, as to represent the feeling of timelessness, which are evocative of the timelessness of Divinity, of *Brahman*. Next follows the *jor*, also known as the *alap-jor*. *Jor* literally means ñto join,ò which indicates the point at which remaining instrumentalists and percussionists join in to the music. Tempo is essential here and works to create a driving pulse to bring about a trance-like state. The exhibition climaxes upon the tonic note, usually an octave higher. The *nom-tom* is the final section at which all performing expend enormous energy to drive the tempo, rhythm and virtuosity as intense as possible for the musicians and audience alike. Technical proficiency is highly important during this section, as each performer tries to outdo the other. When the climax is reached, when the performer(s) feels the *raga* has been presented in its wholest form, for that specific performance and time, the melody and rhythm coalesce into a chaotic repetition of final intent. In a rousing frenzy, the *raga* reaches its pinnacle, and the performers let go of the *raga*, stopping suddenly and releasing it into creation.

If it is cultivated carefully, the performance of a *raga* is a means through which one can attain liberation, through its meditative and affective powers. Hindustani music and its liberating purpose may seem highly individualistic, but I must refute this point, using Walter J. Ongôs conception of potency of sound in sacralization. ñThe paradigm of communication (in our case with music) is dialogue, a two-way transaction in a world of sound, which is a world of response, of echo.ò[23] Music and sound can assume an entire cosmos of reverberation and sonic dialogue between Self and Other, or it can divine a flow or rhythm of being within the individual. The

[23] Walter J. Ong, *Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 167.

raga may only lead the soloist to transcendent understanding, or it could arouse all who hear it. This is how musicians are seen as religious specialists, liminars integral to the unification of human sonority to the perpetual music of the Cosmos.

Hindustani preserves a primordial connection that humans share with sound, through conceptions of *Nāda Brahma* and the emphasis on the orality of the ancient sacred texts of the Vedas and Upaniṭads, to the emotional soundscape created by the *raga* and *tala*. It is apparent to the Hindustani musician and all who are privy to the unfolding power of its sounds that the World is Sound, and Sound is All. Music, in its purest sacramental potency of sound, has the ability to not only unfurl the lotus of Brahma, but to exist and transform the essence of Creation itself and all of its manifestations.

Chapter 3

The Muslimôs Music

What is music[24] to Islam? Though antecedent examination and rhetoric has continually exempted the role of music (in its *modern* definition and connotations) in Islamic devotion, music remains a perpetual element of culture, Islam notwithstanding. When the modern Muslim encounters this dialectic, he/she can only respond with his/her own personal constitution (that is forged through a private relationship with the Divine, Allah) regarding the sacrality of music. I propose that music has remained an indelible element of devotion from its sacralization by the One who Hears, and is an inherent component in Islam. The intent of this particular discourse is to not only clarify the issues regarding the role and status of music in Islam, but to elucidate the power and function of sound within its breadth.

This chapter seeks to explore the elements whose culminations constitute the perseverance of music within the Abode of Islam (*dār al-Islām*). In order to unravel the complexities of such a subject, this exposition will be divided into two sections. The first is on the form and function of music within Islam as a culture and religion. The second will deal primarily with the manifold issue of legality and the polemic regarding the permissibility of music and modern issues. In the first section, I will present an abridged explanation of the cosmology of Sound in Islam, to delineate a primordial connection Muslims share with music. An assessment of the Islamic epistemology of sound and music will follow, with a brief

[24] Referred in Islamic terms as *mūsīqah, ghina, maqām,* etc.

commentary on the dynamics of permissibility, and its form and transmission. Thereafter, I intend to discuss the function and action of music in Islam.

As I have stated in the previous chapter, sound cosmology refers to the creation of existence through the catalyst and agency of sound. Sound is a key component of nearly all religious cosmological myths. I submit that Islamôs sound cosmology plays a pivotal role in musicôs pervasive perenniality.

Since the coming of Islam assumes and subsumes the power structures and cosmologies of the Abrahamic traditions that came before it, Biblical sound cosmology is of equal importance as its own. Thus, when John proclaims, ñin the beginning there was the Word[25] and the Word was God,ò (John 1:1) in relation to the genesis of the cosmos, it is an assertion that God represents the Order of Sound within the Chaotic Void of Silence.

It is important to note here the vitality that the action of sounding creates. In breaking silence, three components must characterize the sounding: the inspiration/inhalation, the shattering of silence with vibrational agitation, and the expiration/exhalation. Within the John myth, the inspiration/inhalation culminates with Godôs resolve to create the Universe as It Is, the shattering of silence agitates and triggers the potentiality[26] of the Void, and the expiration/exhalation[27] of this world has yet to come. In his *Mathnawi*, Rumi speaks directly to this idea: ñThe form was born of the Word and died again, the wave subsided into the Sea.[28]

[25] From the Greek *logos,* which through Heraclitus now refers to the semantic field as both speech and language, as well as rationality and order. In Christianity and Islam, Christ is considered the living Word, the physical embodiment of Godôs command, while in Islam, this station is held by the Noble Qurðn.
[26] Of which is Godôs command.
[27] The end of times, apocalypse, etc.
[28] The theophanic wave of Tawhid on the Sea of Wisdom ï through the context of this poem.

Form emerged from Formlessness and then returned, for *truly, unto Him we are returning.*ò[29] In this perspective, the view of sound as not only a primogenitor but as cosmic sustenance is employed. Ergo, it is conducive to view God not only as the initiator of sound but the sustainer and embodiment of it as well.

From this notion, we can illuminate a more encompassing view of Sound Cosmology in Islam. The QurÕ¯n explicitly confirms the action of creation as sonic: ñThe Originator is He of the heavens and earth: and when he wills a thing to be, He but says unto it: Be![30] and it is[31]ò (2:116).[32] To initiate His unfathomable power, God need only employ the mere agency of Speech, which for our purposes here assumes not only the dynamism of expression, but the potentiality for its own higher order.

In this world, God chose to supersede the Silence of the Void, of non-existence, with sonic decree, and thus created a sonorous sentience in this world. The Void, and the Silence that characterizes it, is a necessary concept in the creation myth, as it directly relates to the Unicity of God.

> ñIf we consider God as the Ultimate Substance or Pure Being, remembering that in the terminology of Islamic metaphysics it is possible to refer to Being as ósomethingô (*al-shay'*), then there is an aspect of nothingness or void which lies in the very nature of the whole created order and which is a direct consequence of the fact that, in an absolute sense, only God is realé [The] void, or that which is empty of things becomes a trace and an echo of God in the created order, for

[29] Jalal al-Din Rumi, from *The Rumi Daybook*, selected and trans. by Kabir and Camille Helminski (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2012), 39.
[30] From the Arabic word *kun*, eT, which refers to the action of manifesting, or creation. Also referenced in the QurÕ¯n in the chapter *Ya Sin*, 36, verses 81-83 ï ñIs then, He who has created the heavens and the earth not able to create [anew] the like of those [who have died]? Yea, indeed ï for He alone is the all-knowing Creator: His being alone is such that when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, óBeôï and it is.ò
[31] Also translated into the intransitive verb *become*. ï ñHe says to it Be! and it becomes.ò
[32] All English translations of the QurÕ¯n is this paper, unless otherwise specified, are from Muhammad Asad.

through its very negation of ówhatsô it points to that which is above and beyond all things. The void, therefore, is the symbol of both the transcendence of God and His presence in all things.ò [33]

In this act of creation from the Void, God imbues the action of Sound and Speech with the power of creation and sustenance. ñAnd He [it is who] applied His design to the skies, which were [yet but] smoke; and He [it is who] *said* to them and to the earth, óCome [into being], both of you, willingly or unwillinglyôï to which they *responded* ówe do come in obedience,ôò (QurÕ¯n 41:11) (emphasis mine). Even in the Bible, the act of sound as sustenance is iterated: ñMan shall not live on bread alone; but on every word that proceeds out of the Mouth of God,ò (Matthew 4:4.)

In his commentary on the Speech of God, Ibrahim alï Bajuri illustrates how the sonic dictum of God has a two-fold meaning:

> ñAnd know that the phrase *'Kalām Allah'* (Allahôs Word or Speech) is applied to the beginningless unuttered speech (*kalām nafsī qadīm*), which happens to be a quality (*sifah*) present with His being (*dhat*) ï High is He; just as it is a phrase applied to the uttered speech (*kalām lafzī*), which happens to be a reference to His creation (i.e. the physical book) while no one has played a part in the origin of its composition. And according to this (second) application, the statement of Our Lady õi isha is understood when she said: óAll between the two covers of the book (*mushaf*) is Allahôs word (*kalām Allah*) ï High is He.ôò[34]

The signifier óQurÕ¯nô itself means órecitation.ô It assumes not only a textual knowledge of the scriptures, but a recitational one as well. To (inwardly) read the QurÕ¯n only reveals part of its majesty and beauty. Illuminating its mysteries requires expressing it aloud. It is transmitted

[33] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1987), 185.
[34] Sheikh IbrÕ¯hÕ¯m ibn Muhammad al-BayjÕ¯rÕ¯ as quoted in Abdullah bin Hamid Aliôs article ñThe Speech and Word of Allah (Kalam): In Light of Traditional Discussions.ò LampPost 2011.

that the Prophet said, ñBeautify the QurÕ¯n with your voices.ò[35] In Islam, the opposite is valid as well: beautify your voices with the QurÕ¯n.

The prime evidence for this is its initial revelation to the Prophet Muhammad. When Allah had deemed the return of creation to Islam, he employed the angel Gabriel, as a divine instrument, to announce to Muhammad the message he was created to disseminate. The archangel, who bears the rank of Mouth of God[36] commanded to the Prophet, ñRecite!ò Allahôs Apostle could not, for he was unlettered, or unable to read the script of revelation. Thus it was that the QurÕ¯n was not transmitted through symbolic absorption, reading, but rather through sonic apprehension. The angel Gabriel enunciated Godôs message to the Prophet. The Prophet Muhammadôs unlettered nature is evidence of the messageôs divine origin, and the divulgence through recitation secures its manifest transmission to the People of Creation.

"And it is not given to moral man that God should speak unto him otherwise than through sudden inspiration, or [by a voice as it were,] from behind a veil, or by sending an apostle to reveal, by His leave, whatever He wills [to reveal]. For verily, He is exalted, wise." (QurÕ¯n 42:51-52)[37] This verse not only clarifies the sacred status of the QurÕ¯n, but also illustrates the awesome power of the Voice of *God*. Man, in his earthly state, is too delicate to receive the sonic dictum of God, which is still yet a filter for His Absolute Power. This is manifest sonically but still retains such raw potency that the Created (as opposed to the Uncreated essence of *God*) need the further protection of intercession. The Might in the Sound of God has the ability not only to

[35] Narrated by Al-Bara ibn Azib, from the Sunan of Abu Dawood, Book 8:1483.
[36] As the archangel who was typically used in all Abrahamic traditions as the intermediary who sent messages from God to humans. ñFor he it is who hath revealed (this Scripture) to thy heart by Allah's leave, confirming that which was (revealed) before it, and a guidance and glad tidings to believers.ò QurÕ¯n 2:97. (trans. Marmaduke Pickthall.)
[37] As translated by Muhammad Asad, chosen specifically for its translation of ñrevelationò as ñinspiration,ò related to previously as the inhalation/inspiration of the Sound of Creation/Order.

create, but to unmake creation. This idea is best illustrated in the representation of IsrŪfęl, the archangel of the apocalypse.

When the apocalypse begins, it is for IsrŪfęl, though not named explicitly in the QurǾn, to announce. Here we find the only instance in the QurǾn of a ñmusicalò instrument: ñOn the Day of Resurrection, the whole earth will be in His grip. The trumpet will be sounded and everyone in the heavens and earth will fall down senseless except those God spares. It will be sounded once again and they will be on their feet, looking on.ò (QurǾn 39:68).[38] These verses explicate the power of sound to not only signal the end of all existence, but to strike down all that are not specifically spared, as well as resurrect them. It must be noted that the power inherent in the trumpet to strike down all who hear it is not imbued in its own sounding, but rather the power that *God* invokes in its use. ñOn that day all will following the Summoning Voice from which there will be no escape; all sounds will be hushed before the Most Gracious, and thou wilt hear nothing but a faint sough in the air.ò (QurǾn 20:108) [39]

It is also interesting to note that the QurǾn delineates a sphere of silence as punishment for those dwelling in Hell. Those who have won the paradises of Heaven will not hear the sounds of torment in Hell, and those who are punished will not be Heard. ñNo sound thereof will they hear; and they will abide in all that their souls have ever desired.ò (QurǾn 21:102.)

Finally, it must be mentioned the essence of *God* as the One who Hears. The QurǾn exactly states *God*ôs presence as all-encompassing ï ñHe said: Fear not. Lo! I am with you twain, All-Seeing and All-Hearing.ò (QurǾn 20:46.)[40] As a point, in fact, the entire QurǾn is rife with the concept of Hearing: not only in causing believers to hear the revelation of Islam, but in the Godôs Hearing, listening to the prayers of His steadfast. *God* has purposely sealed the ears of

[38] *Oxford translation by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem.*

[40] Pickthall translation.

those who are not worthy to Hear the revelation, but ever hears the exclamations of sentience in his creation.

To further explicate *God*ôs essence as the One who Hears, it is useful to employ the analogy of God as Composer and Created Existence as the Harmony that He has created and sustains. In this metaphor, man functions as one voice in the Symphony of Creation, or he functions as a symphony in himself, whose harmony is attuned with *God*, and whose very euphony is due to the Divine Breath imbued in him. ñ[When the] Gnostic has torn apart the veils of separative existence and become united with his original state and primordial nature, he also, like the world, is an instrument upon which God plays what He will. What joy could be greater than that a man not only listen to the Divine Concert, but also be himself the means for playing its music? That man, through submitting his own volition to the Divine Will, places himself completely in Godôs hands and becomes the source of the melodies which spread joy and felicity and guide man towards his primordial home and ultimate abode.ò[41]

The chief principle of humanity, within this line of thinking, is of sonority. Man is sound as much as he uses sound, not just as a communicative tool but also as the space through which identity travels from Self to Other. Sound is an indelible element of humanity, and a Muslim employs sound (and its own higher order, music, to be explored further in this discourse,) for a number of reasons. In order to become a Muslim a person must, with full spiritual and cognitive integrity, pronounce the Complete Shahadah aloud, to the best of his/her sonorous abilities. This sonic action is considered not only a necessary article of identity for the Muslim, surrendering witness, but a sacred reintegration into the incomprehensible Harmony of Truth.

And it is this harmony that permeates the whole of man from birth to death. He/she is ever sustained in a balance between Infinity and Manifestation, through the Divine Harmony of

[41] Nasr, *Islamic Art,* 172.

God. At birth, when a child is brought into the world, the first sounds he/she should hear is the adhŪn, the call to prayer. Upon hearing the adhŪn, the child will remember that his/her creation and existence are due solely to the decree of *God*. At death, a Muslim hopes to have the ability to pronounce the Shahadah one last time, to not only pronounce to the world his/her faith, but to pass into the Unknown with the courage only the Shahadah can give. ñThe secret of seeking [God] lies in cultivating the faculty of sensing [the Harmony of Truth], for harmony is beauty and beauty is harmony. The lover of beauty in his further progress becomes the seeker of harmony, and by trying always to maintain harmony he will tune his heart to the will of God.ò[42] It is thus that music functions as a channel by which an imperfect humanity can tap into, align oneôs vibrational frequency, with the perfect essence of Knowledge and Will, which are concomitant of *God*.

In his thesis on globalization and the Muslim ñsoundworld,ò[43] Michael Frishkopf concludes most succinctly that ñthe whole of Islam is suffused with sonic practices, including tilawa (Qurôanic recitation), duôa (supplication), adhŪn, ibtihalat, and inshŪd, mediated or live, as associated with daily prayer, lifecycle events, and religious holidays, as well as with liturgies of the Sufi orders, indicating the interpenetration of [sound and Islam]. The unarticulated, unremarkable prevalence of these sonic forms mediates social relations by linking individual and group experience in an integrated, affectively rich soundworld.ò[44]

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[42] Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1991), 116.
[43] ñI define the soundworld to be the affectively charged sonic-social intersubjectivity, that lived social world of empathetic understanding, intuitive communication, and shared values, as developed, expressed in the social experience of pre-linguistic sound. By definition the soundworld links sonical and social aspects, mediated through individual aural experience, an experience that is primarily implicit and affective, and which cannot therefore be rendered in discourse without distortion. Indeed the soundworld references a non-specific semantic domain, which is also somatic, and thus very far from the rational domain of language. The sonic aspect of the soundworld features performed sound, particularly music.ò ï Michael Frishkopf, ñGlobalizing the Soundworld: Islam and Sufi music in the West,ò *Sufis in Western society: global networking and locality*. Ed. Ron Geaves, Markus Dressler and Gritt Klinkhammer(London: Routledge, 2009), 55.
[44] Ibid., 49.

The cyclical relationship between sound and hearing that exists within and without humanity is an enduring quality of sentience. ñThe first thing we knew from God and which became connected to us from Him was His speech and our listening. Therefore all the messengers came with speech, such as the Koran, the Torah, the Gospels, the Psalms, and the Scriptures. There is nothing but speech and listening. There can be nothing else. Were it not for speech we would not know what the Desirer desires from usé We move about in listening.ó[45]

In accordance with this injunction regarding spiritual audition, the Sufiôs employ a ritual ceremony performed in the capacity of dhikr (remembrance) for the Heartôs ear. It is known as samÜ, which means, simply, ñlistening.ò This practice traces its origins to the popular mystic poet of Turkey, Jalal al-Din Rumi. As the story goes, upon walking through town Rumi hears the repetitive hammering of gold-beaters in their shop, and hears the Shahadah within the rhythmic tones ï ñLÜilaha ilÜAllÜh, LÜilaha ilÜAllÜh é ò This bears similar traits to another legend of music with the Greek Pythagoras, wherein his experience with smith hammering caused him to realize the mathematical nature of music and the Cosmos. Each instance enlightened the phenomenal power of music and its aural essence as merely an echo of a grand mystery we have yet to fully perceive. For Islam, this grand mystery is none other, none deserving of devotion, than Allah. Thus, it is the echoes of *God*ôs Divine Harmony that distinguishes the act of passive listening with the act of samÜ. *God* is the secret that is perceived within and without the musical notes, vocalized verses, and rhythm of the ritual. SamÜ moves beyond an unadulterated aesthetic experience to an immeasurable unfolding of the heartôs ear towards the Unseen.

ñThe soulôs samÜ is not compacted,

Alone of words and consonants.

[45] Ibn al-Arabi, as quoted from *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* byWilliam C. Chittick, ed. (New York: SUNY Press, 1989).

No, in every pitch and strain

Thereôs another enigma contained.ò[46]

So, where does music enter into this equation of Sound as cosmological initiation and the essence of *God* as All-Hearing? Al-GhazŪlītentatively purports that as long as the heart of the Hearer is inclined towards *God*ôs straight path, the listening of music can only accentuate the love *God* has already placed in the believerôs heart.

ñ[The] listening of him who loves God, and has a passion for Him, and longs to meet Him so he cannot look upon a thing but sees it in Him (Whose Perfection is extolled), and no sound strikes upon his ear but he hears it from Him and in Him. So listening to music and singing in this case is an arouser of his longing and a strengthener of his passion and his love, and an inflamer of the tinderbox of his heart, and brings forth from it States consisting of Revelations and Caressingsé ò (from al-GhazŪlītôs Ilya óUlÎ m ad-Dīn.)

Even RÎ zbihŪh Baqlī, the Sufi saint of ShīrŪz, was explicit in his understanding of the clair-audition one might receive if he were situated within the correct, ideal spiritual station:

*"*It is not proper for those who are alive on the natural plane, but whose heart is dead, to listen to music, for it will cause their destruction. It is, however, incumbent upon him whose heart is joyous, whether he discovers or fails to discover the soul, to listen to music. For in music there are a hundred thousand joys, of which with the help of a single joy one can cut across a thousand years of the path of attaining gnosis in a way that cannot be achieved by any gnostic through any form of worship.ò [47]

Here, one can see a stark contrast from the perspective of devotion in the West as opposed to the musical devotion of Islam. It is a common Western view that music, being a

[46] Mahmud Shabistari, *Gulshan-i Raz: The Mystic Rose Garden*, translated by E. H. Whinfield (London: Trubner, 1880), verse 857.
[47] As quoted from Baqliôs *Risalat al-Quds*, by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ñIslam and Music:
The Views of Rûzbahân Baqlî, the Patron Saint of Shiraz,ò *Studies in Comparative Religion*, 10(1): 1976, 4.

separate created element from God, is the refinement of Godôs creation; whereas Islam sees Music as an indelible part of the magnificence of God, created by Him, refined through Him, and also the process by which God refines the heart of he who hears it.

There are no direct injunctions against music in the Qurðn. The word ñmusic,ò which in Arabic is mÎsīqah, (from the Greek mousike, or any other etymological derivation to signify ñhumanly ordered sound,ò[48]) is not mentioned in the Qurðn. It is thus subject to human interpretation. The complexities regarding the polemics of permissibility of music are vast; much discourse has focused on the orthodox subordination of instrumental music, especially to clarify the importance of voice in Islamic devotion. There are those that purport that the Qurðn speaks of music as ñidle talk,ò that leads the believer astray. *"*And of mankind is he who payeth for mere pastime of discourse [idle talk], that he may mislead from Allah's way without knowledge, and maketh it the butt of mockery. For such there is a shameful doom. And when Our revelations are recited unto him he turneth away in his pride as if he heard them not, as if there were a deafness in his ears. So give him tidings of a painful doom.ò (Qurðn 31:5-6)[49] In these verses, we see a distinction of a person who ñpurchases *idle talks*,ò which is heretofore related from the Companions of the Prophet, Ibn Masud in particular, as singing and instrumental music-making in frivolity. There are however, specific injunctions against instrumental music in the mosque from the Prophet in Hadith. It is therefore believed that the only instrument worthy of communicating to God any sound is the instrument by which God created Himself: the voice.

The voice is the ideal medium through which a human can express himself to God. This principle is supported by the high regard that Qurðnic recitation holds in the hearts of Muslims,

[48] Blacking, J. *How Musical is Man?* Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1973.
[49] Pickthall translation.

the prevailing use of *nashīd* as a devotional act, and even by the construction of mosques to favor the acoustics of the human voice, particularly the muezzin, the one who calls Muslims to prayer. Hadith abound on the Prophet Muhammadôs indifference to approval of singing, notably on festival days,[50] during wedding celebrations, military expeditions, and caravan drives. It was the Prophet who appointed Bilal ibn Rabah al-Habashi, the emancipated Ethiopian slave who was one of the Prophetôs companions, to announce the call to prayer specifically because of his beautiful voice.

The QurôĪn itself is recited in cantillation, in dulcet descant, which is reflective of the mystery of the Divine Harmony. It is most important to note that there is no fixed melodic and rhythmic framework that one must recite the QurôĪn with, but after extensive study of the rules of *tajwid*, one may presume that there is a meta-rhythm and esoteric melody associated with its recitation. Nevertheless, ñbecause melodic recitation of the QurôĪn, known as *mujawwad*, was considered an element of human creativity and artistry introduced in the recitation, scholars insisted that fixed melodies should not be adhered to or taught,ò [51] and therefore (divinely inspired) óimprovisationô is employed. To be clear, the many schools of recitation maintain specific rules for long vowel durations, pauses between certain words or verses, and even embouchure shape, but the actual vocal ornamentations and pitches are pulled forth without any prior rehearsal from the Divine Will through the human voice. ñTo maintain the óabiding

[50] As narrated by óAisha ï ñAbu Bakr came to my house while two small Ansari girls were singing beside me the stories of the Ansar concerning the Day of Buath. And they were not singers. Abu Bakr said protestingly, "Musical instruments of Satan in the house of Allah's Apostle !" It happened on the 'Eid day and Allah's Apostle said, "O Abu Bakr! There is an óEid for every nation and this is our 'Eid." ï Sahih Bukhari 2:72

[51] Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 108.

intrinsic oralityô of the QurṎn, an exclusive and exquisite melodic-rhythmic system has been developed to sound the divine word and articulate its neatness,ò[52] and autonomy.

Humanly ordered sound, what we consider music as well as the cantillations and psalmody of the QurṎn, has the potential to open spiritual doors within the devout follower. ñDwelling at musicôs heart is a sacramental potency, awaiting appropriate times and places for its actualisation (sic), for manifesting the holy and for expressing our experiences of the holy.ò[53] To Muslims, this sacramental potency abides in all devotional music, but cannot be approached or attained with any permanence by a person who has not prepared for the fire of the Love of God. In al-GhazÜ̈qôs view, music has the potential to incite what is in the heart ï if the heart of man is more inclined towards material things, impermanent passions, or profane affection, music will increase in him these things. However, if the heart of man is inextricably linked to God, and resides only within the sustenance and Love of Him, music will enhance and arouse in him the ecstasy of pure Union with God. ñIslam was fully aware of this reality and limited exteriorized forms of music in favor of interiorized music, which increased the love for God, is the means of recollection of paradisal realities and intensifies the upward currents that help the wings of the soul to fly to its original celestial homeland.ò[54]

What makes music such a pervasive reality in Islam is its ability to connect to something other than language, something more than human meaning. In this sense, music takes on a supralingual order, a structure of power that goes beyond mere words and specific notes, to the innermost connection of Self to Other (in our sense, Allah.) The soundscape of Islam is ubiquitous element in a Muslimôs life. Echoes of God and the majesty of his creation ripple

[52] Regula Qureshi Burckhardt, ñIslam and Music,ò *Sacred Sound: Experiencing music in world religions*, edited by Guy L. Beck (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 91.
[53] Albert Blackwell, *The Sacred in Music* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 28.
[54] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 233.

throughout existence and stir something deep within Manôs soul. ñ[Among] all the different arts, the art of music has been especially considered divine, because it is the exact miniature of the law working through the whole universe. For instance, if we study ourselves we shall find thaté [life] depends upon rhythmic workings of the whole mechanism of the body. Breath manifests as voice, as word, as sound. The sound is continually audible, the sound without and the sound within ourselves: that is [our] music.ò[55]

What is the Muslimsô music? What is the music *in* Islam? In our sense, music exists not only in the soundscape of Islam, but is inherent in the harmony Allah has decreed in this world; in Godôs creation and sustenance of laughter and peace within oneôs heart; within the everyday interactions between a Muslim and his/her family and community. Music exists within the acts of humble embrace of the Unity of Being. It exists in the quiet inner stirrings that awaken when one hears the QurôÜn recited aloud. It is incumbent upon every Muslim to approach the issue of music, as humanly ordered sound, with an open heart. Perhaps then can he/she hear the Echoes of the Divine Harmony, or even understand Rumi when he said, ñWe rarely hear the inward music, but we are dancing to it nevertheless.ò

[55] Inayat Khan, 3.

Chapter 4

Jugalbandhi

It is supposed by some that Hindus and Muslims do not mix.[56] They are as different as oil and water or reason and emotion. History has certainly been witness to the volatility of their intermingling, as evidenced in numerous examples: Hindu persecution and temple desecration by Mahmud of Ghazni, or riots against Muslims during the India-Pakistan partition in 1947. How can a monotheist stand idly by as the polytheist supplicates to his vast pantheon? How can the Hindu reconcile proselytization tactics, such as Love Jihad[57]? There are vast differences between the Hindu and the Muslim, from the nature of divinity, to separate rules of purity and piety, as well as discrepancy between sacred texts and liturgy. It is no wonder that the story of their cohabitation in India has been one fraught with violence, contrariety and conflict.

Nonetheless, on the flip side of the coin, the civilization that bloomed from their concord and mutual toleration is an example of a venerable and resplendent culture to which many aspire. When the Indians (Muslims and Hindus alike) looked past the surface of their obvious differences, they became aware of a multitude of similarities between them, no matter how subtle or conspicuous. It was the Sufis, the Muslim mystics, who initiated and perpetuated this

[56] Lala Lajput Rai, ñThe Hindu-Muslim problem is the Problem of India,ò from *Writings and Speeches, Vol. 2, 1920 – 1928*, ed. Vijaya Chandra Joshi (New Delhi: University Publishers, 1966). ï Identifies the struggles between Hindus and Muslims, but does not advocate this idea.

[57] A proselytization tactic used in Kerala, India in which Muslim boys feign love for Hindu girls in order to convert them to Islam. See Times of India article: ñôLove Jihad,ôa misinformation campaign: Kerala Muslim outfits,ò *Times of India*, 2 Nov. 2009. Accessed December 1, 2010. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thirupuram/Love-Jihad-a-misinformation-campaign-Kerala-Muslim-outfits/articleshow/5189444.cms

discussion of tolerance and commonalities[58]. Indians that support an environment of tolerance assert that all religions are merely a facet of multiplicity, all borne from a single root. An oft-used analogy is many rivers spilling into one sea, but Shah Niaz Ahmad of Bareilly described it aptly in poetry: ñWhen the bird-nightingale starts its melodious songs, it raises hundreds of notes, it splashes a new tune every moment but it comes from the same throat, the same beak.ò[59]

Despite their differences, Indians, both past and present, have realized that they are all human beings, children of the same God (in spite of the innumerable names they assign to it), and that peace and tolerance are the ideal in order to prosper and maintain a flourishing culture. This ideal has been visited intermittently throughout Indiaôs history, and is manifest in their music ï Hindustani sangeet.

In this chapter, I will introduce a brief history of Islam in India, from the promulgation by Arab merchants in Kerala to the Sufi assimilation of ñSind and Hind.ò[60] This paper will focus primarily on the spread of Islam through Sufis and the conquering empires of the Islamic caliphates, Delhi Sultanates, and the Mughals. In exploration of the assumption that ñMuslims and Hindus do not mix,ò I will provide a concise comparative analysis of the religiology of Hinduism and Islam. Furthermore, an exploration of the effects of the Islamic empires on Hindustani music today will supplant the earlier assumption of devotional incompatibility and reform it using music. Finally, I will conclude this chapter with a case study on Ustad Zakir Hussain, the preeminent tabla master known for developing the modern genre of ówold musicô through his unique position as a hybrid performer.

[58] K.A. Nizami, ñThe Contribution of Indian Sufis to Peace and Amity,ò from *Culture of Peace,* edited by Baidyanath Saraswati (New Delhi: IGNCA and D.K. Printworld, 1999).
[59] Ibid.
[60] Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in India and Pakistan* (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1982), 1.

Long before the caliphs of Islam turned their imperial eye towards India, Arab sailors and traders had made landfall and secured business with the Hindus.[61] India was (and still is) a vast womb of wealth and from her was born the much sought after commodities of silk, spices and gems. Having long traded with Egypt, and then the Roman Empire, the indigenous peoples of the subcontinent accepted these traders in stride. It was not until the Islamic caliphates entering the Mother Land that Islam held any economic, and thus political, sway.[62] Muhammad ibn al-Qasim wrenched control from the natives and held power from the lower Indus valley to the great city of Multan[63], now in Pakistan. It was only after instituting the *jizya* (tax to practice indigenous faiths) that resentment grew between the foreign conquerors and the existing habitants. But it was the Delhi sultanates (as they are now called) who brought a focal culture, and widespread conversion, of Islam to India. After deposing the warrior class who held the most power in North India, the Afghans and Turks established a series of regimes, which held rigid control over the North and enacted several raids into the heartland. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni plundered and looted one of the largest and sacred temples, in Somnath, in 1025 C.E. Though he claimed his actions were guided by faith ï he intended to destroy a ñpaganò temple which held the (unharmed) idol from the Kaaba, of Manat, and cleanse India with the truth of Islam ï they were more likely motivated by the opulence of the temple, for Mahmud looted the entire complex of gold and defaced the idols of Shiva. [64]

[61] Satish Saberwal, ñOn the Making of Muslims in India Historically,ò from the Oxford Handbook of Muslims in India, edited by Rakesh Basant and Abusaleh Shariff (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2010), 39.
[62] Ibid, 50.
[63] Schimmel, *Islam in India*, p.2.
[64] "The Meeting of Two Oceans." *The Story of India*. DVD. Directed by Jeremy Jeffs. London: MayaVision International, 2007.

However, the faith of Islam did not have a lasting[65] visual representation on the subcontinent until 1192. The Quwwat al-Islam mosque, best known for its towering Qutub Minar, was the first surviving mosque erected in India, in the city of Delhi[66]. Inscribed at the complex gate is a description of how twenty-seven Hindu temples were dismantled to create the mosque. Not only did this complex signal the might of Islam, but it also communicated to the native Indians that not only would there be a religious shift; there would be a cultural one.[67] Despite an unequal balance of power between invader and invaded, the two cultures dissolved into one another, creating a vivacious and electrifying synergy of civilization.

Maintaining a pragmatic manner regarding the Hindus, many sultans realized that converting the innumerable and rural peoples of India was a daunting and perhaps futile endeavor. Instead, they were often known to surround themselves with not only Muslim scholars, poets and artists, but also Hindu intellectuals, musicians and wise men. Al-Biruni (d. 1048 C.E.) remarked,

> ñYou must bear in mind that the Hindu entirely differ from us in almost everything. And the barriers separating us are many ï language, manners, customs, rules of purity. And India is such a diverse land ï from Kashmir in the North, to the Southern cultures, Telugu, Kannada and Tamil. In religion the Indians totally differ from us, as we believe in nothing in which they believe and vice versaé . Indiaôs hard to understand, though I have a great liking for it. And our apparent differences would be perfectly transparent if there were more contact between us.ò[68]

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[65] The ruins of a mosque are found ñin Bhambore near Karachiò and ñcan be regarded as the oldest relic of Islam on Indo-Pakstani soil; its inscriptions in simple floriated Kufic style bears the date of 294[A.H.]/906-7ò ï Schimmel, *Islam in India*.

[66] Ibid, 4.

[67] ñ*The Meeting of Two Oceans: The Story of India,"* with Michael Wood.

[68] Paraphrased by Michael Wood in *"The Meeting of Two Oceans: The Story of India,"* from al-Biruniós *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*. See Al-Biruniós ñ*The Chronology of Ancient Nations of al-Biruni" translated by C. Edward Sachau (London: William H. Allen and Co., 1879).*

Unfortunately, the Delhi sultanate was in constant flux, with five different tenures in which power dissipated as quickly as it was achieved.

During the Delhi sultanate, Sufis played a pivotal role in bringing Islam to the masses, from the lowest castes to the intellectual elite. Several orders were established, from the ecstatic Chistiyya who offered the opportunity for ñnon-Muslim novices to ótasteô mystical experience, even before embracing Islam,ò[69] to the sedate (in comparison) Suhrawardiyya. Even the most sober group of Sufis, the Naqshbandiyya, held sway with the people through their emphasis on unrestrained love for the Prophet Muhammad and an authoritative genealogy[70] linking them to the Prophet through Abu Bakr. [71] The Islam that the Sufis preached was more accessible to the native Hindu, and most conversion to Islam took place under their tutelage. The Sufis embraced those things that orthodox Muslims refrained from ï dance, ecstatic utterances and poetry, and music ï which made them more appealing to the common Indian in the Middle Ages. And even their terminology regarding soteriology was similar, despite the differences in language. Though there is dispute regarding the real distinction between *nirvana* and *fana'* and *baqa'*, Abbas Rizvi contends that *nirvana* is not necessarily a nihilist concept, but a positive one, comparable to the state of annihilation from *fana'*. The subsistence of the soul through Allah, as in *baqa'*, is likened to subsistence of the *Ātman* (world soul) in Brahman. [72] Comparisons such as these in religiology will be explored further in the chapter.

And not only were the Hindus enchanted by the rapture of the Muslim ñmystic,ò but the Sufis in turn reciprocated with respect and honor for the Motherland of India. The poet and

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[69] Schimmel, *Islam in India*, p. 4.
[70] Genealogy represented an important facet of life for the medieval Indian, as it hearkened to the hereditary system of caste. See Bhagavad-Gita, chapter 4 verse 13.
[71] Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: the Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), p.89.
[72] Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India, Vol. 1: Early Sufism and its History in India to 1600 AD*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1975), 323.

musician Amir Khusrau, the ñFatherò of modern Hindustani sangeet, who will be distinguished later in this chapter, spoke of Delhi thus:

> ñMy home was the Dome of Islam,
>
> It was the *qiblah* for kings of the seven climes.
>
> Delhi is the twin of pure paradise,
>
> A prototype of the heavenly throne on an earthly scroll.ò[73]

Nevertheless, it was not just their practices that brought converts, but also the affirmation of the Naqshbandiyya by the newest conquerors, the Mughals.[74]

In 1526, Babur of the Timurids marched on Panipat from his base in Kabul, Afghanistan. After four failed attempts to remove the Delhi Sultanate, Babur and his army of 12,000 men stood facing a force numbering over 100,000, led by the proud Sultan Ibrahim. It was hot, and a horde of Ibrahimôs elephants shifted restless within the 100 degree heat. But being outnumbered could not extinguish the fire of conquest in Baburôs heart ï for he had artillery. Guns, not seen in battle in India before, won Babur what he believed was his rightful possession, and he took the reins of India in glory.[75]

However, the first acculturation of India to Babur was a rocky one, and it seemed as if Baburôs previous association with Qalanders (wandering Sufis) and the resident shaykhs of India was nullified by his material extravagance. His tax on the holy men was mostly met with aggravation and antipathy, as most Sufis lived a simple life and had very little money. The defeated Ibrahimôs shaykh óAbdul ôl-Quddus admonished Babur and proclaimed that ñthe imposition of ó*ushr* [tax on produce] upon the *wajh-i ma'ash* [grants to Hindu and Muslim holy men to live rent free] of these classes should not be permitted and should be considered a

[73] Sunil Sharma, *Amir Khusraw: The Poet of Sultans and Sufis* (Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 2005), 20-21.
[74] Buehler, *Sufi Heirs*, 56.
[75] Summarized from the memoirs of Babur, *Baburnama*, translated and edited by Wheeler Thackson, (New York: Modern Library, 2002.)

heinous siné ò[76]. In spite of the qualms India had with Babur, and later his son, Humayun, both rulers paved the way for what is considered by some historians as the Golden Age of India, under the reign of Abuð-Fath Jalal ud-din Muhammad Akbar, lovingly known by his honorific Akbar, ñThe Great.ò Where his predecessors ruled only the Northern sections of India and the Indus River Valley, including the cities of Agra and Delhi, it was he who expanded and united the largest territory under the Mughal Empire.

Akbar ascended to the throne at the age of 13, and despite his age, he quickly defeated his enemies to secure his kingdom. He was a very human figure, enjoying sports and games, as well as loafing around with his companions and even his common subjects. In fact, he remained illiterate throughout his life. ñMaybe because the intellectuals and the scholarsé had never gotten their intellectual straight jacket on him, he retained a wonderful capacity to make unexpected, unconventional connectionsé to think outside the box.ò[77] And this characteristic was ultimately displayed in his repeal of the *jizya* ï head tax to practice any faith except Islam, instituted under al-Qasim.[78] He magnified the empire as far west as Bengal and south to the Deccan plateau. And unlike his predecessors, he denied any superiority in his position and often mingled with his subjects, Muslims and non-Muslims, from all religions and philosophies.

He spent much time learning and meditating upon the doctrines of the religions of India, during his time. These included Sikhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Christianity, as well as Hinduism and Islam.

> ñMany of the doctrinesé appealed to him but he could not join the bodies professing them, as members of those religious and social systems are born, not madeé Christianity was as uncompromising as Islam, and made demands to which he was neither inclined nor able, without

[76] Abbas Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India,* 345.
[77] *"The Meeting of Two Oceans: The Story of India"* with Michael Wood.
[78] Sir Wolseley Haig, *"Akbar,"* from *The Cambridge History of India: Vol. IV, The Mughul Period* edited by Sir Richard Burn (New Delhi: S. Chand and Company, 1963), 87.

> arousing the implacable hostility of the two great religious bodies in his empire, to submit. He was much attracted by the mysticism of the Sufis. But theirs was too vague a creed, and too bare of ritual, to which he inclined, to command his [total] allegiance.ò[79]

It was tolerance that Akbar so desperately attained for, taking the best from the faiths around him and introducing a new religion, known as *Din-i ilahi*, the Divine Faith.[80] ñNow it has become clear to me that it cannot be wisdom to assert the truth of one faith over another. In our troubled world, so full of contradictions, the wise person makes justice his guide, and learns from all. Perhaps in this way, the door may be opened again whose key has been lost.ò[81]

Akbar laid the foundation for an enlightened society, and was succeeded by his son Jahangir, who was followed by Jahan. His descendants, however, did not fully deliver Akbarôs dream, due to poor leadership, unwise wars, and overconsumption. However, this overconsumption, despite its effect to dissipation, had a beautiful, mystically romantic facet. The mourning Shah Jahan erected arguably the most powerful display of eternal love to not only his earthly love, his third wife Mumtaz Mahal, but to his divine love in Allah ï the Taj Mahal. Beyond this dimension of ecstatic, yet tender romance between Lover and Beloved, the tomb remains today the epitome of the synergy between this Hindu and Muslim worlds. With elements of Persian art and architecture, QurôÜnic verses, and Hindu holy symbols, it is demonstrative of the Mughals power in assimilation and the height of their empire. It represents now the culmination of Muslim/Hindu synthesis. However, it would be a civil war between brothers that would signal the downfall of the Mughal Empire, Shah Jahanôs sons Aurangzeb ï who urged a renewal of the orthodoxy of the Sunni Islamic faith ï and his brother Dara Shikoh, the Sufi. Defeating his brother Dara, Aurangzeb was succeeded by a weak line of Mughals, who were

[79] Ibid, 130.
[80] Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture.* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004.)
[81] Akbar, as quoted by Michael Wood, *The Search of the First Civilizations* (London: BBC Books, 1992), 73.

eventually conquered by the warrior caste Maratha forces. The last Mughal emperor was dethroned and exiled to Burma in 1775 by a new conqueror, the British.

By the time Britain claimed India, the majestic Muslim/Hindu synthesis had dissolved to only communal tolerance. Only these phenomenal monuments in the Taj Mahal, Sufi shrines, and others came to illustrate what poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore described of the tomb of Mumtaz ï ñLet the splendor of the diamond, pearl and ruby vanish like the magic shimmer of the rainbow. Only let this one teardrop, the Taj Mahal, glisten spotlessly bright on the cheek of time...ò[82]

There have been numerous attempts since the great Mughals to integrate and blend the noble cultures and religions, or at the very least maintain an environment of tolerance and peace. For example, after the annexation and independence of India from Britain, Gandhi begged his countrymen to look past the semantics between their religions, and honor the true evidence of their brotherhood ï their shared love for their Motherland, India. He urged his fellow Indians to be aware of how the colonial encounter with Britain had agitated and manipulated efforts of political and cultural reconciliation between the two religious systems.

When Hindus and Muslims scrutinized the real differences between them, they found that there are more similarities than contradistinctions. Firstly, the primary distinction between them is their conception of the nature of God. Muslims assert the singularity of God, as evidenced in their main creed, the Shahadah. The First Shahadah attests that ñthere is none worthy of worship, than God,ò which stresses that there are many things available in this world to divert oneôs attention from God, but in the end, God is the only God worthy of devotion. This has been a major point of contention between Muslims and Hindus, as Hindus are polytheists. A general inquiry into the pantheon of Hinduism would yield up to 330 million gods, traditionally. This

[82] ñTaj Mahal: Memorial to Love,ò from web: http://www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/taj_mahal/tmain.html

number is staggering to say the least, and is primary evidence of non-Hindus that Hinduism is polytheistic. And the common people profess this as well ï worshiping several household deities. ñIn its entirety, the Hindu pantheon is overwhelming, inconceivable. Its relevance lies in its approachability, not its vastnessé Each has an *ishtadevata*, the deity of personal choice; a *kuladevata*, the deity of family and household; and a *gramadevata*, the deity of community. An individualôs life is entwined in recognizing and honoring these relationships, in defining the self and oneôs interconnectedness to all other living beings.ò[83] And this interconnectedness is also reflected in a pantheistic view of the world, where God is all things.

The stark difference between Islam and Hinduism is the number, at least on the surface. However, if one delves deeper into the ontology of Hinduism, one discovers the fundamental principle of all Hindus ï there is one Divine Truth, Brahman, and all other deiforms are just manifestations of this Supreme Force. An appropriate analogy would be of a diamond ï a jeweler can cut many faces into the rock, as much as his eye can discern and his heart desires, but it is still one diamond. Or to clarify this still further, ñ[the] relationship between the many manifest deities and the unmanifest Brahman is rather like that between the sun and its rays. We cannot experience the sun itself but we can experience its rays and the qualities, which those rays have. And, although the sunôs rays are many, ultimately, there is only one source, one sun.ò [84] This parallels the Muslim belief that all of Godôs creation is just His manifestation in the physical realm, as humans can (erringly) worship His manifestations, rather than His Essence. The primary discrepancy between these two is that Muslims testify that these facets, or

[83] Stephen P. Huyler, *Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 112.
[84] Excerpted from website ï Subhamoy Das. ñWhy do Hindus have so many deities?:Too Many Gods! Too Much Confusion!ò *About Hinduism*. Accessed May 14, 2008. http://hinduism.about.com/cs/basics/a/aa072103a.htm.

manifestations, are unworthy of devotion above His Essence, where Hindus relish the multiplicity, ergo approachability, of God.

Separation and unity are dominant themes in Sufism and Hinduism. Separation from the God is the corporeal state of suffering and disillusionment of reality. With both religions, unity is the more desired state, an end to worldly suffering. Jalal al-Din Rumi, the Persian Sufi poet wrote much of separation and unity, and the necessity of human suffering. ñThe spiritual happiness we achieve in the state of union is accentuated by the suffering we experience while in separation.[85]ò Rumi likens the suffering of separation to the suffering of childbirth ï pain must be experienced in order for the child (the spirit) to find the birth canal (state of freedom or bliss) and leave the womb (the body.)[86] Rumi is most popular in his metaphorical depictions of God as a chivalric beloved. ñSeparation and parting from Thee is difficult, oh Beloved, especially after Thy embrace![87]ò

This aspect of multiplicity can be further compared in their religious texts. In Islam, the only *ultimately* ñsacredò text is the QurðÜn, which is the infallible source for the Word of God. It is supplemented, not equal to the QurðÜn, by Hadith which elucidates the Prophet Muhammadôs *Sunnah*, or honorable example[88]. Whereas in Hinduism, there is a vast collection of literature labeled and revered as ñsacred,ò from the transmitted Vedas and Upaniṣads, to the literary epics of the Mahabharata (which contains the ever popular Bhagavad-Gita) and Ramayana, and even the philosophical collections of the Darshanas and Puranas. Whatever, or whoever, the source of authorship, its sacred quality is attested by Hindus. Nonetheless, the primary tenet that each of these sacred texts puts forth is that of Dharma. Many Hindus do not even read their sacred texts,

[85] Fieser, James and John Powers. *Scriptures of the World's Religions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 454.
[86] Ibid, 454 ï 455.
[87] Rumi, *Diwan 13901* - Ibid, 454.
[88] QurðÜn 33:21 ï ñVerily in the Messenger of Allah, ye have a good example (beautiful pattern) for him who looketh unto Allah and the last day, and remember Him much.ò

but rather follow the law of God, their Dharma, which is the preordained duty each person must fulfill. Despite their nature of their epistemological differences, both the QurÕ¯n/Sunnah and the Dharma, when graciously followed, can lead to salvation: Unity with God, or the cessation of the cycles of rebirth and thus Unity with Being, respectively.

Again, on the surface, the soteriology between the two religious systems is seemingly different. Muslims believe in Heaven and Hell, which are *real* states of being after the soul has exited the earthly body, and has been judged on the Day of Judgment. Hindus profess that even when the body has passed into decay, the soul remains on the earthly plane, reborn in a new body, within a different station of being. Salvation for the Hindu rests in stopping the Wheel of Rebirth, *Samsara,* and uniting with the Primordial Essence of all souls, Brahman. The ultimate state of being is *moksha*, the condition of pure bliss, which is liberation from the continuous cycle of birth, death and rebirth. This state is the melding of oneôs higher self, *ātman*, to the higher being of all, *Brahman*. This can also be viewed in the river analogy as the river (*ātman*) merges with the ocean (Brahman.) The Sufis seek to reach Union during oneôs current lifetime, between Heaven and Hell. Paradise exists in the mystery of Love for the Beloved, the devoted servant of Allah. Utilizing the river to ocean analogy above, Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh explains that if Allah is the ocean and a human is a drop of water, then Sufism is the river that carries the drop to the ocean. [89] But, in the end, whether the goal is to unite with God or Brahman, either in Heaven or within the Supreme Essence, the salvation is the same. Only the means to this end are different.

[89] Javad Nurbakhsh, ñThe Drop and the Ocean.ò *The Nimatullahi Sufî Order,* Accessed January 28, 2008, http://www.nimatullahi.org/nurbakhsh/discourses/drop

Another soteriological aspect by which Hindus and Muslims are alike is in their conception of retribution. Muslims believe that good deeds, pious and charitable living, and maintaining purity ï body, mind, and soul ï will result in Godôs rewarding them. In turn, Hindus regard the fulfillment of karma is a real impetus that springs from every action, thought, or deed. Fulfilling positive karma requires detached action for good and purifying the vessel that creates karma. It is these similar conceptions of retribution that beg compassion and ultimately humanity between them.

Even with these similarities, the differences between them have often spelled animosity and bouts of violence throughout their shared communities. Within them rests the difficult responsibility of maintaining peace and affability for the good of not only their individual villages and cities, but for India as a whole. ñThe occasional communal violence that flares up in parts of India between the two communities is a product of pent up frustrations and mutual animosity in an economic environment of scarcity, and poverty, that struggles to survive in the hands of a few fanatics from both sides, in a sea of brotherhood, tolerance, adaptation, mutual appreciation and incredible understanding.ò[90] At the center of this environment of mutuality lies the pinnacle of their creative cooperation: art. Often, it is hard to distinguish where the contribution of the Muslims end and the Hindu begin.

Art stands as one of the best means by which to express the search for God, the pain of separation, the bliss of unity, and everything in between. Art is made for several reasons, none of which is better than the other. The basis upon which art is created is from aesthetic value (art for artôs sake), historic value, or devotional value, all of which are fluid categories. While there are numerous examples of the former values, devotion is responsible for some of the most

[90] Jayaram V, ñHinduism and Islam,ò Web. http://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/h_islam.asp.

magnificent works of art. Religious devotion had been shaped into all types of art, including sculpture, paintings, dramatic and comedic plays, and music and poetry.

Our Westernized notions of poetry and music tend to divide the two entities. To Western ears, they are notably different from one another. One uses the semantic system to create words whereas the other uses musical notes to create sounds. Poetry is available on paper, whereas music is found in concert halls and CDs. However, Eastern impressions of poetry and music place concurrent emphasis on both, as one is a form of another, and vice versa. Poetry and music share structure, meter, rhythm, divisions (stanzas and movements), the ability to evoke emotion and play within the contexts of sounds/words and silence. To write poetry is to create music of words, and to compose music is to form poetry from sounds.

*Qawwal*i is the devotional music of the Sufis. The rhythm of the music and repeated lyrics, comprised of spiritual poetry, are meant to elevate both the listener and the performer to a state at which divine union is possible. The words to the lyrics are sung simply at first, and then are repeated any number of times, with slight embellishments or tonal changes. These variations are used to deepen the meaning behind the lyrics. The lyrics are inextricably linked with the mysticism of the Sufis, creating a link between word and feeling. The word *qawwali* most likely comes from the Arabic *qaol*, meaning axiom, or dictum of Allah. The *qawwal*, or the one who engages in the music of qawwali, is essentially singing his *dhikr*[91] aloud, proclaiming the axiom of Allah. *Qawwali* is love songs to Allah.

[91] Dhikr, literally ñremembranceò is an action as well as a state of being which strives to maintain constant remembrance of Allah, through either audible or inaudible chanting of any of the 99 names of Allah. See Alan GodlasôñSufism: Remembering God.ò *Sufism.* http://www.uga.edu/islam/sufismdhikr.html.

Qawwali is always sung in a party, or group of *qawwals*. There is one primary singer, with at least one secondary vocalist. Sometimes, the whole party participates in singing. A *qawwal* party is almost exclusively composed of men.[92] There is at least one percussionist, who plays the *tabla* and/or *dholak* (both traditional Indian drums), and hand clapping by subsequent non-instrumental musicians is used to keep beat. Instruments used include the harmonium[93], and stringed lute-like instruments including but not limited to the *sarod*, *sarangi*, and *rabab.* In *qawwali* performances, the audience is even considered part of the communal process of music making. During the ritual of listening, each person present in the performance, without the distinction between musician and audience, plays an integral part in the communal experience. The audience is not limited to clapping, dancing and singing with the chorus. Audience participation is encouraged as all union with the divine is praised. ñThrough the act of listening ï *sama* ‟ï the Sufié [opens] himself to the powerful message of Qawwali, he hopes for a spiritual experience of intensity and immediacy that transcends his conscious striving. The music serves to kindle the flame of his mystical love, to intensify his long for mystical union, and even to transport him to a state of ecstasy and to sustain him there to the limit of his spiritual capacity.ò[94]

A *qawwali* performance often begins with a quiet, growing instrumental prelude. There is little to no rhythmic emphasis placed on this section of music, as it is meant to represent the freedom of Allah from the human conception of time. The *alap* is the long tempered improvisation upon which the singers intone different long notes, in the raag of the song to be

[92] Tsioulcas, Anastasia, *Qawwali*, Accessed May 14, 2008. http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com/worldmusic/view/page.basic/genre/content.genre/qawwali_770.
[93] A fairly new addition to the *qawwal*i instrumentation, brought in the 19th century by French missionaries. The harmonium replaced instruments such as the sitar or the sarangi, which aside from needing exceptional technical ability to play, were less audible and needed constant retuning throughout the performance ï Regula Burkhardt Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, context and meaning in Qawwali* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 58.
[94] Qureshi, *Sufi Music*, 1.

played. This follows the introductory prelude, and often presents the skeleton of the melody from which the party will improvise. During this time, the lead singer introduces the introductory verses, not necessarily part of the song, but usually thematically related to it. The main section begins, always accompanied by a driving rhythmic background. The consistency and repetition of this rhythmic background is intoxicating, creating a trance-like quality shared by all participants. It is likened to the heartbeat, and is useful in the repetition of oneôs *dhikr*. The repetitive lyrics begin their variations here. Melodic themes and lyrics are repeated continually, repetition building meaning in the words and music alike. Songs can last anywhere from five minutes (in an abbreviated performance) to two hours. The song builds in energy and religious passion. Sometimes the tempo can subtly accelerate, the rhythms become stronger, and each of the vocalists participates in vocal acrobatics trying to outdo one another. This should not be seen as competition, but rather a joint effort to raise the energy of the song. Most often *qawwali* songs are ended abruptly, and at the direction of the primary vocalist.

The melody and harmony of *qawwali* are composed from *raags*, or a collection of five or more notes meant to evoke a certain mood or emotion. This is directly related to the traditional Hindustani *raga*, and is used in much the same way. The raag used for Nusrat Fateh Ali Khanôs *Yeh Jo Halka Halka Saroor Hai* is used to convey a spirit of intoxication and an upwelling of love for Allah. The songôs title literally means, ñThis intoxication is because of your eyes,ò and speaks of the Lover becoming slightly drunk on the thought of the love he has for his Beloved. The theme of this song rests on the slight thought of the unfathomable love of Allah, creating an ecstasy not unlike one has when in love.

ñMy devotion is such devotion

that is not bound by the mosque and the temple.

When I see you once,

by God, it is no less than a prayer.

Only your love is my life.[95]ò

The voice is an essential part of *Qawwali*. A song must be performed with words, especially to convey a particular emotion to the listener. The meaning of the words is an integral part of the song, but the meaning cannot confine the song. Each person experiences the divine in his or her own way. This is also true in Indian classical music, except most songs are not confined to words. The voice is the medium by which instrumentalists aspire to imitate.

Indian classical music is divided between the Indian subcontinent. In the North, Hindustani is the custom music. Karnatic is Southern Indiaôs classical music. For the purposes here, I will only be addressing the Hindustani sangeet of Indian classical music, as it is entrenched in mutual devotional art and represents a key component of cultural transmission throughout the Indus River Valley. Hindustani music has grown alongside, and has become inextricably intertwined with Persian music, particularly within the lifetime of Amir Khusrau (c. 1253 ï 1325). Khusrau was a Sufi poet and musician who helped bind the musics of the Hindu and the Sufi. Much of modern Hindustani and Qawwali are attributed to Khusrau. In spite of little historical evidence, several aspects of current Indian musics are ascribed to him, including, but certainly not limited to, the innovation of the sitar and tabla, the invention and refinement of the *taranah* (song) style of performing, and the introduction of the *khayal* style, which is still used today, and demonstrative of the links between Hindustani music and Qawwali. In fact, much of the Qawwali performed today can be credited to a composition by Khusrau. Thanks to his systemization, purification and combination of the musics of his time, as well as extensive

[95] Nurudin Jauhari, ñYeh Jo Halka Halka Saroor Hai,ò *Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan: Music, Lyrics, and English Translations,* Accessed May 14, 2008. http://nusrat.info/ye-jo-halka-halka-suroor/

patronage by the Delhi Sultanates and Mughal emperors, the extent of Hindustani is huge, yet remains refined. Hindustani music extends from Bangladesh, Northern and Central India to Pakistan.

Hindustani music is composed, much like Western music, of melody (*raga*) and rhythm (*tal*). Harmony is not a component of Hindustani, because a drone replaces this role. Instead of melody being created from specific scales, it is created from an affection, which is translated into a *raga*. A *raga*, like the *Qawwal raag*, represents a specific mood through a series of five or more notes. In Hindustani, a typical *raga* consists of seven notes. *Tal* is a complex system of rhythm that includes common to rare patterns of rhythms played repeatedly throughout a Hindustani song.

Instruments included in Hindustani include the infamous sitar, a long-necked lute-like instrument with up to twenty strings, with seventeen being the average amount of strings. Three or four of these strings are used to play the primary melody, where three or four strings are used as the background drone to the song. The rest of the strings are sympathetic, and resonate within the instrument to amplify the melody. The drone establishes the tonic for which the *raga* is played on. Each sitar must be tuned to each specific *raga* before a song is played. Another popular stringed instrument is the *sarod*. It is a short, guitar-like instrument that is derived from the Persian rabab. The time, organized in rhythmic cycles as taal, is kept by a percussionist who normally plays either the tabla alone, or a tabla and a dholak.

The structure of most Hindustani music is much the same as in Qawwali, thanks to Khusrau. Any given piece most often begins with the drone instrument intoning the tonic and the dominant notes of the *raga*. The lead soloist spends a few moments absorbing the notes,

meditating upon their quality. He/She gently echoes the tonic note, usually the first of the *raga* scale, from the drone, and reveals the complete *raga* in an unassuming introduction. The soloist is encouraged to take his/her time during the exposition of the *raga*, as oneôs musical intuition can shape the *raga* into a particular color or emotion exhibited by both the original structure of the *raga* and the fluid perceptions of both the musician and the audience. The alap begins once the *raga* has been presented as fully as possible. The alap is comparable to the Western notion of an exhibition section of sonata form. In many cases, the introduction and alap are one in the same. The primary purpose is to introduce the *raga* of the song and the melodies upon which the soloist will improvise. These sections are played without the percussionist, as to represent the feeling of timelessness, which are, much like Qawwali, evocative of the timelessness of Divinity. Next follows the *jor*, also known as the *alap-jor*. *Jor* literally means ñto join,ò which indicates the point at which remaining instrumentalists and percussionists join in to the music. Tempo is essential here and works much in the same way as qawwali songs use driving tempo to bring about a trance-like state. The exhibition climaxes upon the tonic note, usually an octave higher. The *nom-tom* is the final section at which all performing expend enormous energy to drive the tempo, rhythm and virtuosity as intense as possible for the musicians and audience alike. Technical proficiency is highly important during this section, as each performer tries to outdo the other.

Music and poetry in the Indus River Valley represent the highest states of art, which are seen as one of the few appropriate ways to express devotion. Whatever aspect of the Divine one chooses to worship requires a certain amount of dedication. To reach the most desired state of being, union with the divine entails unequivocal love and sacrifice. Sufis and Hindus alike use music and poetry as a means by which to praise, share and become united with the Divine. In

essence, the natures of both Allah and Brahman can be related to the music itself. Music is not only a path, paved by devotion, to the Divine. The Great Absolute *is* music, beating within each of our hearts.

Music exemplifies the quintessence of the intermingling of Muslim and Hindu. The previous assumption of their incompatibility, i.e. oil and water, is nullified when scrutinized under the lens of music. *Raga* and *Tal* are two separate dimensions of music, but without its complement, *raga* is just notes ringing in an empty atmosphere and *tal* is just tempo lacking melodic structure. When Hindus and Muslims look past their obvious differences, the peace and beauty that blooms from their concord echoes the music of the Divine.

Chapter 5

Case Study: Zakir Hussain

Can music function as a channel by which an imperfect humanity can tap into a perfect essence of Knowledge? Can music teach us about our Selves? Hazrat Inayat Khan, an early 20th century Indian Sufi musician, believed music had the power to supersede our common notions of religion and manifest balance among our Selves, in peace. ñIf the principle[96] of music were followed, there would be no need for external religion. Someday music will be the means of expressing universal religion. Time is wanted for this, but there will come a day when music and its philosophy will become the religion of humanity.ò[97] Ustad[98] Zakir Hussain is not only one of the primary architects of the widely encompassing (inclusive) genre known to a global music market by the superlative, ñWorld,ò but also, perhaps, one of the early saints in this inner religion of music.

To develop an authentic amalgamative identity, Hussain not only heralds the virtues of

[96] Principle reads as ñlaw,ò in this quote, as in earlier discourse, Inayat Khan emphasized the empyrean quality of music, i.e. ñWhen one looks at the cosmos, the movements of the stars and planets, the laws of vibration and rhythm ï all perfect and unchanging ï it shows that the cosmic system is working by the law of music, the law of harmonyé If there is one principle upon which the whole of astrological law is based ï and the science of magic and mysticism behind it ï it is music.ò ï Hazrat Inayat Khan, as quoted in Peter Lavezzoliôs *The Dawn of Indian Music in the West* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 42.

[97] Inayat Khan, as quoted in Lavezzoli, 43. - It is important to note here that as a Sufi, Inayat Khan does not employ the word ócreligionô as it is conceived of in ñWesternò scholarship, because it is not a standard abstract within the traditional Islamic lexicon. Rather, the word used is ñ*al din*,ò which means ñthe truth, or the way.ò Many noted musicians within India and other noted figures in Islam have the suffix ñad-dinò as part of their name, i.e. Allauddin Khan.

[98] The title *Ustad* is an official title through general consensus of the Islamic society (*umma*), musicians and lay alike. It is an honorific used in Islam to denote a master and profound teacher of an art of science. It is a title of respect and devotion.

his ancient musical tradition, Hindustani, but does so with an intimate connection to a humble and reverent philosophy of music. Coupled with his hybrid cultural personhood, Ustad Hussain is a significant figure in the global evolution of musical knowledge, and, like the saints before him, creates and cultivates a synergy of Old and New that reverberates with our soundscape today. Hussain represents for our generation a profound example of the consummate concord that arises from the fusion of Eastern cultures to the West. His musical intuition is nearly matchless, and he has created a myriad of exemplars that have shaped the face and future of music. Like his music, Hussain is a synthesis of a number of influences, including but not limited to being a Muslim in India, being a witness to the development of India on an economic and social sphere, and being a dedicated adherent to his deepest foundation, Hindustani.

This discourse will specifically highlight the issue of displacement within Hussainôs cultural, musicological and religiological identity. In order to achieve this, the focus of this essay will center on how Hussain developed as a person and musician, and emphasize the seemingly disparate factors that shaped him. This paper seeks to provide a brief analysis of the Hindustani music tradition, as well its influences from Islam, and a concise exploration of the transmission of Hindustani to the Western music tradition, and the Union Hussain has been pivotal in cultivating between the two. Employing a succinct style analysis will highlight further the displacement and hybridity with which Hussain engages in his music. Despite the diverse idiosyncrasies that have created Hussain, his ability to unify and negotiate them into one identity is evidence to the power of music and its capacity as a universal religion of humanity.

Zakir Hussain was born in Mumbai, India, in the state of Maharashtra, in the early spring of 1951. When he was brought into his family home after his birth, he was handed to his father,

the noted tabla[99] master, Alla Rakha.[100] In this highly important and personal moment, the Muslim father is expected to whisper into his childôs ear the call the prayer, the *adhan*. Ideally, it is the first sound a Muslim will hear on this earth. The first words a Muslim child is supposed to hear are ñGod is greatest! God is the only God, and Muhammad is his (final) messenger, come to prayer, come to salvation. God is Greatest!ò[101] Instead, Hussainôs father took his son and whispered what innately came to him, which was *tal*, a rhythmic cycle. Hussain recalls the story fondly, explaining,

> ñThereôs also a mullah[102] or somebody there who then does the prayer after that, and they were, like, more critical of him, saying ówhy are you doing that?ô and you know, ôYou should be singing adhan.ô He [Alla Rakha] said, ôNo, but this is my son, and this is my prayer for him. And this is how I pray, so that is what heôs going to get from me.ôé He just whispered the first four syllables of the most important *tal* or rhythm that we play in tabla, and thatôs *tintal*é Just ótaé tiné tiné naé ò[103]

From this moment, Hussain began his journey in *tal*. His mother hoped he would grow up to become a lawyer or a doctor, but his father groomed him from his infancy to know rhythm organically. By the time he was three Hussain had a more intimate connection with *tal* and began his official training on tabla with an enhanced rhythmic intuition.

The tradition through which Hussain was raised is an ancient majesty of an art tradition. With a devotional foundation in the antediluvian sacred texts that comprise the Vedas and the

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[99] An Indian percussion instrument that is composed of two drums, the bass bhayan drum and the soprano tabla drum. Each sound is produced with various hand positions, stoppings and finger/wrist/base of palm pressure.
[100] Qureshi Alla Rakha Khan (1919 ï 2000).
[101] I have given the English translation here, but all Islamic ceremonies are spoken in the Muslim language of Divinity, Arabic. *Allahu akbar, allahu akbar! Ashahadu La ilaha illAllah, wa ashahadu anna Muhammadun rasul allah. Hayya ‘ila as-Salat! Hayya ‘ila ‘l-falah. Allahu akbar!*
[102] A man of Islam who is highly educated and seen as an authoritative figure. Usually leads mosque activities, and serves as a community leader.
[103] Zakir Hussain, in an interview with Jujhar Singh/Art Talk.

primordial sound cosmology of OM[104], the Hindustani tradition is an old and venerable one. It is highly hierarchical, functioning on a generation-by-generation oral transmission. What is significant about Hindustani is its evolution shaped by its fixed foundation in devotion (sacred texts and practices as well as singular symbols of artistic representations ï deities[105]) and the inherent creative progression it allows within this metastructure, for which oral transmission is (primarily) responsible. Zakir Hussain is heir to an incredibly complex and matured tradition, through which he speaks and becomes. Even today, only a rudimentary form of written transmission is available, a basic manuscripting system that is used rarely. It is a strong oral tradition. Hindustani is still taught within a profound reciprocity between guru and student, the *guru-shishtya parampara,* from mind to mouth to ear to mind. It is important to note here that the relation of transmission is cyclical, as the *shishtya* also teaches the *guru*, in some way, and this progresses the tradition ever further.

Within the overarching paradigm of Hindustani is contained the collective regional traditions in visual art, dance, poetry and literature, and music. Each area of India has a unique and fully developed music tradition that is promulgated by a hierarchical system of transmission. If your father is a musician, you are likely to be inducted and indoctrinated into this caste, career, and livelihood. If you are in the same caste (usually), with less direct familial ties to a music guru, but still display a propensity and talent for music, you have the capability to learn with this guru, but in the same token, you are then accepted into his family. The purpose of this

[104] The concept of OM is especially important, as it functions not just as a sound cosmology (a creation of existence through sound/music), but as a continually evolving philosophy of silence and sound, which has intimate ties ontologically and epistemologically, if not purely anthropologically. Subsequent Indian theoretical structures of philosophy and spirituality evolved through this abstract; even now in neotoric rhetoric it is sustained and employed.
[105] See (the God) *Shiva* as *Nataraja*, or (the Goddess) *Saraswati*. Nearly all deities within the Hindu pantheon have some connection with music.

explanation is to highlight the strict familial ties that exist in Hindustani.[106] This is the institution to which Hussain was born, and his lineage is very important to him.

Growing up, Hussain received his primary education (non-musical) from St. Michaelôs High School and graduated from St. Xavierôs College of the University of Mumbai. Both schools are Roman Catholic in affiliation, but accepted children regardless of faith to pursue knowledge. His schools were indicative of the developing globality in India, as his home was witness to an explosion of economic and cultural growth. Mumbai is situated on the West coast of India, and it became the most populous city in India due to its prime location for trade and social interaction since the 3rd century CE. Mumbai is a city of convergence, of culture, language, religion, knowledge and music intermingling and coalescing fluidly. The riches of Mumbai slowly and most assuredly saturated into Hussainôs identity. Mumbai and the Hindustani art tradition gave him the ability to supersede these surface disparities in order to live harmoniously and productively in his family and city. He can be a Muslim who is proficient in an Indian tradition, retain his original identity, while developing with its organic process.

Zakir was touring by age twelve. In 1970, he began touring the United States with his father and other noted musicians who looked to enhance Hindustani through global autonomy and creative collaborative advancements. It was Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha who popularized a style perfected by Shankarôs guru, called *jawab-sawal*, a call-and-response style, that gained acclaim with many global audiences. This conversational style also elevated the role of the tabla from a secondary, accompanist status, to an equal player and speaker in the musical conversation. In this back-and-forth responsorial style, both players, regardless of affiliation and

[106] This is further emphasized in the concept of karma and reincarnation. If one is a musician in this life-time, it is assumed that music played an important role in oneôs past lives. The relation between family cannot be overemphasized when referring to a propensity in reincarnation. Thus the cycle completes between Self and community.

form, have equal voice together. This is further represented in the ideal metanarrative of the West speaking to the East, most notably in this Hindustani/Western music exchange.

> ñThe art of jawal-sawal interchange achieved apotheosis when Shankar began working with Alla Rakha, both musicians cultivating such a powerful chemistry over the years that they seemed inseparable. Alla Rakhaôs exhilarating tabla solos were among the highlights of many historic Shankar performances in the West; and Alla Rakhaôs son Zakir Hussain would advance the tabla to an adaptability that rivals any percussion instrument in the world.ò[107]

The West, as a whole, was first introduced to Hindustani in 1952, with Ali Akbar Khanôs release of *Morning and Evening Ragas* album, the first Hindustani recording released in the Western global market. Hussain was only a year old at the time of this pivotal introduction. So, when he began touring in the 70s, the West, primarily the United States, had an appetite for what was deemed classical Indian music. Rock musicians, especially, latched on to the art heritage of the Hindustan, though it was not limited to this genre. The Beatles were popularly engaged with India and her music, notably through George Harrison and Ravi Shankar, and with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Even the Grateful Dead were eager to experiment with and incorporate the magnanimity of India within their own works. Alla Rakha met Mickey Hart, one of the two drummers of the Grateful Dead in 1967. Though Hart did not learn tabla under Alla Rakha, he was still inducted into the mysteries of rhythm through him. They spent days at a time playing rhythm games and speaking to each other through the drum. In Hart, Alla Rakha saw a part of the future of music, namely through rhythm. He trusted him and they were good friends until Alla Rakhaôs death. It was because of this trust that Alla Rakha requested that Hart take his son, Zakir Hussain, under his wing. Hussain had been thoroughly indoctrinated and was prodigious in the tradition of *tal*, and Alla Rakha deemed it time for Hussain to open his horizons to the rest of

[107] Lavezzoli, 38.

the world. Not only did he trust Hart in this first role, but he also trusted his son and his propensity toward cultivating the mysteries and thrusting them forth into history. Alla Rakha lived long enough to see this happen.

In 1972, Hussain moved to Hartôs communal ranch in California. In an interview, Hart looks upon this time as pivotal for Hussain and *tal's* development. At the time, the appetite for Indian music was whetted, but the stasis of the music contributed to a type of stalling. At this point, Hindustani was still more a spectacle as an austere, classic, unchanging Oriental art, rather than something that could interactively speak to the West and her music.

> ñThen the second generation came with Zakir. That upped the ante considerably, because he was a youngster. He couldnôt speak English very well either at first, but he related to the kids. Zakir became responsible for the second wave, which turned a lot of heads. He lived with me for a while when he came over. I was ófunkifyingô Zakir, telling him, ólôs OK to let go and breathe, like a rubber band.ô He wasnôt into rubber bands! [Laughs.] He wanted everything to be precise. But then all of a sudden he said, ñOh yes, thatôs music too!ò So we met halfway. I said, óOK, Iôll be precise if you learn to give and take.ô He came from that real strict tradition, but I loosened him up. He says that I got him funkyé . óHey man, there are other things besides precision, you know. Youôre precise and thatôs wonderful, but sometimes thatôs boring, and itôs not that much fun. Sometimes itôs really fun to slow down and speed up, and show some kind of emotion other than rhythmic dexterity.ôò[108]

In 1972, Hart featured Hussain on his first solo album, *Rolling Thunder*. The following year, Hussain was also featured in George Harrisonôs *Living in a Material World* album, and then accompanied the Afghanistanian *rubab*[109] master Ustad Mohammad Omar in a November 1974 concert that introduced the Afghanistanian modes and practices of music. At this point, Hussain

[108] Lavezzoli, 93.
[109] The *rubab* is Persian lute-like instrument akin to the Indian sitar and sarod.

had begun the intrepid journey into collaboration with great Western artists of rock and with a renowned Eastern artist not of his own musical tradition. Even at age 23, he had begun to lead the progression of a universal, world music. He was situated in the emerging perception of globality and planetary consciousness. Here, as well as throughout his entire career to the present, he could have reformed or changed his ideas on music and how the tabla speaks with the other players in the ensemble, but rather, he used his perspective firmly rooted in his personal locality (Hindustani) as an aggregate voice in the wide spectrum of the global music. Hussainôs tablas still speak Hindustani, but do so while incorporating larger lexicons and employing musical vernaculars and dialects ï and Hussain does so with humor, joy, consternation and respect.

In 1975, Hussain joined another collaborative effort, this time with John McLaughlin, an English rock guitarist, to create another new synergy of the two traditions. The band was called Shakti and was composed of Hussain on tabla, McLaughlin on guitar, L.Shankar on the Indian violin,[110] and Ramnad Raghavan and T.H. Vinayakram on Indian percussion. Shakti not only represents the synergy between East and West, but North and South, as Hussain is a tablist in the North Indian Hindustani style and the other three Indian performers were artists in the South Indian Carnatic style.[111] Between 1975 and 1977, Shakti toured extensively, and recorded three studio albums ï *Shakti*, *A Handful of Beauty*, and *Natural Elements*. Meanwhile, Hussain formed the Diga Rhythm Band with his mentor Hart, and Vince Delgado, a San Francisco based jazz drummer and Middle Eastern *dumbek*[112] master. Recorded in 1976, their first album features a

[110] Yet another example of assimilation of the West into Indian music and vice versa.
[111] The division of Indian music into North and South, Hindustani and Carnatic respectively, is due to a wide cultural evolution of the North by numerous conquering empires. Notably, these empires included Muslim invaders, and thus a tradition was born from a synergy of Hindu India and Muslim India. Hindustani is herself a hybrid tradition.
[112] A goblet drum of Persian origin.

unique and refreshing fusion of Indian, African and Latin percussion with the standard drum-kit. It includes marimba, conga, bongos, *dundun*[113], dumbek, timpani, and tabla, all intoning an ethereal rhythmic upheaval, a conversation about what is to come.

One of the most progressive tracks on this album is entitled *Tal Mala*, translated as ó(flower) garland of rhythm.ô It was composed in cooperation by Alla Rakha,[114] Zakir Hussain, and Mickey Hart, and is composed of two 102 ½ beat cycles, which ride above an overarching gyre of 205 complete beats. For nearly thirteen minutes, the Diga play with natural shifts in rhythm that create an almost sense of hemiola, of almost shifting, which lifts the listener from a visceral to a more empyrean notion of down-beat.

> ñTruly mind-boggling in its complexity, ôTal Malaô is an exhilarating experience, filled with moments of humor, danger, and beauty, like a wild ride down a treacherous mountain road with dangerous curves. One can only speculate how exciting and challenging it was for the musicians involved. Mickey Hart looks back on ôTal-Malaô as perhaps his greatest composition.ò [115]

After 27 ½ introductory beats on the tabla, the marimba enters interdependently, arising from some harmony that seems created and sustained in an Elsewhere. When a cyclical climax is reached after three minutes, a silence (equally as important as the sound in this composition) grabs the attention of the listener who had been lifted into a meditative state, and teasingly restarts his/her meditative evolution. Luckily, the evolution does not re-begin from tabula rasa, but rather hearkens to the listenerôs awareness and turns his/her intuitive ear towards a seemingly perpetual existence of a cycle that our centers revolve within. The tabla weaves in and out of the texture, creating an energetic interaction between the surrounding percussion and speaks in cascading phrases of falling and turning over, in that centerward movement. The timpani sings

[113] A Nigerian Yoruban talking drum.
[114] However, Alla Rakha is not a performer on the albumôs studio track.
[115] Lavezzoli, 88.

above this conversation, quietly and unobtrusively intoning a foreshadowing of the tone games the rhythms will play until the end. After ten minutes, the whole of the group coalesces into one voice that falls apart into an almost schizophrenic, head-shaking, ecstatically obfuscating interlude with elements of jazz voice and minimalism.

Throughout the 1970s, until he was succeeded by Swapan Chaudhury in 1981, Hussain was the director of the *tal* department at Ali Akbar Khanôs College of Music in San Francisco. Nevertheless, Hussain remains a perennial lecturer and teacher at the College to this day. Since he began touring in the United States, Hussain has kept a full schedule. He has averaged 150 concerts a year since he began his Western career. Over the years he has performed with masters of percussion and melody, he has collaborated with such notable figures in the both musical traditions (which includes Hindustani, rock, jazz, film and ñWorldò) as John Handy, the saxophonist from Charles Mingusô band; Jan Garbarek, a Norwegian jazz saxophonist; Vasant Rai, a Hindustani sarod[116] master; Hariprasad Chaurusia, an Indian *bansuri*[117] master; Ravi Shankar, the modern preeminent master of sitar; Babatunde Olatunji, a Nigerian percussionist and master of the talking drum; Bela Fleck, the internationally acclaimed banjoist; and Egdar Meyer, an American jazz and fusion bassist, among a number of others. Some of his greatest musical successes have come from his collaboration with Planet Drum and Tabla Beat Science. Both of these groups are pivotal in establishing a percussion-based fusion in the global market and are active in experimenting with electric and extra-instrumental sounds. In the summer of 1991, Planet Drum released a self-titled album that would achieve immediate and lasting success for Hussain and its members.

[116] A fretless, lute-like instrument from India, which is like the sitar, except smaller and with less sympathetic strings.
[117] Indian bamboo flute.

ñRecorded as a spontaneous gathering with grooves and strategies contributed by each member of the group, the [album] was eclectic and accessible enough to have mainstream appeal, and would spend twenty-six weeks at number one on the *Billboard* World Music chart (then a new *Billboard* category) and win the Grammy for Best World Music Recording (another new category at the time.)ò[118]

Ustad Zakir Hussain is a pivotal figure in the emerging musical consciousness of globality. From his humble but venerable tradition, he has spoken with dexterity and adaptability that finds a common rhythmic source in all of us, this rhythm turning and revolving around a center repetitively. It is this center, this concentrically cyclic center whose power is thrust forth centrifugally and centripetally, that Hussain has found a voice in which to speak in the face of an increasingly fluid identity of existence. His hybridity, constructed initially from his beginnings as a Muslim percussionist in an Indian tradition and renovated through each subsequent interaction with more and more world musicians, is what makes Hussain into the musical genius he is today. Every musical conversation he has ever had has been assimilated into his style today, and through this amalgamative identity, he has gained not only artistic authority but autonomous self-hood that provides the confidence to speak ever further. In his treatise on the *Dawn of Indian Music in the West: Bhairavi*, Lavezzoli succinctly states the reason why music has this power: ñIt seems clear that when we learn about Indian music, or any kind of music, we can learn something about ourselves. Itôs difficult to think of a better reason to study music other than to transform ourselves in the process.ò

[118] Lavezzoli, 88.

Chapter 6

Concluding Remarks

Through Hindustani and Qawwali India has transformed the philosophies of music all around the world. These traditions are old and venerable, as well as modernized and commodified. They are highly hierarchical, functioning on a generation-by-generation oral transmission. What is significant about Hindustani is its evolution shaped by its fixed foundation in devotion and the inherent creative progression it allows within this metastructure, for which individual improvisation on oral transmission is (primarily) responsible. For Hindus, music is yoga in itself. It is an art of breath and becoming, a yoking of the spirit to the transcendental modes of sound. For Muslims, music is present in every harmonious interaction that Allah has created, and can serve to elevate feelings of spiritual devotion or in a more negative sense, elevate feelings of material, *shirk*, devotion.

Since the partition of India in 1947, it seems as if the relations between Hindus and Muslims are strained. Sectarian violence and cultural clashes are common, and even now there are political movements pushing for their continued cultural and political divide. With the world becoming rapidly interconnected through the internet and economic globalization, it seems as if division is all that is left to maintain a specific identity. However, through this thesis, I submit that Hindu and Muslim Indians, and particularly those that play and listen to the Hindustani art tradition, have a unique ability to pluralize and hybridize their identities. This is why Hindustani is able to have global commercial success.

Qawwali and Hindustani owe their systemization and development to a hybrid figure, Amir Khusrau, who was a devout Muslim and devotee of the Nizami Chishtiyya Sufi order but also a key member of his pluralized society. It was the Sufiôs themselves that created amicability and tolerance between the two religions. And through specific hierarchical traditions, the musics have flourished from guru to student to guru and so forth.

The theme of this thesis rests upon the concept and interpretation of jugalbandhi. Meaning entwined twins, I have purported that Islam and Hinduism can make harmony through the idea inherent in this performance practice: two individual musicians, equal in artistic integrity and technical proficiency, can combine their respective musical intuitions to create a synergy, a devotional music that transcends theological division. Though it was only recently developed in the 19^{th}-20^{th} centuries, it was popularized by two performers in America, Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, along with their tabla player Ustad Alla Rakha. And thanks to the success that this hybrid form has had in the West, the son of Alla Rakha, Ustad Zakir Hussain has emerged as a pivotal hybrid figure, crafting and evolving the form of the World Music genre we know today.

With a world so urgently connecting, getting smaller and smaller, it seems as if many want to divide identity and often between religious barriers. What the Hindustani traditions (including Qawwali) have taught the world is that seemingly disparate parts can create harmony through different melodies, and flourish in a world when we need it the most.

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