

## Sufi and Baul Music's Melody: The Way to Perfect Humanity

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### Abstract

This paper explores the melody of Sufi and Baul music as a means to perfect humanity. Sufi and Baul are two religious groups. The word Sufi comes from the word safaa, which means cleanliness. Through this cleanliness, our hearts become pure and clean. Cleanliness helps us reach God. On the other hand, the inner meaning of the term Baul is mad. Here, Madness is connected to God. Both Sufi and Baul look to find out the Supreme Being. In Sufi terminology, the Supreme Being is known to us as "Fana" and in Baul tradition, it is known to us as "Moner-Manus." Sufis and Bauls express their love for the Supreme Being through their music and dance. Their songs and dances cultivate the message of love and peace towards humanity. So, the main aim for both Sufi and Baul is to love mankind. So, In this paper, there is a humble attempt to show the importance of Sufi and Baul Music's Melody Way to Perfect Humanity.

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### Introduction

The word Sufi conveys multiple meanings. These are "safaa, sufi, sofa, safool- ul-qafa, siyu soofia" etc. [1] Among them, the widely accepted interpretation is purely derived from the term safaa means "cleanliness, particularly the purity of heart, soul actions of a man." [2]

Music is a medium that also purifies our hearts and souls and helps us to go the way of self-realization. Sufi music is not different from it. The whole philosophy of Sufism is a journey. The journey towards God. The final destination of this journey is union with God. So it is a devotional journey that connects Humans and God. That is why in Sufism, various types of devotional music make the road easier for this journey. Qawwali is one type of devotional music that helps the devotee to go to their ultimate destination. Qawwali mainly originated in the 8th-century Persia. That is today known as Iran and Afghanistan. Qawwali songs are mainly attached to three things. These are love, devotion, and longing. (Of man for the divine). There are various types of Qawwali songs. [3]

### These are Discussed Following

- i) **A Hamad:** Hamad is an Arabic term that mainly indicates praise. This type of Qawwali song is mainly in praise. This praise is for Allah. The performance of this song starts with a hand.
- ii) **A Naat:** In Arabic terminology, the meaning of the naat is -description. It is a song in praise. It is a praise of the prophet Muhammad. Qawwali music is mainly performed in shrines on dargahs. It starts with hamad and is traditionally followed by a naat.
- iii) **A Manqabat:** Through a maqamat but also praise is possible. Praise of either Iman Ali or one of the Sufi Saints. It came after naat.
- iv) **A Marsiya:** This type of Qawwali song is mainly for a dead person. It is mainly a song of lamentation.
- v) **A Ghazal:** Ghazal is an Arabic term that means love song. Two types of metaphors are used for ghazals: the joys of drinking and the agony of separation from the beloved. When ghazal is used in Qawwali, it is mainly used for intoxication and yearning through this intoxication and to express the union between soul and divine.

There are three important things that we found in the intoxicating Gazal songs in Qawwali. These are “Wine”, “cupbearer” and “tavern”. “Wine” indicates – “Knowledge of the divine”. “Cupbearer” is God and the word “tavern” is mainly a metaphysical term that indicates a place where the soul exists. Intoxications help to gain spiritual knowledge.

vi) **A Munadjaat:** It is mainly a song of conversation in the night. It is a main gratitude song through which devotees express their thankfulness to God. It is sung in various linguistic techniques.<sup>[4]</sup>

Several people mainly perform qawwali songs. That is why it consists of musicians. The group of musicians is known as humnawa in urdu. This group consists of one main singer, two or three side singers, several chorus singers, and percussionists.

Qawwali songs longibility only 15 to 30 minutes. The arrangement of these qawwali songs mainly follows certain rules:-

Qawwali songs' melody is usually played through harmonium besides that table is also used in qawwali songs. At the very first beginning of the qawwali song starts with an instrumental prelude. After that comes the alap. Alap is mainly a long tonal improvised melody.

Qawwali songs start with some preamble verses. These verses are sung by the lead singer. These are not the part of the main song. Then the lead singer sings a verse of the main song. The other side singers will repeat the verse. This is the technique of the qawwali song.<sup>[5]</sup>

**Sama:** Sama is a particular type of ceremony where dhikr is performed. Sama means – “listening” and Dhikr means – “remembrance ”of god.<sup>[6]</sup> In the Sama ceremony, various other things are included. These are -Singing, playing instruments, dancing, recitation of poetry and prayers, and wearing symbolic attire. Sama is mainly started from the 10th century and refers to a type of dhikr that is a spiritual concert. This spiritual concert ceremony was used by various Sufi orders, mainly the “chisti order”.

Sama is mainly a mystical journey. The mystical journey is mainly for love to perfection. To achieve the goal, one must uplift their inner love, demolish his ego, and go to the road of perfection.

In Sama, music takes a great role. But the playing of instruments is also important in sama. The singing of hymns is also used as an instrument in sama. It is called qawl and bayf. In this sama ceremony, poetry is sometimes used. It is mainly used for spiritual contemplation.

The purpose of Sama ceremony is to meditate on God. This purpose was achieved through melodies and dancing. The goal of sama is to reach “wajd”. Wajd is a state of sublimation.<sup>[7]</sup>

**Sufi Whirling:** Sufi whirling is nothing but one of the important forms of Sama. This is also known in Sufism as active meditation. This practice is popular in the Sufi group of the “Mevlevi order”. It is mainly dance performers whose main aim is to reach the point of perfection. Throughout this performance, devotees left their egos and personal desires by listening to the music and mainly concentrating on God and circling his bodies in repetitive circles. This circling is the representation of planets in the solar system that orbit the sun. When one starts his whirling, his hands are open and his right arm is raised to the sky, and it is ready to accept God’s grace. On the other side, one’s eyes are strung into a person’s left hand that rotates towards the earth. This rolling movement

from right to left around the heart One’s person is fastening all humanity with love. All human beings have been created with love.<sup>[9]</sup> All the processes that follow the Sufis help to attain the Supreme Being. Besides Sufi Baul also searched their “Monar- Manus” through their songs and dances.

**Baul:** Baul is mainly a sect that has its own uniqueness. The word Baul contains various meanings. The etymological meaning of the term “Baul” is mad. This term Baul emerged from the Sanskrit word that is “Vatula” or forms “vyakula”. The word vatula or vyakula means – “Impatiently Eager.” From the context of Sufi, there is also a relative term Aul or Aulia that is also used for Baul by the Muslim Prophets.<sup>[9]</sup>

So all the meanings of the term Baul are associated with the same thing which is madness for God.<sup>[10]</sup>

Baul is against orthodox Hindu thought. Their philosophy is against Vedic rites and rituals, but they follow the path of the “Upanisadic Ananda concept”, “Buddhist Sahajiya concept”, “Concept of Vaisnavism”, and “Sufism”. So it is mainly a fusion version of everything.<sup>[11]</sup>

So all these groups of religions melt into Baul's Philosophy and help to build a new religion that believes in a formless God and blissful joy, which means Ananda. Bauls also create a new form of Blissful joy or pure mood of joy, which is called in their philosophy as “Moner Manus”.

**Baul Song:** Baul songs mainly reflect two types of meaning. One is outer and another is inner. Outer meaning mainly expresses apparent meaning. If one once understood the inner meaning, then he must be able to understand and go through the spiritual practice or the sadness of Bauls. The inner meaning of the songs of Bauls is always constructing a good relationship between the human mind and divinity. Bauls are always mystic in their experiences. Baul songs are always attached to three things: subtle sentiment, devoted feelings, and innate emotion. But all these materials help to go the path of the Supreme Being. The songs of Baul are very rhythmic and the verses that we found in the Baul songs are human aspiration for the unknown the ultimate divine.<sup>[12]</sup>

Those who are the composers of Baul songs in the earlier days are known to us as “Sain”. Sain means spiritual teacher or Guru also considered as part of the ultimate reality. So, Sain is a very honourable designation that is acceptable in the Baul cult. Oftentimes times their usage we found in the Baul songs.

Baul songs are the true reflection of the inner thoughts of the creator who created the song. This inner thought reflection is mainly found in the course of the making of Baul's song.<sup>[13]</sup> It is noticeable that the tune used in the Baul songs allows the singer to apply his voice full-throated. In the Baul songs embedded various sharp and long-standing notes. These types of notes help to understand the inner idea of the verse.

There are various instruments used by the Bauls for their songs. The instruments are mainly – “Ek-Tara or Gopi-Jantra,” “do-tara, dholok, dubki,” etc. Baul singers also use different instruments that are attached to their body parts. Nupurs are a type of instrument that is a very small instrument<sup>[14]</sup>

Baul singers wear this instrument on their ankles. The jingle sound is coming from the nupurs. Besides that, there are also the rhythmic taps that come from the dubki. At the time of singing, the Baul also danced. Songs and dance are the special characteristics of Baul Sadhana. This technique is imported into the Baul cult from the Vaishnavas.

Bauls are completely against social customs. There is a special name for Baul that one finds in the Baul cult, and that is “madcaps. Their song also echoes the same fact.<sup>[15]</sup>

Rabindranath Tagore, the great poet was also influenced by one of the most renowned Baul Lalan Fakir. Lalan Shah Fakir was a Hindu by birth but he was brought up by a Muslim Fakir. That is why by the composition of the Lalan songs we found the effects of Baul and Sufi. [16]

In the other song Lalan beautifully expresses the Baul Philosophy: "O madcap, where can you move, Before you learn your message? You will be puzzled outside, Unless you know your home inside." [17]

So everything is present in our body. We cannot find out outside. Any scripture any religion cannot help to uplift us unless we know our real essence of self.

**Similarities between Sufi and Baul:** There is a very close relationship between Sufi and Baul. These are the three major similarities found in the Sufi and Baul cults. The similarities are:-

1. Sufis and Baul believe that Paramatra or Allah who present in the body of man. The absolute is nothing but the reflection of man.
2. Self-realization is the ultimate destination that focuses on the sadhanas of Baul and Sufi. In Sufism, this self-realization is known to us as Fana or the passing away of consciousness in mystic union with God. On the other hand, this self-realization in Baul terminology is known as "Moner-Manus", which is an ecstatic state.
3. Baul and Sufi are completely free from religious dogmas and cannot accept rites and rituals in their philosophy.

Besides these three resemblances, other similarities were also invented in Sufis and Bauls.

Sufis and Baul's based on Guruvad. Guru is the master who mainly helps to go the way of enlightenment. Guru takes a great role in the Sufis and Baul's philosophy.

Man plays a great role in the Sadhanas of Baul. Baul believes that the human body is identified as a microcosm of the universe. The ultimate reality is present in the human body that is the whole life is a sadhana for searching our moner-manus that resides in our body.

Sufis also believe in the concept of Bauls. Our body is the Holy place for the beloved. [18] Therefore, both Humans and God assimilate into one. That is why lover and beloved are unified. [19]

**Methodology:** In this research work, I would like to use the qualitative research method. As my search area is related to Perfected Humanity that is why I first used content analysis. So, I have gone through books, and articles to find out the real essence of Sufi and Baul Music's Melody Way to Perfect Humanity. I have also used Baul songs, which is the primary sources of my research work. Besides that, there are other useful texts like "Obscure Religious Cults" will also be used in my research work as a secondary source.

**Literature Review:** A vast literature helps to conduct this study and a few of these can be reviewed in this regard.

Muhammad Isar Ahmad (2014) "The World of Sufism Beliefs and Practices" Mittal Publications New Delhi. Muhammad Isar Ahmad discussed very properly the chief content of Sufism and critically analyzed Sufi music.

Pranab Bandyopadhyay (1989) "Bauls of Bengal" Firma KLM Private Limited Calcutta. Prof Bandyopadhyay has made an outstanding discourse on the origin and development of the Baul Philosophy, their sadhana, songs, and other major issues related to Baul.

## Conclusion

All the methodology and the vast literature review help to conclude that Sufi and Baul are mainly coming to represent the cult of our society they are obscure and also the underground people of our society. That is why they are known to be an obscure religious cult. Their philosophy is expressed through their songs and dances. They do not believe in the caste system. They believe in humanity. The only identity for a people is Human. They do not believe in any form of God. Candida's (Famous Baul poet) also portrays the same truth. They only love human beings

"The truth about Man is the highest of all; there is no other truth above that." [20]

Islam is the symbol of peace. Sufis are a part of Islam whose main motto is to spread love and peace towards society. The same thing is reflected in the Baul tradition:

"The Sain lives in all of us, but we miss him as we don't know him He exists in the Humanity of Divinity In all of us." [21]

## References

1. Masood Ali khan, Ram S. 'An Introduction to Sufism origin, philosophy and Development' Anmol Publication, New Delhi, 2003, 18.
2. Ibid, 18.
3. Muhammad Isar Ahmad 'The World of Sufism Beliefs and Practices' Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2004, 28.
4. Ibid, 129-130.
5. Ibid, 131.
6. Ibid, 132.
7. Muhammad Isar Ahmad 'The World of Sufism Beliefs and Practices' Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2004, 134-135.
8. Ibid, 137.
9. Rebati Mohan Sarkar 'Bauls of Bengal: in the quest of man of the heart' Gyan Publication, New Delhi, 1937, 29.
10. The image which the Baul presented the world is like ..... that of a madman a man who tolerates no stricture of society who goes deliberately against society to prove his independence of it. Dimock Edward C 'the place of Hidden Moon: Erotic Mysticism in the Vaisnava Sahajiya Cult of Bengal' The University of Chicago press, Chicago, 1966, 250.
11. The Bauls are fitting hybrids the vaisnavas sahajiya and sufi strains yield beauty, sympathy and strength. Ibid, 270.
12. Pranab Bandyopadhyay 'Bauls of Bengal' Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, 1989, 46-47.
13. Ibid, 48.
14. Ek-tara – A simple instrument made of an old bottle ground which is dried up in sun and brought to certain shape. Do-tara – A similar instrument fitted with two strings instead of one. Dholok- Small wooden instrument Dubki – Kettle drum tied with their waist. Ibid, 49.
15. That is why I become a khepa (madcap) Baul; master I obey, nor injunctions, canons or customs.'Pranab Bandyopadhyay 'Bauls of Bengal 'Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, 1989, 51.
16. Oh, my beloved sain stands there tied with love He cares not if one is a Hindu, A Muslim or from any other stream He wants your devotion and love.' Ibid, 59.
17. Ibid, 73.

18. Therefore "I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I We are two spirits dwelling in one body If thou seest me, thou seest Him, And if thou seest Him thou seest us body." Shashibhusan Dasgupta 'Obscure Religious Cults' Firma KLM Private Limited, Kolkata, 1946, 180.
19. Phakir-cand famous Baul tells in a song – "O my mind, let me tell thee -the Man of the heart is in the heart and search for him there. Why art thou roaming from country to country?" Ibid, 184.
20. Pranab Bandyopadhyay 'Bauls of Bengal 'Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, 1989, 59.
21. Ibid, 99.