CHAPTER VI

EMOTIONS UNBOUND: EXPERIENCING

SUFI RITUALS
Losing the Self: Ecstasy (wajd) and its Forms

Sama if properly performed in the true spirit of the assembly leads the mystic towards ecstasy. The word commonly used to denote the feelings of ecstasy is wajd, which in the literary sense means 'grief.'\(^1\) If for some unwanted reason the assembly of sama ceases to be an exercise of listening to the chanted verses elaborating the Beloved's attributes, then it degenerates into merely an aesthetic occasion, who aim lay in musical self indulgence.\(^2\) Then such an assembly becomes nothing but a gathering intended for the enjoyment of music. Under such circumstances it is quite impossible that the Sufi experience the true finding (wajjud).\(^3\)

Thus it can be deduced that in the course of a single assembly it is possible for a Sufi to experience two completely varying forms of emotions depending on the spiritual intent of the listener. While one state is connected with grief the other state is the expression of happiness on finding the object of desire.\(^4\) In the mystical experience the real sense of grief comes from the feeling of separation vis-à-vis ones Beloved. At the same time the emotions of finding and the joys associated with such a state comes from the attainment of the desired objective, i.e. union with the Divine Almighty.\(^5\)

Wajd is a sense of grief that results with respect to the loss involving another entity, in this case the Almighty. It is the experience of grief in the way of love and essentially explains the relationship between the seeker of God and God Himself.\(^6\) In the mystical mode of thought it is quite impossible to explain wajd since it essentially signifies a sense of pain (alam) the way of the Lord and it is well known that such emotions are hard to

\(^{1}\) KM, p. 413.
\(^{2}\) Lawrence, *Early Chisti Approach to Sama*, p. 72.
\(^{3}\) EG, p. 147.
\(^{4}\) KM, p. 413.
\(^{5}\) Ibid.
\(^{6}\) Ibid.
express by the pen (qalm).  

Wajd therefore remains a mystery between the lover and the Beloved which cannot be deciphered by normal sense of deduction but can be understood through the experience of revelation.  

Wujud or the happiness of finding signifies a sense of emotional thrill in the contemplation of the Divine, and thus it cannot be reached or experienced by any sense of investigation (talab).  

After the overbearing sense of grief due to separation from the Beloved, the emotion of wujud essentially signals the descent of Divine grace as bestowed by the Beloved on the lover, or the mystic in this occasion.  

It then is a benefaction which no amount of symbolism and intellect can decipher and thus discern its true nature. While wajd is a painful affection of the heart from the feeling of separation, the emotion of wujud is at the same time is the removal of grief from the heart and the discovery of happiness due the gaining of the desired object, that is the Lord, who in a sense was both the cause of wajd and the remedy of the same through the emotion of wujud.  

What then is the emotional outcome of a mystic experiencing wajd? Al Hujwiri would argue that the mystic who is possessed by the feelings of wajd either experiences an agitation of the heart, expressed in the desire of longing, due to continued separation from the Beloved as through a state of occultation (bihjab).  

While at the same time the mystic undergoing the sense of grief, can search for calmness in the act of contemplation of the Divine, and experience in turn the state of revelation (kashf).  

Much has been discussed with regards to the superiority of wajd over wujud and vice versa. While some mystics would argue that wajd is the characteristic of true gnostics (arifs), and wujud is a characteristic of novices.
who are yet to gain the spiritual maturity their peers have. Therefore wajd as a mystical experience is more powerful and perfect than wujud. The theoretical disposition that lies behind such an argument states that since wujud is the act of finding, it involves a degree of apprehensibility. Since any sense of apprehension and finding is limited or in a sense finite to the human senses, it is in direct contrast to the essence of God, which is infinite and incomprehensible. Thus in wujud what an individual finds is nothing but a feeling of the desired, the Almighty. But a Gnostic who engages himself in the act of wajd experiences the Truth of the experience which is understood only by the finder of God.

The other side of the story states that some mystics are of the opinion that wajd is an expression of the passion of the novices in the path of spirituality, while wujud is the direct benefaction from the Divine bestowed on the choicest of lovers. Therefore since wujud of the lovers is more exalted than the wajd of the novice, it can be comfortably deduced that the enjoyment of Divine benefaction is more perfect than passionate ecstasy. A brilliant illustration of the diversity of these emotions can be found in the actions and words of two great mystics – al-Junayd and Shibli. While Junayd, being the sober master of the Baghdad school of Sufism, argued that ‘He who seeks shall find’; Shibli being in his more ecstatic self exclaimed on the contrary ‘No, he who finds shall seek.’ While Junayd was arguing for the passionate expression of wajd, the ecstatic Shibli, blessed with Divine beneficence, considered the end to be the means and hence supported wujud over wajd.

The inner meaning of Junayd’s opinion can be located essentially in the relation between knowledge and feelings. It has been suggested by the

14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.

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masters of Sufism that shaykhs in the Path of \textit{wajid} should be in complete control over their knowledge (\textit{ilm}).\textsuperscript{20} Since the mystic who is in \textit{wajid} loses himself completely in the search for the Divine, and hence can lose all control over his sober and rational self, thereby endangering his very existence.\textsuperscript{21} In such a situation the mystics fails to differentiate between good and evil, honor and disgrace alike. He therefore loses all control over the faculty of discrimination and as a result places himself among the imperfect.\textsuperscript{22} Thus he ventures into the threshold of being addressed as a madman, who can never be in favour of the Divine. On the other hand a Sufi who is in complete control over his knowledge can in no way lose his self in the experience of \textit{wajid} and is secure in the folds of \textit{tasawwuf} and religious law.\textsuperscript{23} He is benefited by Divine commandments and is rewarded by the place of glory in proximity to the Beloved.\textsuperscript{24}

Thus knowledge and action are the two essential components without which the quest of the Divine remains unfulfilled. It is the presence of knowledge that lends actions its credibility, so it does not loses itself in the lanes of imperfection and ignorance.\textsuperscript{25} Knowledge therefore is the most glorious component that steers a mystic towards his search for the perfect Truth - the witnessing of the Divine, for which the essential precondition remains the sobriety of the inner self.\textsuperscript{26}

However the presence of knowledge is never a guarantee of the experience of the ecstasy by the mystic. In an assembly of audition it may be so that the mystic needs to undergo great pains in realising the state (\textit{hal}) of spiritual ecstasy (\textit{wajid}).\textsuperscript{27} This can be done either through a contemplation of

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\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 415.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
the mercy and bounty of God, thinking about union (ittisal). Such tendencies are known as tawajud in the spiritual parlance and these acts of imitation of the spiritual states of the ecstatic is an absolute prohibition in the annals of mystical theory. Any sort of dancing, or imitation of gestures which the blessed may engage himself or experience in order to attain the desires degree of spiritual maturity, must never be done by those who are deprived of the Divine beneficence in a spiritual assembly. We have already, in the earlier chapters, discussed in quite a length about the spiritual concept of tawajud, and the emphatic Chishtia support in its favor. It need not be repeated here, but we can definitely round off this discussion on tawajud by tracing the traditions which the Chishtia drew upon in their arguments in support of tawajud. Some while arguing that tawajud if carried out in the true spiritual manner need not be termed as forbidden in a spiritual assembly; rather it should be desired so that the bereft can hope to attain their degree of spiritual states and Divine nourishment. The Prophet in this regard is known to have remarked that 'He who makes himself like unto a people is one of them.' The tradition is further confirmed by the statement where the Prophet of Islam remarked 'When ye recite the Quran, weep, or if ye weep not, then endeavor to weep.' These Prophetic traditions are illustrative enough of the legality of the act of tawajud.

The Chishtia master Shaykh Nizamuddin Awliya once while discussing the idea of wajd, remarked that of the ninety nine names of God, one is al-wajid, meaning the one who bestows wajd. Although it can be argued that al-wajid may also signify the individual who dances and revels in ecstasy, but in the Sufistic meaning of the term it only means the Almighty. Therefore it is blasphemous to attribute the qualities of singing and dancing

28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 FF, p. 84.
to the essence of the Lord. Thus al-wajid here essentially means the inducer of wajd. It is only when the listener is in complete absorption of the content read out in the assembly of sama will he be in receipt of Divine beneficence which then in turn stirs his heart toward wajd. Thus even before the emotion of wajd can be expected to hit the mystic it is essential to have an idea of the various states (hal) the mystic finds himself in an assembly of sama.

Shaykh Nizamuddin Awliya is of the opinion that there are four types of states which descends on a mystic in the ritual of sama. Firstly, a mystic may be only interested in the verses read out in the assembly together with the rhythm of the music. Although this is apparently permissible there are certain dangers that lurk in the corner, ready to strike at the first chance of distraction the listener faces in the assembly. Secondly, it may be so that the listener only concentrates on the apparent meaning and interpretation of the verses. Such a state is more characteristic of the novices, and at the same time it is not prescribed that one discusses too much into the dangers and ill effects of such an audition. Thirdly, it is such that the participants of sama apply it to the changes of the spiritual state, which in turn is directly a blessing from the Divine. For the process of application it is essential that the self (nafs) of the mystic undergoes transformation towards the Divine. This type of a spiritual state is perfect and recommended for the disciples (murids), since they are more equipped to benefit from such a state, which is essentially the state of Divine Truth. After the murid is fully aware of the essence of the state of Truth, then he can strive further towards attaining that particular state. Thus in the way of the mystic there are numerous variations in spiritual states which is confronted by the disciple, and it is only when the disciple is aware of the true nature of his own self that he can

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34 Ibid.
35 Siyar al-Awliya, p. 512.
36 Ibid.
succeed in realising the ultimate Truth. Fourthly, and lastly comes the most matured of the spiritual states where the audition (sama) should be in the way of Truth, as if the mystic is witnessing the Divine Truth through the audition of Divine attributes. Such a state is compared to those of the ladies who while witnessing the majestic beauty of Prophet Yusuf, were taken in such a state that they did not even realise the fact that they had cut their own hands. It is only when they returned to their normal states did they realise their folly and feel the pain. This is precisely the state of the mystic (salikin) when they attain the station (maqam) of Divine annihilation (fana) through witnessing the glory of the Almighty. Such is the experience of union for the mystic with his Beloved.

Maulana Fakhruddin Zarradi in his treatise Risala i- Usul al- Sama states that the condition of wajd is experienced only when the mystic is in deep contemplation of the Divine. Since the fact remains that wajd is essentially a secret that is kept between the Creator and His creation, and such a secret is revealed only to the true believers (mumin) and the men of spirituality. Therefore it is a state that can be achieved only by the true mystic in the path of the Divine, and others who claim to have experienced wajd are making false claims thereby indulging in the act of heresy. Wajd is essentially an emotion which if applied correctly elevates the mystic towards higher spiritual stations. Mystical theorists would argue that wajd is a Divine attribute of the heart, which remains inexplicable through the medium of words and mouth. It can only be experienced through Divine sounds (jilham), and audition of rhythmic verses, which brings out the true feelings of the heart and hence stirs it towards wajd. When a mystic is in

\[\text{\textsuperscript{37}}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{38}}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{39}}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{40}}\text{Ibid., p. 516.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{41}}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{42}}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{43}}\text{Ibid.}\]
control of *wajd*, then he feels a sense of Divine happiness (*surur*) which calms the disturbance of his heart while at the same time producing movement in his limbs.\(^44\)

*Wajd* is a feeling of the heart which is directly connected to the experience of the Divine. As said above it is essentially an expression of grief which a mystic feels when he treads the path towards Divine union. Therefore for a perfect expression of *wajd* it is imperative that the thought of the Lord prevail in the heart of the mystic, for it is only when the mystic remembers his Lord, as his Beloved, that he realises the grief of separation that pains his heart and at the same time makes it strive in the path of Truth, towards the ultimate union with the Creator. Thus in the ultimate stage (*maqam*) of spirituality nothing remains but the existence of the Lord in the heart of the Sufi.

At this point of the discussion if we may digress a bit towards an essential quality concerning the taste of *sama*, that is to say the *zauq i-sama*, we can try and look into the dynamics of this intrinsic quality that is important for a mystic intending to achieve his spiritual end in the assembly of *sama*. An interesting point to be noted here is that not only the Sufis of the Chishtia order, but also other noted Sufis like Shaykh Ziauddin Rouf who stated that in the course of his spiritual journey the degree of spiritual taste (*zauq*) and satisfaction (*laqya*) he derived from *sama* had no close parallel.\(^45\) One more incident states that a certain shaykh named Sharfuddin Kirmani who lived in the town (*qasba*) of Sarshi used to participate regularly in the ritual of *sama* where he derived much pleasure from the verses of the *qawwal* named Junayd.\(^46\) Till one day he became so overpowered by the taste of ecstasy that he gave up his life to the following verse.

\(^{44}\) Ibid.
\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 520.
\(^{46}\) Ibid.
My soul calls upon me every day,
Sacrifice me in the Path of my Friend.47

Such is the taste of sama on the heart and soul of the mystic that they remain awestruck of the Almighty God to an extent that they remain oblivious to His creations around them. The effect of zaqiq sama can be severe on individuals who can decipher its complex intonations. The perfect illustration in this regard is that of Shaykh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, who was once attending a session of sama in the hospice of Shaykh Ali Sanjari. The qawwal was reciting a verse of a little known Persian poet-mystic, celebrated among the Chishtia Sufis of the subcontinent, Ahmed-e Jam when he reached the couplet—

Kashifgan i khanjar i tasleem ra
Har zaman az ghayb jam i deegar ast 48

Translation
All those by the knife of submission killed
Each moment from God, with new life are filled

Shaykh ul Islam, the qutb of the shaykhs was overwhelmed on listening to this verse. His taste for sama knew no bounds and his spiritual intellect was awestruck by the intensity of the spiritual message the verse conveyed. Even after returning to his khanqah he insisted that the verse be repeated often. This continued and every time the verse was being recited he would be awestruck in remembrance of the glory of God. Only at times of canonical prayers did he emerge from his trance like state. Tradition records that for four nights and four days he remained in that state of complete stupefaction. So that in the fifth night he returned to his Creator.49

47 Ibid.
48 FF, p. 140.
49 Ibid.

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The above couplet by upholding Shaykh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki's taste for the ritual of sama, also engages with the Sufi concepts of fana (annihilation) and baqa (permanence). In the mystical stages of progress, fana represents the act of complete loss of the self, through an act of surrender to the Beloved, who is also the Creator. Thus those individuals, who submit themselves in the essence of their Beloved, are dead for the material world, through the abstraction of death by the Almighty. Although they get slain by the sword of benevolence, they are situated beyond the pale of death, in the realm of baqa, or eternal permanence. Every time the lover is killed in the hands of the Beloved, he is reinstated in the essence of permanence, from where he receives a new lease of life. This is an act of continuous occurrence (at every moment) with the death of a mystic, through the binaries of fana and baqa.

The truth of the Sufi being dead only in name is ably reflected in the incident that Shaykh Badruddin Ghaznawi describes as a follow up to the demise of the Chistia shaykh. The former states that when the moment of the shaykh's departure from the material world was approaching Shaykh Ghaznawi was lulled to sleep where he dreamt that Shaykh Bakhtiyar Kaki had arisen from his place of seating and was on his upward journey, higher and higher. Turning towards Shaykh Ghaznawi the Chishtia mystic remarked that 'Look, the friends of God never die.' Thus the spiritual truth of the life of a mystic achieving union with the Beloved after his physical departure from this world is ably illustrated by the above narration of events.

It is said that such was the taste of Shyakh Nizamiuddin Awliya for the ritual of sama that in an assembly he paid little to anything else but

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51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., p. 140.
53 Ibid.
submitting his heart and soul to the Divine Creator for His merciful benefaction.54 Leading qawwals of the age gathered at the jamaat khana of the shaykh to perform at the occasion of sama. They strived hard to raise their standard of composition, so that they could add to the sanctity of the assembly in which the shaykh himself participated. Their recitations created such an atmosphere of reverence that along with the shaykh all other attendants, young and old would feel the taste of sama in their hearts.55 Thus the assembly would gain the character of an exercise in the search for the benefaction of the Almighty.

Returning to our discussion wajd it may be taken into consideration the opinion of some scholars who argue, rather superficially, that the end of sama was seen as nothing else but the attainment of wajd.56 The nature and precise definition of ecstasy has been put forward as 'a Divine mystery which God communicates to true believers who behold Him with the eye of certainty.'57 We have already discussed the concept of wajd being a mystery between God and His creation. At the same time it has also been argued that the equation of love is crucial towards the realisation of wajd, so that at times it has also been described as 'a flame which moves in the ground of the soul and is produced by love-desire.'58 Wajd as it is understood by such scholars remained an involuntary phenomenon, of course through the realisation of certain conditions. It is argued that wajd descends upon an individual 'through vision of the majesty of God and through revelation of the Divine omnipotence to his heart.'59 On certain occasions it was also argued that wajd can be artificially induced through the ritual of sama and zikr, in addition to the contemplation of thought and severe contemplation

54 S.A., p. 535.
55 Ibid.
56 Nicholson, Mystics of Islam, p. 60.
57 Ibid., p. 25.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., p. 27.
of the Divine. But at the same time it also needs to be pointed out that sama is by no means an exercise of the artificial spiritual self. Rather it is a ritual that is meant solely to arouse the latent emotions of the heart towards a realisation of the Divine, so that the resultant emotions of wajd is by no means an artificial inducement, but rather a spontaneous attempt of the mystic towards his successful spiritual goal culminating in Divine union.

All said and done it will not be unwise to look into some more interesting aspects of the emotion of wajd, primarily towards a proper definition for the feeling. Though most of the mystical masters remain silent on the issue some like Al Kalabadhi prefers to tread the dangerous path by stating that 'ecstasy is a sensation which encounters the heart, whether it be fear or grief or the vision of some fact of future life or the revelation of some state between man and God. Though not completely ambiguous in its meaning the above statement of Kalabadhi dwells on the centrality of the heart as the focus of descend of Divine beneficence, through the actions of hearing and sight. The importance of the heart is also emphasised by another mystic of ecstatic nature, Abu Hasan al- Nuri, who would define wajd as 'a flame which springs up in the heart and appears out of longing. More interestingly seldom does a mystic differ on the source of wajd to be emanating from God Almighty. Hence the second level of its definition involves a direct reference to God as the benefactor of wajd. So that Abu Hasan al- Nuri continues to hold the same view that wajd is a visitation of the Divine. Kalabadhi improving on his earlier statement goes on to say that 'ecstasy is the glad tidings sent by God of the mystic’s promotion to the station of His contemplation. Junayd, the more sober mystic from Baghdad and his fellow theorist Al Ghazzali also argues that

60 Ibid.
62 Ibid., p. 113.
63 Hussaini, Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayn i-Gisudum, p. 118.
64 Kalabadhi, Kitab al-Ta’arruf, p. 113.
was a visitation by the grace of God, and at the same breath is an expression of rapture from the descend of the ‘Unseen visitations’ (al-\waridat al- ghayibiyab) with which the hearts (qulub) and spirits (arwah) are nourished.65

Although it is seen that the source of wajd is from the One and by the One, it must be kept in mind that wajd effects different individuals differently. For the adept it has a calming effect since they are used to such visitations, but for the novice its results are agitating since their bodies are opposed to it.66 However over course of time when the newly initiated become calm and get used to the continuity of such Divine visitations their physical self too gets used to the emotions stirred by its descend.67 Abu Nasir al- Sarraj is of the opinion that ‘ecstasy, provided that it is involuntary, is not improper for dervishes who are entirely detached from worldly interests.68 Kalabadhi however differs in this context by arguing that ‘if a person’s ecstasy is strong he controls himself and is passive.69 Though being a truth that an adept has complete control over his emotions of ecstasy (wajd) mystics also are unanimous on the count that such strength of hearts is very rarely discerned.70 If the mystic has complete control over his emotional self then, as Shaykh Najimuddin Kubra would argue ‘nothing seizes the shaykh. On the contrary he takes control of the states (ahwal).71 One of the finest illustrations of mystical sobriety in an assembly of sama lies with Junayd Baghdadi and Abu Hasan al- Nuri, both of whom were masters of self control in an assembly of sama so that nothing could overpower their

66 KM, p. 408.
67 Ibid.
69 Kalabadhi, Kitab al-Ta’arruf, p. 112.
70 Al Ghazzali, Kimiya i-Saadat, Tehran, 1919, p. 387.
71 Hussaini, Juyyid Muhammad al-Husayni i-Gisudara, p. 120.
emotional strength, and hence they were in complete control of their *wajd* even when their compatriots danced away in ecstatic self revelry.\(^{72}\)

The Suhrawardi notion of *wajd* explains the experience as something that arrives from God, thereby turning the heart of the mystic from its original state, to that of intense grief on the separation from his Beloved.\(^{73}\) However *wajd* also signifies the return of the heart to the reality of joy where all the mortal essences of the mystic are severed from his being, which then situates itself with the Almighty Lord.\(^{74}\)

The *wajid* signifying the individual on whom the experience of *wajd* descends is separated from the Divine through a veil of sensuality that obstructs his journey towards the Beloved.\(^{75}\) This foil of sensual emotions is a result of his own material existence which is then incapable of benefiting from the Lord. It is only through his experience of *wajd* that the veil of material existence is breached and the rays of Divine beneficence shines into his heart.\(^{76}\) In the course of such an experience the mystic is capable of fully realising the essence of the Divine so that the veil that surrounds the material existence of the Sufi is dissolved in the light of God’s existence which shines upon the mystic, combining his existence (*maujud*) with that of his Lord. In the course of this elevation that material existence (*maujud*) of the mystic gets transformed into the spiritual existence (*wujud*) where there remains nothing but the light of the Lord (*nur i-ilahi*). Thus the *wajid* gains everything and in turn loses all of his existence in the essence of *wujud*.\(^{77}\)

Suhrawardi manuals too give due recognition to the experience of *wujud*, as it signifies the ultimate stage of mystical achievement, where the possessor of *wujud* is wholly effaced from his material self and in turn finds

\(^{72}\) Ibid.
\(^{73}\) *AM*, p. 145.
\(^{74}\) Ibid.
\(^{75}\) Ibid.
\(^{76}\) Ibid.
\(^{77}\) Ibid.
his existence in the existence of God (maujud i-ilabt).\textsuperscript{78} For the Suhrawardi mystics real experience and joy of witnessing descends only on those who, through the witnessing of his own wajd come closer to the existence of God. Else the mystic is deprived of the possibility of joy that arises from the act of witnessing of the Divine essence.\textsuperscript{79}

When a Sufi attempts to gain victory over his material existences through a intense contemplation of the Divine, he is welcomed to the Divine realm through the showering of wajd which the Suhrawardi mystics equate to a catapult on the fortress of materialism.\textsuperscript{80} When the essence of wajd takes complete control of a mystic’s material existence then it becomes subsumed in the emotions of wujud. Thus the end of wajd signifies the beginning of wujud or the existence of the Sufi in the essence of the Almighty. It then becomes the condition under the influence of which one realises the wujud of maujud, or the existence of the existence of God.

\textbf{Artificiaility of Inducement: The Role of Tawajud}

If we argue that wajd epitomises the eventuality of spiritual emotions, then the question that naturally comes to the fore concerns the spiritual state of the novice. This is where mystical masters argue that what novice experience at the beginning of their spiritual journey are essentially the emotions wrought by tawajud, rather than wajd.\textsuperscript{81} Tawajud therefore came to be defined as the artificial way of inducing ecstasy, or in a finer, non material sense, the beginning of wajd.\textsuperscript{82} Thus the emotion of tawajud does not necessarily entail descend of Divine beneficence in a voluntary way. Rather it subsumes that the mystic must appropriate the feeling of ecstasy from the affected ones in the assembly, so that it benefits his own novice state. Therefore tawajud is

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 146.
\textsuperscript{81} EG, p. 149.
\textsuperscript{82} Hussaini, Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayni i-Gisudaraz, p. 119.
defined as the process of adoption by the novice, quite contrary to the experience of *wajd* which is essentially a 'visitation' from the Divine.\(^{83}\)

*Wajd* if considered to be only an experience in the assembly of *sama* can be categorised into two types: Firstly, it is the ecstasy of possession (*wajd milk*), which finds its subject and takes possession of him, indifferent of his desires. Secondly, there is the ecstasy of confrontation (*wajd liqain*) which does not operate voluntarily. Instead the onus is upon the listener to induce such a state of ecstasy through ways and means, of which imitation is the primary course.\(^{84}\) Such an experience of *wajd* can only be gained if the mystic is capable of encountering it and in turn adopting it for himself. The first type of *wajd* is therefore genuine ecstasy which descends directly from the Divine on the true mystic. While the second type of *wajd* is that which is artificially induced (*tawajud*). Here *tawajud* has been argued as an extension of *wajd* since for the realisation of *tawajud* it is absolutely necessary that the feeling of *wajd* be present in the assembly. Hence *tawajud* becomes a derivation from *wajd* rather than existing as an independent category of emotional expression.

As mentioned earlier it goes without doubt that the feelings of *tawajud* are despised by most of the leading Sufi theorists. Since for them spiritual benefits are derived only from the Unseen, and the intrinsic focus of any mystical discipline is to remain in the presence of the Divine, so that they may be benefited directly by the Lord.\(^{85}\) The practice of *tawajud* as a spiritual exercise involves a degree of artificiality which should be abhorred in the Path of spirituality. Also because the ritual of *tawajud* involves certain amount of indulgence in pleasure and amusement which negates any attempt at self control over the state of spirituality essential for the Sufi for a

\(^{83}\) Ibid.
\(^{84}\) Ibid.
\(^{85}\) Ibid.

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complete realisation of his spiritual end.\textsuperscript{86} Hence conservative theorists like al-Hujwiri completely condemns the act of methodical dancing and imitation of gestures by the novice from those who are in the state of \textit{wajd} in an assembly.\textsuperscript{87}

Mystics like Abu Nasir al-Sarraj would argue that \textit{wajd} should always be an involuntary action, and if so then it is termed lawful and at the same time considered as a blessing on the mystic from the Unseen.\textsuperscript{88} However he strictly prohibited individuals from experiencing the state of ecstasy through the process of imitation.\textsuperscript{89} A mystic if unaffected by the emotions of ecstasy can join a group of enraptured souls, but must never try to imitate their actions so as to indulge in a feel of \textit{wajd}.\textsuperscript{90} For mystics like al-Kalabadhi, \textit{tawajud} is the direct result of a weak heart intent on gaining ecstasy. If he fails even after repeated attempts then he tries to console his deprived self through an imitation of those who are in actual possession of \textit{wajd}.\textsuperscript{91} On the other hand, adepts in the Path of spirituality make no attempt to indulge in such superficial acts; since they are in complete control over the Divine ‘visitations’ (\textit{warida}) and are rather more intent in controlling their agitated self thereby staying calm and passive to their surrounding actions.\textsuperscript{92}

One of the leading mystical theorists of south Asia was Khwaja Bandanawaz Gesudaraz, who interestingly conformed to the practice of conformity (\textit{muwafaqat}) in an assembly of \textit{sama} where the person unaffected by \textit{wajd} tries and acts in a way that resembles the mystic who is completely immersed in the emotions of \textit{wajd}.\textsuperscript{93} Contrary to what al-Qushayti has to say in his \textit{Risala}, Khwaja Gesudaraz argues that \textit{taawajud} is only the means of obtaining \textit{wajd} and nothing else, and therefore must not be regarded as a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{87} \textit{KM}, p. 415.
\item \textsuperscript{88} Sarraj, \textit{Kitab al-Luma}, p. 186-87.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{91} Kalabadhi, \textit{Kitab al-Ta’arruf}, p. 112.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Hussaini, \textit{Sayyid Mubammad al-Husayni i-Gisudaraz}, p. 120.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p. 133.
\end{itemize}
forbidden act.\textsuperscript{94} The reason for its allowableness arises from the fact that it is only intended to induce a state of \textit{wajd} in the mystic.\textsuperscript{95} It is not a forced attempt at experiencing \textit{wajd} like what the Kubrawiya Sufis who isolate their disciples for a week before allowing them to participate in \textit{sama}.\textsuperscript{96} In this instance the soul is artificially starved of Divine blessings so that when they participate in \textit{sama} they end up in a state of complete rapture. This in the view of Khwaja Gesudaraz is artificiality, where the natural inclinations of the soul towards experiencing the beneficence of Divine is stifled, and hence cannot be termed as \textit{sama} in the true spirit of the term.\textsuperscript{97}

However \textit{tawajud} for Gesudaraz is a good (\textit{mustahsin}) thing and a praiseworthy (\textit{mamduh}) practice for the mystics, which should be complete acceptable (\textit{maqbul}) to any individual in the Path of spirituality.\textsuperscript{98} However if a mystic is completely in the folds of \textit{wajd} he should restrain himself from moving (\textit{junbad}) in an assembly which is presided by a respectable (\textit{muhtashami}) and revered (\textit{mubtarami}) Sufi master.\textsuperscript{99} And even when Sufis become agitated in an assembly of \textit{sama} and engage in limb movements it does not necessarily mean that he has completely lost his senses (\textit{bi khabar}).\textsuperscript{100} Rather his outer appearance does little to justify his inner spiritual state which on the other hand is in complete control (\textit{ba khud}) of the Sufi, dancing away in the thought of his Beloved.\textsuperscript{101}

Being a true master of the Chishtia order, Khwaja Gesudaraz refuses to recognise the practice of \textit{tawajud} as an unlawful spiritual exercise; precisely because \textit{tawajud} for him had a greater inner significance, moving beyond the realms of being just an artificial method for inducing ecstasy (\textit{wajd}).\textsuperscript{102} For

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{96} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{99} Ibid., p. 134.
\item \textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{102} Ibid., p. 146.
\end{footnotes}
Khwaja Gesudaraz, *tawajud* in a sense signifies the act of begging (*istijlab*) for the ultimate spiritual find (*yafian*) of the Sufi, which is the feeling of *wajd.*\(^{103}\) *Wajd* being the state of grief for the Sufi essentially indicates the condition of sufferance which the mystic must bear before he can realise the beneficence of the Divine.\(^{104}\) Thus the idea of yearning (*shawqi*) precedes the realisation of *wajd,* and for Gesudaraz only those mystics who share a true taste (*zawq*) for yearning are fortunate enough to be blessed by the state of *wajd.\(^{105}\) Thus yearning leads to the state of *wijdan,* which then ultimately turns to the state of *wujud* or discovery, of Almighty God.

Khwaja Gesudaraz argues that one who is in a state of *wujud* is never alone, nor is he aggrieved. Rather the individual is absent (*ghreyb*) from the beings of the material world (*akwari*), because he finds himself with the existence of God (*ba khuda*).\(^{106}\) This, in the words of Khwaja Gesudaraz is the ultimate stage of the state of *wujud,* where the mystic becomes unanimous with his ultimate goal of Divine union. Thus in a sense the state of *wujud* becomes the real nature of the mystic’s existence itself (*ayn i-wujud*), so that his current state of existence becomes similar to his spiritual goal (*ayn i-maqsud*).\(^{107}\)

Now if we try and situate the idea of *wujud* in the hierarchy of mystical experience then we come to realise that firstly the mystic attempts at realising his spiritual state which is *tawajud.*\(^{108}\) Next, he experiences the descend of Divine visitations which implies the state of *wajd.* In this state the mystic is in the midst of an experience that comes from the Unseen and affects the heart of the mystic irrespective of the Sufi’s choice (*ikhtiyar*). It is only when the Sufi experiences such benefaction from the Divine that he is able to witness (*shabada*) the Divine Himself, which is then equated to the

\(^{103}\) Ibid., p. 145.
\(^{104}\) Ibid.
\(^{105}\) Ibid.
\(^{106}\) Ibid., p. 146.
\(^{107}\) Ibid.
\(^{108}\) Ibid.
experience of wujud, which also in a sense signifies the ultimate state of existence of the mystic or precisely his wujud.\textsuperscript{109}

Khwaja Gesudaraz moves further in his understanding of the above concepts of tawajud, wajd and wujd, and equates them with the spiritual concepts of fana (annihilation) and baqa (permanence).\textsuperscript{110} He draws upon an interesting illustration of al–Daqqaq, who equates the above three experiences to witnessing the sea, sailing in it and ultimately getting drowned in it.\textsuperscript{111} Gesudaraz comments on this correlation and states that the feeling of tawajud or artificial ecstasy is a permanent feeling in the heart of the mystic who can conform to it whenever he wishes to. Its artificiality makes it ever permanent.\textsuperscript{112} Wajd being an experience of Divine visitation is not dependent on the will of the mystic, but rather occurs when the heart of the mystic is engaged in serious contemplation of the Divine. It is at this stage that the mystic finds (yaftan) his goal of Divine union in which he is totally lost and in turn annihilates (fana) himself. The stage of wujud then becomes the very nature of existence (baqa) the mystic has in the essence of the Creator. Khwaja Gesudaraz goes further than al–Daqqaq when he argues that the metaphor of the sea gives an incomplete expression to the three spiritual states mentioned above.\textsuperscript{113} While the state of tawajud can be compared to a person who stands at the shores of the sea, and is destined (sakhtah) to get himself drowned in the waters; the state of wajd is like falling into the sea and getting familiarised with the nature of it. At the ultimate stage wujud signifies his drowning in the sea and losing himself in the waters, so that he becomes one with the sea and hence turns into the very sea (ayn i-darya).\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., p. 147.
Khwaja Gesudaraz's understanding of mysticism functions with the ultimate aim of understanding the Truth, as it is experienced by and revealed on the mystic. By theorizing his concepts with the ultimate motive of experiencing the Truth, Gesudaraz actually upholds the idea of the 'unity of being' (wahadat ul-wujud) where all paths and processes begins and ends at the same point. Thus while the begging for ecstasy is done with the ultimate aim of God, the state of wujud also signifies the existence of the mystic in the permanence of the Divine. Thus all actions and intentions of the mystic moves around the central focus of the Divine, and have its origin and end in His divinity, whose presence extends from the beginning till the very end of the entire process of experience.

Suhrwardi mystics while drawing on the classical tenets of Sufism argue that by moving beyond the realm of wajd and experiencing the notion of wujud does the mystic become one with the Almighty, thereby upholding and conforming to the tenets of Unity (tauhid). On the other hand if the Sufi restricts himself to the essence of wajd then he conforms to a duality of existence which is separate of his self, and thus ascribes to the notion of duality, in other words disregards the supreme notion of Unity (tauhid). Thus tawajud and wujud represent the two extreme poles of spiritual realisation mediated by the experience of wajd.

Tawajud in the Suhrwardi tenets signifies the asking for the experience of wajd, which can be achieved by various ways. Firstly, through the repetition of Divine invocations; but secondly, and more importantly, through the act of imitation resembling the action of an individual already in a state of wajd. Suhrwardi mystics would argue that essentially the imitation of wajd is nothing but a paradox to sincerity, reflecting a duality of intentions of a mystic. At the same time they also recognise the fact that all

115 AM, p. 146.
116 Ibid., p. 147.
117 Ibid.
this striving is particularly aimed at gaining the acceptance of the Divine, from the Unseen so that the intentions of the heart are not necessarily betrayed by the apparent duality in actions.\textsuperscript{118}

\textbf{Rhythm Divine: Dance (raqs) as Expression of Spirituality}

One of the most talked about expressions, both as voluntary and sacrilegious, in the experience of \textit{wajd} is the movement of limbs by the possessed. Such an act of intense movement of the limbs of the mystic absorbed in rapture is addressed as \textit{raqs}, which is a term used to denote dancing.\textsuperscript{119} Mystical theorists while recognising the importance of \textit{wajd} in the path of spiritual experience of the mystic vehemently condemn the practice of \textit{raqs}, as nothing but an innovation in the name of religion with the sole purpose of indulging in an act of diversion when done in earnest, and portraying a sense of impropriety when carried out in jest.\textsuperscript{120} It is difficult to find support for the ritual of \textit{raqs} among the classical proponents of mysticism. They argue that only because it is an exercise resulting from the revelation of ecstasy (\textit{wajd}) in a mystic; it has been transformed into an exercise in itself towards a search for the spiritual Truth.\textsuperscript{121}

But at the same time mystics warn that it must be kept in mind that Sufism has more to it than revelry and dancing. Mystics like al –Hujwiri would argue that any sort of foot play (\textit{paiba\text習}) is condemned as a religious exercise, no matter how well intended it may look.\textsuperscript{122} But in the course of the assembly of \textit{sama}, when the emotions of exhalation and rapture captures the heart, giving rise to a sense of intense agitation and ecstasy, with a simultaneous dissolution of the conventional forms, then the resultant

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} Sarraj, \textit{Kitab al-Luma}, p. 288.
\textsuperscript{120} KM, p. 416.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
action must not be termed as dancing. Rather it should be called the 'dissolution of the soul.' Individuals who address it as 'dancing' are completely mistaken as to the true nature of the exercise, and even though they are in a loss for words to describe the ritual, it is wrong to address it as dancing. Since, for Hujwiri, those who do not have the proper experience of spiritual states are incapable of understanding its true nature.

While classical mystics like Abu Said ibn Abul Khair, together with the great Islamic theorist Ahmad al-Ghazzali agree that the act of dancing (raqs) dispels the presence of lust from the hearts and minds of young men; the great Andalusian mystic Ibn al-Arabi vehemently opposes the practice of ecstatic dances as nothing more than diversion in the mane of religion inspired by artificially induced ecstasy. However we come to know from a motley of sources that some of the leading mystics like Al Shibli, Maaruf Karkhi, Abdullah ibn Khafif, Abu Said al Khair, Mansur Hallaj together with Ayn ul Qudat al Hamadani, did at some time or the other in the course of their spiritual life engage in the practice of audition.

The mystics of the Chishtia order being the foremost proponents of the practice of sama were also vigorous defenders of the practice of raqs. Shaykh Nizamuddin Awliya argued that in an assembly of sama any movement of the physical self, to be considered lawful, must be a result of the Divine intervention. If it is otherwise then the entire exercise will be termed unlawful (haram). But at the same time he also states that the action of raqs as done by the mystics of the assembly is the result of Divine

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123 Ibid.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
127 Al Tusi, Bawariq ul-Ibna, p. 155.
129 Hussaini, Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayni i-Gisudara% p. 121.
130 Ibid., p. 121.
131 5:4, p. 524.
132 Ibid.
benefaction and hence must be considered lawful. The shaykh however strictly prohibits novices from attempting to indulge in raqs, lest they end up only doing an exhibition of their worldly emotions and hence their hearts be depraved. He goes on to say that ‘when a dervish, in an assembly of sama claps his hand in an expression of ecstasy, all the sins of his hands are removed. When he shouts as a result of ecstasy all his evil desires are destroyed.

It normally happens that in an assembly of sama a mystic engages himself in the ritual of raqs completely oblivious of his surroundings keeping in mind only the beat of the qawwal, who invigorates the Sufi towards a more intense form of raqs. Such an experience is only possible when the heart of the mystic is away from the desires of the flesh and lust for the material. It is under such conditions that the Sufi is brought closer to the experience of the Divine. Some argue that the essence of raqs lies in the movement of the hands, while to some it is in the exercise of dance, and to some it is only the movement of the head in a position of confirmation of the receipt of Divine benefaction. This is precisely the result of participation in sama.

Maulana Fakhruddin Zarradi, in his Risala argues that when some mystic was asked as to the benefits accrued from the movement of limbs during an assembly of sama, the latter replied that it is an expression of Divine love (rubani ishq) from the Unseen, which is never dependent on the will of the lover, but rather descends on the Sufi from the world of the Divine whenever he engages in deep contemplation of God, as an act of intense love for his Beloved. Such an reflection of Divine love is visible

133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
135 Sarraj, Kitab al-Luma, p. 237. Shaykh Nizamuddin Awliya refers to this interpretation of Abu Said Abul Khair, without mentioning his name.
136 1/4, p. 524.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
thorough the various limbs of the mystic, which rises in union with the Beloved, and thus is expressive of the intense love the mystic feels for his Beloved, so that when the moment of witnessing arrives the benefaction of the Divine descends on him.\textsuperscript{139} The mystic then seems to lose control over his sober self, and rises up to conform to the experience of mystical love, which is seldom understood by men of the material.\textsuperscript{140}

Sufis when enquired about the essence of \textit{raqs} remarked that only when the heart of a mystic is aroused in an assembly of \textit{sama} does the effect percolate down to the limbs setting it to motion.\textsuperscript{141} Thus essentially \textit{raqs} results when the state of the mystic experiences \textit{wajd} or relieves itself from the grief of separation and ‘finds’ himself in the presence of his Beloved.\textsuperscript{142} An interesting event is narrated in the sources which testify the degree of vivacity a mystic felt in an occasion of \textit{sama} especially while performing \textit{raqs}. Badruddin Ishaq, the chief steward at the \textit{khanqah} of Baba Farid at Ajodhan, narrates an incident where once in an assembly of \textit{sama} the Chishtia master was performing \textit{raqs} and had placed his hands on the shoulder of Badruddin Ishaq, in the course of dancing. Subsequently when the spiritual ambience of the assembly reached its peak and all were engaged in the contemplation of the Divine, then Shaykh Fariduddin Ganji-Shakr remarked at his grandson, Mahmud Pattu, who was also his disciple ‘Oh Mahmud! Are you dead or alive?’\textsuperscript{143} Immediately the latter stood at his feet and started performing \textit{raqs}. Our raconteur recalls that from that day onwards whenever Baba Farid used to utter those words to Mahmud, in an assembly of \textit{sama}, the disciple used to get agitated and always took the lead in the ritual of dancing (\textit{raqs}).\textsuperscript{144} Thus from the incident above it is well evident that Chishtia saints while indulging themselves in the ritual of \textit{raqs} took care to respect its sanctity, so

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p. 525.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.

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that they only engaged themselves in the practice when their hearts were voluntarily in favour of rising over their senses and losing in the occasion of raqs.

Such was the popularity of the practice of raqs in the age of the Chishtia Sufis that their contemporaries were also equally attached to it. It is said in the sources that a famous mystic of that age, Shaykh Awhad uddin Kirmani (mentioned earlier with regard to Shaykh Suhrawardi’s audition of sama) participated in sama under the auspices of the qawwal Muhammad Bairam. In a certain assembly where Shaykh Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakr was also present he ordered the qawwal to begin with the proceedings, to which the qawwal started off with a verse from Khwaja Nizami—

\[
\text{Ashiqui mein malamat kare ki izazat nabin}
\]
\[
\text{Jo bhi murid bina boga woh malamat kehe ko karega}
\]
\[
\text{Har gunahgar ko ishq baaz gyob nabin deti}
\]
\[
\text{Ishaq ka nishan to dard bi se nazar aa jaata hain}
\]
\[
\text{Nizami jahatak ho sakein parsu ban}
\]
\[
\text{Kyunke parsu ka nur dilon ke lien shama hain}^{146}
\]

Translation: In love there is no place for blaming
Whoever becomes a disciple why will he engage in blaming?
Every sinner is not entitled to indulge in love making
The sign of love is evident in the pain of the lover
Nizami, be virtuous as much as possible
For in virtue lies the secret to the light of the heart

Hearing this verse others who were present in the assembly of sama, including Shaykh Badruddin Ghaznavi and Shaykh Jamaluddin Hansawi, fell into deep excitement in their hearts, and immediately started doing

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145 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
This is reflective of the fact that only when the verses of the qawwal affected the spiritual states of the mystics that they rose up to the performance of rags. It is on this premise of a pure heart getting agitated with the remembrance of the Divine, that the ritual of rags has been justified by the mystics of the Chishtia order.148

The mystics of the Chishtia order believed in eternal truth that when the heart is in receipt of the Divine benefaction then it knows no limits of joy, and physical barriers hold little ground.149 Once in an assembly of sama Shaykh Badruddin Ghaznawi was also present, together with the leading Sufis of the Chishtia order. The shaykh was quite addicted to the practice of raga but growing age proved to be a deterrent.150 When the shaykh was asked as to how, with his old age, will he participate in the exercise of raga, the master replied like a true mystic, ‘I do not do raga, rather it’s my love that’s dances...any individual who is in love does not need a pretext to do raga.151 It is said that Shaykh Badruddin Ghaznawi was unable to engage in sort of movement (junbish) during sama due to his debility.152 But it was worth noticing that whenever he was possessed by ecstasy in an assembly of sama, he would immediately stand up and start doing raga. Onlookers described it as an exercise not by an old and feeble mystic but as if it was being done by a ten year old disciple.153 The swiftness and agility of his movements defied any sense of ageing, so that onlookers became convinced that raga is something that cannot be done in the true spirit unless the mystic is blessed from the Unseen, and is in complete possession of the Divine benefaction.

147 Ibid., pp. 525-26.
148 Ibid., p. 526.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid.
153 Ibid.
The essence of raqs lies not in the fact that in an assembly you stand up in emotion as frequently as you can. Or when the excitement of the heart overbears, you stand up. Rather raqs is considered to be that emotion where it takes you through both the worlds of existence, and tests the strength of your heart to withstand the blessings of the Divine. In such an exercise the mystic does not hesitate to even risk his own life. For the true mystic the exercise of raqs is permitted only when he is completely oblivious of the existence of the two worlds, so that he is lost in his own moment of rapture.

That the ritual of raqs was a preserve for the mystics or men of the spiritual world is evident from an incident, when one day Amir Khurau in an assembly of samu at the jamaat khanab of Shaykh Nizamuddin Awliya was overcome by emotions of the heart, and he voluntarily took to doing raqs by stretching his arms above him. This proved to be undoing of him since Shaykh Nizamuddin called him and remarked 'You are related to the material world So it is not suitable for you to perform raqs with your hands held high above your head.' Since that was a sign of un-worldliness and hence not suitable for any individual having concerns with the material world. Amir Khusrau was quick to rectify his mistake and henceforth whenever he performed raqs he did it with folded fists and hands down. A verse quite precisely upholds the other worldly nature of the exercise of raqs in the following words

Raqs agar karte hon to irfani raqs karo
Duniya ko paon taley rondh do
Aur akbirat par dost afsani karo

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154 Ibid.
155 Ibid., pp. 526-27.
156 Ibid., p. 527.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
If you are doing raqs, do it the way of the gnostic
Crush the world beneath your steps
And knock the doors of the Day of Judgment

It is argued by mystics that the exercise of *raqs* is not mandatory except for the situation when it becomes absolutely necessary.\(^{161}\) The emotion of love might take control of the heart of the mystic to such an extent that he runs the risk of loses his life in the assembly of *sama* if there is no alternative of releasing that pent up emotion.\(^ {162}\) But at the same time it must also be kept in mind that *raqs* must not be considered as a thoughtless and arbitrary exercise. Rather it is something which must be conducted with the proper manners so that others in the assembly of *sama* might not feel disturbed and irritated by an excessive and uncontrolled demonstration of emotions.\(^ {163}\) It is said that Shaykh Nizamuddin Awliya in an assembly of *sama* used to stand in his place for long hours listening to the proceedings of the assembly.\(^ {164}\) In the course of *sama* his eyes would overflow with tears from the emotions of the Divine that were aroused in his heart.\(^ {165}\) Then finally when he would reach the station of emotional overbearing then he would peacefully retire in a corner and engage in doing *raqs*.\(^ {166}\) Thus it is evident that a proper exhibition of emotions in the ritual of *raqs* is crucial for the realisation of Divine beneficence.

We come across an interesting incident where it is said that once Shaykh Nizamuddin Awliya was sitting in the courtyard of his *jamaat khanah* when a *qawwal* named Samat was performing in front of him.\(^ {167}\) The verses of the *qawwal* had a positive impact on the shaykh who was interested in

\(^{161}\) Ibid., p. 528.
\(^{162}\) Ibid.
\(^{163}\) Ibid.
\(^{164}\) Ibid.
\(^{165}\) Ibid., p. 529.
\(^{166}\) Ibid.
\(^{167}\) Ibid., p. 532.
doing *raqs*. But unfortunately none of his spiritual compatriots were present in that assembly who could provide him with company, so that those present in the assembly were feeling a bit left out.\footnote{Ibid.} At this very moment of hesitation and two-mindedness an individual from nowhere stepped into the assembly.\footnote{Ibid.} After prostrating in front of the shaykh he started doing *raqs*. Shaykh Nizamuddin immediately joined the individual in the ritual. This exercise continued for couple of hours.\footnote{Ibid.} The assembly completely absorbed in the spiritual ambience of *sama*. After the assembly ended the individual again prostrated in front of the shaykh and departed.\footnote{Ibid.} Shaykh Nizamuddin who was interested in knowing who the unknown and unseen individual was, sent his attendants to fetch him. His attendants went about looking for him but unfortunately could not find him.\footnote{Ibid.}

His disciples inferred that the individual must be from the Unseen, to have enlightened the assembly and left.\footnote{Ibid.} But the inner realisation behind the incident lies that whenever a true mystic intends to remember his Beloved, but is held captive by the lack of arrangements and companionship, it is seen that someone from the Unseen is sent to accompany him and provide a vent to his emotions. The mystic is so enamoured by the love of the Divine that he cannot stop himself from engaging in the exercise of *sama* of doing *raqs*, in the memory of his Beloved.\footnote{Ibid.} His sense of ecstasy takes complete control over his self so that his heart is lightened (*arwar*) up by the flashes (*tagalli*) of the Divine and hence he strives to find himself in the existence of God. It is at these times that the mystic yearns for companionship, dervishes and other mystics, who would engage alongside him in the remembrance of their Lord.
One of the most enigmatic Chishtia mystics of the age to leave us with a detailed account of various Sufi exercises was none other than the Chishtia master of the Deccan, Khwaja Bandanawaz Gesudaraz. His prolific accounts on various aspects of mystical life, both theoretical and practical provide us with an invaluable source to work upon in our quest for the mystical truth. Khwaja Bandnawaz falls back on the lineage of his classical antecedents while elaborating his position vis-à-vis the ritual of raqs.\textsuperscript{175} He defines the same as an agitation (idtirab) that befalls on the heart of the mystic in the assembly of sama.\textsuperscript{176} His definition resembles the one put forward by his south Asian predecessor al –Hujwiri, who, as stated earlier, considers raqs to be a type of movement rather than belonging to the explicit category of dance.\textsuperscript{177}

Gesudaraz while recognising the feeling of agitation that descends upon the heart of the mystic argues that during such a moment the expression of raqs can either be rhythmic (ba warṣ) or non rhythmic (be warṣ).\textsuperscript{178} In an assembly of sama it may so happen that under the experience of agitation of the visitation (warid) the Sufi might lose his sense of rhythm (warṣ) and beat (darb), so that his resultant actions in the form of circling (gashami), running (duwidami) and moving to and fro (paidami), may be without any sense of rhythm (warṣ) and rule (wad).\textsuperscript{179} However it is strictly advised that in an assembly of sama it must be kept in mind that the ritual of raqs should be as organized as possible, so that it does not imply that the Divine benefaction that descends upon the mystic is independent and arbitrary, but the fact of the matter is that the blessings of the Unseen benefit those who are careful of the manners of raqs.\textsuperscript{180}

\textsuperscript{175} Gesudaraz's argument on raqs is more in tune with his north Indian masters, as in the sense of support rather than negation.
\textsuperscript{176} Hussaini, \textit{Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayni i-Gisudaraz}, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{177} KM, p. 416.
\textsuperscript{178} Hussaini, \textit{Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayni i-Gisudaraz}, p. 138.
\textsuperscript{179} Khatimah, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{180} Hussaini, \textit{Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayni i-Gisudaraz}, pp. 138-39.
Gesudaraz attributes a number of esoteric interpretations to various forms of *raqs*. He says that when a mystic in the assembly of *sama* circles in ecstasy (*wajd*) it should be taken to imply that he is circling around the world (*atwar i-alam*) in the search of his ultimate goal (*maqsud*) of Divine union.\(^{181}\) It is noted at the same time that the mystic is unaware of the mode and path through which the blessings of the Divine might descend on him. So that hearing the attributes of God in the assembly of *sama* the mystic is taken to a state of wonder (*hal i-hayrati*) and is thus gripped in the folds of ecstasy, thereby making him helpless of any rational deductions (*majdbub i-salik*).\(^{182}\)

In the assembly of *sama* if any mystic leaps and jumps (*mi jabad*) his actions are indicative of the fact that his spirit (*rub*) yearns to return to its source of eternity from where he was created, precisely to the higher world (*alam i-uhd*).\(^{183}\) But then why does he come back to the ground? Gesudaraz states that it is the doings of his lower self (*nafl*) which ties him back to the material world and binds his movement to the earth (*zamin*).\(^{184}\) Some mystics try hard to get over this state which clamps him to the earth.\(^{185}\) This is evident when the mystic stamps his feet at the ground in a way to symbolise his desperate attempts at freeing himself from the clutches of the material world. In a sense the mystic looks to annihilate all existences other than that of the Lord, by placing everything under his foot.\(^{186}\)

Together with the foot another important limb that is engaged in the experience of *raqs* is the hand. So that when a mystic in the assembly lifts both his hands over his head, circles them, twists them and then brings them down — it is significant of the fact that he is in possession and experience of the three worlds — the spiritual (*malakut*), transconscience
(jabarut) and finally Divine (labuh).\textsuperscript{187} When a mystic exclaims that he is ecstasy then it should be understood that he is in nothing but the state of He-ness (huwjat).\textsuperscript{188} In such a state the mystic possesses nothing else but the remembrance and blessing of the Divine, which is revealed only to him from the world of the Unseen. Gesudaraz is of the opinion that it is only in this state that the mystic traveler can be attributed with the benefits of \textit{sama}, which effects only those who are affected by nothing but the Divine.\textsuperscript{189}

It is only in such a state that the trueness of Unity (\textit{tauhid}) comes forth, and the virtue of oneness (\textit{wahadat}) shows up.\textsuperscript{190} Gesudaraz being a staunch advocate of the principle of \textit{wahadat ul-wujud} necessarily includes it in the focus of his argument. With the revelation of \textit{wahadat}, the concept of \textit{T} (\textit{ana}) goes to the background, so that the mystic is in complete presence of the idea of Unity and attributes of the Only One.\textsuperscript{191} Thus for a true mystic in the assembly of \textit{sama}, the essence of He-ness remains in its place, because in contemplating the Divine the mystic cannot conceive anything beyond the ultimate notion of One in the One (\textit{yak dar yak}).\textsuperscript{192}

The final stage of Divine realisation in the ritual of \textit{raqs}, is crucial for Gesudaraz since it is at his stage that the notions of Unity (\textit{tauhid}) and Oneness (\textit{wahadat}) converge at a single point, so that there remains for differentiation (\textit{tafrig}).\textsuperscript{193} In such a state of Divine reality the Lord establishes Himself in the mystical state of the Sufi so that there is both the Union (\textit{jam}) — of the lover and the Beloved, and at the same time the Union of Union (\textit{jam i-jam}) — for the mystic becomes He and in turn He unites in Himself.\textsuperscript{194} This then is both the beginning of Creation and the ultimate end — where all

\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
unites with the One Creator and such an eternal Truth is realised and celebrated through the performance of raqs.\textsuperscript{195}

The Suhrawardi master, Shaykh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi in his celebrated mystical manual \textit{Awartf ul-Maarij} states that dancing should only be an expression of ecstasy, when an individual takes recourse to it to vent his feelings of extreme rapture.\textsuperscript{196} But at the same time he also mentions that not all in the assembly of sama should expect to get ecstatic to such an extent that he may take to dancing under its effects.\textsuperscript{197} Another Suhrawardi master Abu Najib al–Suhrwardi considers the essence of etiquette (adab) as crucial to the performance of dancing, so that it does not surpass the limits of spiritual manners.\textsuperscript{198} Emotions in the assembly should be tried and controlled as much as possible till a point of time when it becomes almost impossible to hold it back any longer, so that the mystic is forced into dancing (raqs).\textsuperscript{199} At the same time the Suhrwardi master is candid enough to admit that raqs can be termed as an allowable religious exercise (mubah) together with a mode of worship only if the intentions and actions of the mystic engaged in the ritual of raqi is pure and worthy.\textsuperscript{200}

Abu Najib al–Suhrwardi in his instructional treatise \textit{Kitab Adab al–Muridin}, recognises the effect of sama in the heart of the mystic which can lead to an upsurge of emotions, causing the mystic to jump and turn around in the assembly.\textsuperscript{201} A possible reason as Shaykh Suhrwardi argues for such movements may be the desire of the heart to return to its heavenly origin towards union with its Creator.\textsuperscript{202} Another aim for this dance maybe the intention of the Sufi to relieve himself of the emotional burden that rests on

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} \textit{AM}, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{198} \textit{Kitab}, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{199} \textit{AM}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{201} \textit{Kitab}, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
his heart, during the assembly of *sama*.203 It is noteworthy that Abu Najib does not forbid the latter premise for *raqs* as unlawful. Rather it is said that such an action is reflective of the qualities of those who attain the state of ‘reality’ (*ḥaqq*).204 At the same time Shaykh Abu Najib also concedes that if the mystic engages in *raqs* with the intention of cheering up his compatriots in the assembly, without any pretensions of intoxication and forced ecstasy, then it can be termed as lawful.205

It will be interesting to round off the discussion on the performance of *raqs* and the ethics which mystics usually attach to it, with a description of the same, left for us by the Suhrawardi master, Shaykh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi in the *Awarif ul-Ma‘arif*.

He states that, in the assembly, dervishes, numbering between nine and sixteen sit on the floor in sheepskins, at equal distances from each other. While in this posture they keep their arms folded, eyes closed and heads bowed. They sit in this position for half an hour engaging themselves in intense meditation. The master of the assembly or the shaykh seats himself in a small carpet. After the initial exercise of intense meditation he recites a hymn in the name of God and at the same time invites his fellow mystics, in the assembly (*majlis*), to join in the recitation of the *Fatiha*

After the recitation of the *Fatiha*, the following prayer:

‘Let us chant the *Fatiha*, in glorifying the holy name of God; in honor of the blessed religion of the Prophets, especially of Muhammad Mustafa, the greatest, most august, magnificent of all heavenly envoys; in memory of the first four *Khulafa*; of the sainted Fatima; of chaste Khadija; of the Imams Hasan and Husain; of all the martyrs of the memorable day (Battle of Karbala, 680 C. E.); of the ten evangelical disciples, the virtuous sponsors of

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203 Ibid.
204 Ibid.
205 Ibid., p. 62.
our Prophet; of all his zealous and faithful disciples; of all the imams, mujtabids, of all the ulema, of all the awliya, of all the holy women of Islam.

'Let us chant in honor of Hazrat Maulana, the founder of our Order, of Hazrat Sultan ul-Ulama (his father), of Sayyid Burhanuddin (his teacher), of Shaykh Shamsuddin (his consecrator), of Validah Sultan (his mother), of Muhammad Aliuddin (his son and vicar), of all the successors, of all the shaykhs, of all the dervishes, and all the Protectors of our Order, to whom the Omnipotent designeth to give peace and mercy.

'Let us pray for the constant prosperity of our society; for the preservation of the very learned and venerable General of our Order, for the preservation of the reigning Sultan, the very majestic and clement sovereign of the Islam faith, for the prosperity of the Grand Wazir, and of the Shaykh ul-Islam, and of all the Mohammedan soldiery and of all the Hujjaj to Mecca.

'Let us pray for the repose of the soul of our pirs, of all the shaykhs, and of all the dervishes of all other Orders; for all good people.

'Let us pray for all Muslims of one and of the other sex, of the east and of the west, for the maintenance of all prosperity, for preventing all adversity, for the accomplishment of vows, and for the success of praiseworthy enterprise.

'Finally let us ask God to deign to preserve in us the gift of His grace, and the fire of His love.

After all these chanting the shaykh recites the Fatiha and the salawat.

With this being brought to a close now the dervishes stand up in line to the left of the shaykh, their arms folded, head bowed, and a slow approach. The first arrives in front of the shaykh and with profundity salutes the tablet on which is inscribed the name of the founder of the order. Then advancing by two leaps he comes to the right side of the shaykh, turns to him and salutes him, thereby signaling the beginning of dance. This dance as described in the Awarif, consisted of turning on the left heel, with a slow advance, with a
simultaneous turn of the hall with closed eyes and open arms. This is then followed by all the other dervishes.

Thus the dancing continues in full rhythm for two hours, only to be interrupted by two short pauses during which the shaykh attends his prayers. It is only towards the close that the shaykh joins the dancing assembly. After that he returns to his seat and chants the following supplication intended for the prosperity of religion and state.

'Let us pray for the Sovereign of the Muslims and the most august Monarch of the house of Uthman, son of a Sultan, grandson of a Sultan... and for the dervishes present and absent; for all friends of our Order; for all the faithful, dead and alive, in the east and in the west.

Once more the Fatiha is chanted and the assembly of sama is brought to a close.\textsuperscript{206}

In the course of the above discussion it becomes amply clear that mystical expressions are essentially reflective of the emotions which take over the heart of the mystic during rituals and spiritual exercises. Thus the realm of the spiritual space of the mystic, though very personal to the Sufis and esoteric to the masses, nonetheless attempted to express itself to the worldly souls through such a variety of spiritual exercises. While essentially upholding the Truth about \textit{tasa\\u0131w\\u0131f}, they, at the same time also prepared the Sufi seeker to face the realities of the mystical world in their quest for the Divine.

\textsuperscript{206} \textit{AM}, pp. 297-98.