

“The Theory and Practice of *Sama`* (Listening to Music) in the Sufi Circle of Burhan al-Din Gharib”

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One of the most distinctive practices of the Chishtis was *sama`*, or listening to musical recitation of poetry. Although *sama`* literally means "listening" or "audition," it is more correct to follow Bruce Lawrence's definition of *sama`* as "hearing chanted verse (with or without accompanying instruments) in the company of others also seeking to participate in the dynamic dialogue between a human lover and the Divine Beloved¹." Since music, particularly instrumental music, has always had an uneasy status in Islamic law, the practice of *sama`* has been controversial. In contemporary South Asian Muslim circles, one sometimes hears the argument that the Chishtis only adopted the questionable practice of *sama`* in order to appeal to the music-loving Indian population, as part of a program of conversion.

This position, which seeks to excuse a legally dubious practice by making it serve a higher missionary goal, has no historical justification. *Sama`* was a standard topic in the Arabic Sufi manuals of the tenth century, and it was widely practiced in Iraq and Iran. There are remarkable similarities between the Chishti approach to music and that of the great Sufi poet Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1277), whose works were known in northern India. *Sama`* was, moreover, restricted in principle to the mystical elite, and according to some was a purely spiritual experience. One early Sufi described it in these words:

Sama` is the comprehension of essences by the ear of the heart, the heart's understanding of realities, becoming aware of God's meditations and the divine speech and will, the opening up of the tongue of conscience to God, the avoidance of doubt and suspicion, and the conveying of the words of reality by the heart of *sama`*²."

From the foregoing description, one would take *sama`* to be the essential mystical experience, and the direct perception of God by the heart. Yet simply to equate *sama`* with some kind of inner experience would be misleading, for *sama`* is a form of religious activity involving musical performance that ideally takes place under the strictest of conditions. Demanding

¹ Bruce B. Lawrence, "The Early Chishti Approach to *Sama`*," in *Islamic Society and Culture: Essays in Honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad*, ed. Milton Israel and N. K. Wagle (New Delhi: Manohar, 1983), p. 72.

² *Tarjuma-i Qushayri*, cited in *Shama'il al-atqiya*, p. 356. For details on the texts cited here, see Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992).

psychological and intellectual guidelines, as well as elaborate rules of etiquette, govern the enactment of *sama`*. The writings of the Khuldabad Sufis amplify this notion of *sama`* as the ecstatic core of the Chishti tradition, and they emphasize the pursuit of *sama`* as a way to union with God that must be combined with severe discipline of the carnal self.

Burhan al-Din Gharib was, probably more than any other senior disciple of Nizam al-Din Awliya', dedicated to the practice of *sama`*. Mir Khwurd had emphasized this ecstatic attitude, saying that Burhan al-Din had "a distinctive style (*tarzi ala-hida*) in dancing, so that the companions of this saint were called 'Burhanis' among the lovers."³ Burhan al-Din himself was extremely susceptible to the influence of *sama`* as well as spiritual discourses in general⁴. The Khuldabad *mal'uzat* reveal that *sama`* was very popular in the circle of Burhan al-Din Gharib, most notably with Burhan al-Din's successor Zayn al-Din Shirazi, although he had fiercely opposed listening to music before he became a Sufi⁵. Ahsan al-aqwal is a particularly rich resource on this topic, as chapter twenty-six presents a whole series of rules governing the practice of *sama`*. Shama'il al-atqiya' also contains a comprehensive discussion of the question of *sama`* according to both classical Sufi authors and the Delhi Chishtis. These primary sources furnish an irreplaceable documentation on the Chishti practice of *sama`*.

As a disciple of Nizam al-Din Awliya', Burhan al-Din must have been keenly aware of the controversy that raged in Delhi over the legitimacy of listening to music. This controversy was not new; Sufis in the Islamic heartland had practiced *sama`* since the ninth or tenth century, and jurists had not been slow to attack this phenomenon as a suspicious and possibly immoral innovation. Although many of the early Sufi masters joined the musical gatherings to hear mystical verses, they more than anyone were conscious of music's power over the soul for both good and evil; consequently, few approved of it without reservation. A number of Sufi authorities give the impression that *sama`* is a kind of stimulant for those whose spiritual nerves have become deadened. Ahmad al-Ghazali was one of the minority of early authorities who regarded *sama`* as part of the height of Sufi experience. Shaykh `Ali Hujwiri of Lahore, one of the first Sufis to dwell in the Indian subcontinent, showed the ambivalence typical of many shaykhs—he praised *sama`* as a source of ecstasy for advanced mystics, but condemned it as a trap of Satan for the unwary novice. The legitimacy of listening to music, in other words, was not a simple question, but depended on the people and circumstances involved.

Under the Delhi Sultanate, the Chishti order was in the middle of the continuing controversy over listening to music, because, in a significant new development, *sama`* had now become the central feature of Sufi practice even for novices. As Bruce Lawrence has observed, "in the Indian environment from the period of the Delhi sultanate through the Mughul era (1206-1857) *sama`* assumed a unique significance as the integrating modus operandi of the Chishti

³ Mir Khwurd, *Siyar al-awliya'*, p. 289.

⁴ *Nafa'is al-anfas*, p. 8.

⁵ Azad Bilgrami, *Rawzat al-awliya'*, pp. 96 (Zayn al-Din), 124 (Shams al-Din Fadl Allah); Majd al-Din Kashani, *Ghara'ib al-karamat*, p. 56 (Farid al-Din Adib).

order."⁶ Thus the Chishti order stood apart from the Suhrawardi order, which did not emphasize *sama`*, and it was even further removed from the conservative jurists. The jurists' opposition took the form of petitions to the sultans of Delhi, seeking a royal decree forbidding the practice of *sama`* while the Chishtis and their supporters vigorously defended *sama`* as permissible under Islamic law. Despite these appeals, both Sultan Iltutmish and Sultan Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq refused to outlaw the Chishtis' observances.⁷ Burhan al-Din was undoubtedly aware of both the contemporary debate and the reserve of some of the classical Sufi authorities toward *sama`*. On one occasion another Sufi, who was not a disciple of Nizam al-Din Awliya', criticized Burhan al-Din's appearance after *sama`* (it may be that Burhan al-Din appeared disheveled or had rent his garments); Burhan al-Din responded that this was his master's practice, even if it was not recommended in the great handbook of Sufism, the *`Awarif al-ma`arif* of Shaykh Suhrawardi.⁸ With this controversy in mind, it is not surprising to find that Burhan al-Din Gharib and his followers upheld a demanding ethical standard for participants in *sama`*, even as they spiritualized some of the technical rules. Burhan al-Din used a framework derived from Islamic law to describe the varying psychological attitudes that lovers of God and lovers of the world bring to the experience of listening to music:

The master (Burhan al-Din) also said, "*sama`* is of four types. One is lawful, in which the listener is totally longing for God and not at all longing for the created. The second is permitted, in which the listener is mostly longing for God and only a little for the created. The third is disapproved, in which there is much longing for the created and a little for God. The fourth is forbidden, in which there is no longing for God and all is for the created.... But the listener should know the difference between doing the lawful, the forbidden, the permitted, and the disapproved. And this is a secret between God and the listener."⁹

Although cast in a legal form, Burhan al-Din's analysis of the listener's motivation puts the burden of responsibility on the individual conscience, for the object of one's love is by its nature secret from the law. Similar was the view of Rukn al-Din Kashani when he was asked if at the judgment *sama`* would weigh in the scale of good or of evil; he replied that *sama`* as the perception of spiritual states did not enter into the scales of actions at all.¹⁰

The Chishtis' focus on purified intention as the criterion of genuine *sama`* led them to encourage novices to participate in musical sessions, and to seek genuine ecstasy (*wajd*) even if it meant imitating that ecstasy initially. Many early texts mention the imitation of ecstasy by "empathetic ecstasy" (*tawajud*), which is sometimes characterized by a susceptibility to be

⁶ See also Lawrence, p. 73; this article is an excellent summary of the development of *sama`* from the classical Sufis to the Chishtis.

⁷ For details of the controversy, see Khusro Hussaini, *Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayni Gisu Daraz: On Sufism* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1985), pp. 121-25.

⁸ *Nafa'is*, p. 49.

⁹ *Shama'il*, pp. 347-48. This distinction is reproduced by Gisu Daraz; Hussaini, p. 128.

¹⁰ *Shama'il*, pp. 356-57.

inspired by hearing a divine communication even in the voices of animals. The subject of empathetic ecstasy had been an ambiguous one in classical Sufism, because of a general abhorrence of affectation or pretense in any form. The Persian translation of Suhrawardi's *'Awarif*, for instance, concentrates much of its discussion of the manners of *sama`* on the horrible nature of empathetic ecstasy, though there is some concession in the case of beginners.¹¹ Yet with Nizam al-Din Awliya' there is a new emphasis on linking the grades of ecstasy with the ranks of the participants in *sama`*. Nizam al-Din's disciple, Fakhr al-Din Zarradi, systematized this insight in his treatise on listening to music, *Usul al-Sama`* (Principles of *sama`*). Now empathetic ecstasy (*tawajjud*) was seen as a proper response to *sama`*, and one that was intrinsically connected to the ecstasy of divine love. This wholehearted enthusiasm for *sama`* became characteristic of later Chishti writers, such as Mas`ud Bakk (d. 1389) and Ashraf Jahangir Simnani (d. 1422). Burhan al-Din Gharib on occasion did say that empathetic ecstasy was a defect in *sama`*, since true ecstasy and spiritual states were the goal; he repeated the advice of Nizam al-Din Awliya' that if one does not have ecstasy (*wajid*), one should call on the name of God as *al-wajid*.¹² This insistence on the elite level of experience was unusual, however.

In general, Burhan al-Din and his followers approve of empathetic ecstasy, and they prescribe it first of all as a mode of behavior during *sama`*. In the ritual, empathetic ecstasy seeks real ecstasy by conforming to the behavior of those who have it. "If someone in *sama`* has no ecstasy nor rapture, the rules (*adab*) are that he go stand with the people of ecstasy and conform with them."¹³ One can observe this custom in the performance of *sama`* even today, when someone goes into a *hal* or spiritual state, and the company rises up to conform to his state. Rukn al-Din Kashani is explicit on this point: "If a dervish rises from his spiritual state and ecstasy, the companions should conform, and all rise. This is an approved custom, and a fine tradition; to go against it is to abandon sanctity."¹⁴ If, on the other hand, one has not yet attained ecstasy, but only the intermediate experiences of "rapture" (*jazb*) and "taste" (*zawq*), one still must conform with the rest, and sit if they are seated, though movement is permitted. In the receptive mood of the *sama`* assembly, one's state can affect others strongly; therefore, if one is overcome by one of the awesome qualities of the divine wrath, one should remain silent to avoid influencing one's companions.¹⁵

Empathetic ecstasy is also a mode of engagement with the recited verses, so that it becomes an intellectual approach to mystical experience. Rukn Din Kashani gives lengthy explanations of the process of interpretation of poetry and empathetic ecstasy, in a number of passages drawn from his lost work *Rumuz al-walihin*.¹⁶ In these comments Rukn al-Din truly

¹¹ Mu`izz al-Din Kashani, trans., *Misbah al-hidaya, tarjuma-i `awarif* (Lucknow: Nawal Kishore, n.d.), pp. 148-54; cf. also Lawrence, p. 82. Lt.-Col. Wilberforce Clarke translated some of the relevant passages from this text in *The `Awarifu `l-Ma`arif*.

¹² *Ahsan al-aqwal*, ch. 28, p. 132.

¹³ *Shama'il*, p. 360.

¹⁴ Gisu Daraz argues that the company, by joining in with the ecstatic, creates solidarity with him and avoids distracting him by their different behavior (Hussaini, p. 134).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Shama'il*, pp. 343-44, 354-55, 358, 359.

lives up to his nickname, "the spiritual clerk" (Dabir-i ma`nawi). He speaks in this text as an intellectual lay follower of the Sufis. His audience is not only the disciples of the Chishti order, but also the educated Muslims who are interested in Sufism but are not certain how to evaluate it. In his discussion *sama`*, he emphasizes the need for the novice to interpret the verses in terms of the attributes of God. Allegorical interpretation (*tahmil*) of the verses poetry in terms of God or the master is of course a dominant characteristic Sufi writing, from Sarraj and Ahmad Ghazali to Nizam al-Din Awliya' and Sharaf al-Din Maneri.¹⁷ According to Rukn al-Din Kashani, this is not to be done except in a theologically correct manner. The negative and divine attributes are to be correlated with the symbols of poetry (e.g., cheek of the beloved as the manifestation of divine beauty). This is a process of deliberate thought (*fikr*) in listening (*istima`*), aided by divine visitations (*waridat*). Or more formally, one proceeds through three journeys. "The first is in voice and verse, the second in active attributes, the third in essential attributes The root of the matter is thought in *sama`*."¹⁸ Examples of this kind of interpretation are the qualities of divine beauty and majesty, or grace and wrath, as polar manifestations of the power of God. Doubtless also many verses were then as now referred to the great Sufi masters, whose lives and deaths are still celebrated regularly by such concerts. As long as one can interpret the poetry in this way, it is a sign of divine guidance, according to Rukn al-Din. This is in general a very systematic and intellectualistic approach to *sama`*, but one that he feels will lead to transrational ecstasy. In contrast, a remarkable instance of Burhan al-Din's more direct spirituality is his story of the shaykh who heard a lute that was expressing the divine attributes with its strings. "Then he said, 'Lute, if you only knew what you are saying, every one of your strings would break.' No sooner were these words spoken than the strings of the lute broke. The disciples asked what the lute was saying. The master said, 'One string said, "O Merciful," and another string said, "O Compassionate."'"¹⁹ Burhan al-Din here alludes to the experience of divine attributes by direct perception. For Rukn al-Din, however, the theological interpretation is significant. This intellectualism may be contrasted with a passage that Rukn al-Din quotes from al-Hallaj, who insisted that *sama`* is not limited to words and thought -- "that which they hear without notes is not by means of word and voice, but is related to the perception of internal hearing."²⁰ On the highest level, however, *sama`* derives from spiritual experiences of the most sublime nature. Ever since the time of Junayd of Baghdad (d. 910), it has been common for Sufis to link *sama`* with the Qur'anic theme of the primordial covenant (*mithaq*) between God and the unborn souls of humanity, when God demanded, "Am I not your Lord (a-lastu bi-rabbikum)?" (Qur. 7.172). This moment, for the Sufis, was not only the perfect statement of the divine unity but also the forging of the link of love between God and the soul. Moreover, the music of *sama`* is nothing but the reverberation of that primal word of God: "*Sama`* is the recollection of the speech of the Covenant, and the burning of the fire of longing."²¹ The Sufis describe God as having placed a secret into the human heart that day, which is concealed like a spark in stone, but

¹⁷ For the latter's views on *sama`*, see Sharaf al-Din Manrin, *The Hundred Letters*, trans. Paul Jackson, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), pp. 382-93.

¹⁸ *Shama'il*, pp. 354-55.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 370; the same story is told in *Nafa'is al-anfas*, p. 47, but there the conclusion is that not all Qur'an readers understand it.

²⁰ *Shama'il*, p. 357.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

which blazes forth when struck with the steel of *sama`*.²² Junayd is quoted as saying, "When to the essence of the children of Adam on the day of the covenant there came the words, 'Am I not your Lord,' all the spirits became absorbed by its delight. Thus those who came into this world, whenever they hear a beautiful voice, their spirits tremble and are disturbed by the memory of that speech, because the influence of that speech is in the beautiful voice."²³ In other terms, the source of *sama`* is said to be the "rapture" or "attraction" (*jazb*) of God, a kind of energy that irresistibly draws one toward God. The Egyptian Sufi Dhu al-Nun (d. 859) said, "*sama`* is God's rapture that agitates (*yaz`aju*) hearts toward God." Alluding to the difference in perspective between lovers of God and lovers of the world, Dhu al-Nun said further, "*sama`* is the messenger of the Real (*al-haqq*). Whoever listens to God becomes a realizer of truth (*muhaqqiq*), and whoever listens to the carnal soul becomes a heretic" (*zindiq*).²⁴ Burhan al-Din even traced the spiritual source of one's physical appearance during *sama`*. He said that "*sama`* has two colors, one yellow and the other red. Everyone on whom distance, wrath, and fear descend turns pale, and everyone who has nearness, union, grace, and hope, blushes."²⁵ In this way, the fundamental modes of separation from God and union with God manifest directly in the color of the human face.

What would most interest an outside observer about *sama`* is to see what are the effects of the ecstasy on the participants, but this is a topic that the sources touch upon only lightly, since the spiritual experience is the goal. One of the most intriguing effects of *sama`* is dancing (*raqs*), usually spoken of as a spontaneous expression of ecstasy. It was perhaps only among the Mevlevi dervishes of Turkey that rhythmic dance was regularly practiced as empathetic ecstasy (nowadays the dance of the "whirling dervishes" is performed in concert halls and for tourists).²⁶ Though the early Sufi masters at best tolerated ecstatic dance, the Chishtis felt it was a natural effect of the powerful influences of *sama`*. Nizam al-Din Awliya' is reported as saying, "At the time of *sama`* and recitation, happiness descends on the heart. From the world of emanation to the world of power, then it affects the heart. These are the states which are between the kingdom (*mulk*) and the angelic realm (*malakut*). When its agitation becomes visible, it is called 'influences' (*asar*), which have come from the kingdom to the limbs."²⁷ *Sama`* creates a kind of channel between the heard and the spiritual world, and the surging of its energy overflows into the body and releases itself in dance. An older Sufi source states, "Every limb has a portion and a pleasure in *sama`*. The portion of the eye is weeping, the portion of the tongue is crying out, the portion of the hand is striking the garment, and the portion of the foot is dancing."²⁸ There is an enigmatic statement by Qushayri, frequently quoted in the sources, that runs as follows: "*Sama`* is an invitation, and ecstasy is an intention." By this Qushayri appears to emphasize the

²² Ghazali, quoted in *Shama'il*, p. 357.

²³ *Shama'il*, pp. 357-58.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 358, with a fuller version in *Ahsan al-aqwal*, p. 134.

²⁶ Hussaini, p. 120.

²⁷ *Nafa'is*, pp; 83 (Badr al-Din Samarqandi healed by *sama`*), 68-70 (problem of *sama`* at funerals causing deceased dervishes to rise up before the Resurrection).

²⁸ *Shama'il*, p. 360; this appears to be from Qushayri, cf. Hussaini, p. 121.

psychological dimension of participation in *sama`*. Curiously enough, the version of this saying cited by Rukn al-Din adds an extra phrase, so that it reads, "*sama`* is an invitation, ecstasy is an intention, and dance is union."²⁹ The additional conclusion, that "dance is union," appears to have been added by some Indian author, perhaps by Rukn al-Din himself. It seems to be typical of the Chishti approach to *sama`* that the ecstatic element has been raised to the dominant position. Other effects of *sama`* include healing and even raising people from the dead.³⁰ The influence of *sama`* was certainly considered to extend beyond the grave. "Khwaja Jalal al-Din told of being with Burhan al-Din Gharib on an ecstatic occasion, and mentioned Khwaja Zuhayr Saqqa' and how tears would fall from his eyes as soon as *sama`* started. Burhan al-Din Gharib suggested that they visit his tomb and perform pilgrimage (*ziyarat*). They did, and Burhan al-Din Gharib told Jalal that Khwaja Zuhayr Saqqa' still had those tears."³¹

This description of *sama`* and the accompanying ecstasy would be incomplete and one-sided without an account of the strict discipline that balanced it. What was the function of these rules? In brief, it was to keep open the avenues of divine influence while attempting to exclude the intrusion of the human ego. These rules were not only derived from the classical manuals of Sufism, but also were ideals that followed the concrete examples of the early Chishti masters. Most notably, in *Ahsan al-aqwal*, Hammad al-Din Kashani records illustrations of these principles from incidents in the circle of Burhan al-Din Gharib, and he also quotes Burhan al-Din Gharib on particular instances of Nizam al-Din Awliya's behavior during *sama`*. According to Hammad, every session began and ended with recitation of the Qur'an. All the participants were expected to perform ablutions as for ritual prayer, and abstain from chewing betel.³² It was important not to make *sama`* a mechanical performance. Therefore it should not be held at a fixed time every week, or be made into a profession or a habit.³³ Neither should one be forward or assertive during *sama`*. Since ecstasy was often the result of the listener's interpretation of a verse, the listener would desire to have that verse repeated; it is acceptable for the listener to request repetition, but "if in spite of his desire he submits and does not have them repeat it, God inspires the reciter" to do so.³⁴

It is forbidden to question others who are present about the meaning of a verse, since that is usually only a pretext for the questioner to show off his own knowledge, and talk distracts from the real meaning.³⁵ One should not criticize the singer, for this reduces the performance to an aesthetic occasion; it is better to refer the matter to God.³⁶ In any case, inspiration is of

²⁹ From Qushayri (Beirut ed., p. 154, cit. Lawrence, p. 79), without the last phrase about dance.

³⁰ *Nafa'is*, pp. 83 (Badr al-Din Samarqandi healed by *sama`*), 68-70 (problem of *sama`* at funerals causing deceased dervishes to rise up before the Resurrection).

³¹ *Ghara'ib*, p. 32. Zuhayr was known for his participation in *sama`* in Delhi; cf. *Nafa'is*, p. 62.

³² *Ahsan al-aqwal*, p. 129

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-35; *Shama'il*, p. 359.

³⁴ *Shama'il*, p. 360.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

greater importance in a singer than artistic skill, and is more likely to induce ecstasy.³⁷ Although the objective is ecstasy, total control of the ego is necessary to achieve this. Therefore it is forbidden to disclose or display the nature of one's spiritual state. Burhan al-Din Gharib has given a whole series of regulations that apply this principle to the physical behavior of participants in *sama`*.³⁸ For instance, he said, "If a dervish unintentionally raises his hand during audition, audition is no longer proper for him." One should be physically restrained. "A dervish should be sober and never allow his hands or feet to touch another; if this happens anyway, he should pull back."

Another rule states that if one goes to the extent of rolling on the ground, there is a fine to be paid. The example given is Burhan al-Din himself, who once had actually been crawling (*lukida*, a rare word), and received this penalty. It is doubtful that this lack of control had anything to do with the "Burhani" style of dancing that Mir Khwurd mentioned, since that must have been a measured dance of empathetic ecstasy. One cannot drink anything during a musical session or fan oneself, no matter how hot the weather. Once when someone committed this offense, Nizam al-Din Awliya' rebuked him in the metaphor of lovers' suffering, "Dervishes consume their blood; what have I to do with sherbet?" One should avoid giving greetings to others during *sama`* to avoid disturbing anyone's concentration. Zayn al-Din Shirazi reiterated this emphasis on solitude in the gathering: "If a hundred Sufis are in *sama`*, one walks so that one's skirt does not touch the skirt of another." But since human nature is what it is, mistakes will occur. When mistakes happen, it would be a serious breach of discipline to point this out publicly. If someone is behaving affectedly or without manners, the proper response is to "remain outwardly silent and help inwardly so that the state becomes balanced again. Our master [Burhan al-Din] said that one uses this prayer: 'Lord, prevent him from this, and protect me from this!'"³⁹ There are other rules governing precedence in rituals, the distribution of patched cloaks, gifts to the musicians, and so on, but it is difficult to reconstruct these aspects of the ritual on the basis of the texts alone.

From the writings of the Khuldabad Chishtis on *sama`*, we can see how Burhan al-Din Gharib stood firmly in the tradition of classical Sufism while at the same time he embodied the particular genius of the Chishti order. He faced the problem of the ambiguity of *sama`* in Islamic law by putting the burden of ethical responsibility on the individual participant in *sama`*. This emphasis on the contextuality of *sama`* was thoroughly in consonance with the internal orientation of Sufi ethics. Burhan al-Din also continued the Chishti practice of permitting empathetic ecstasy, the imitation of genuine ecstasy, as a way to introduce novices into the higher ranges of spiritual experience.

To avoid the problems of insincerity and affectation in *sama`*, Burhan al-Din insisted on the proper spiritual interpretation of the erotic verses recited in *sama`*, and he determined that the psychological basis of *sama`* was to be found in the most profound spiritual experiences of Islamic mysticism. To maintain the purity of this ritual form of meditation, Burhan al-Din urged

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ The following examples are taken from *Ahsan al-aqwal*, ch. 26, pp. 128-35.

³⁹ *Shama'il*, p. 360, also *Ahsan al-aqwal*, p. 135.

a discipline that was designed to eliminate expression of egotism as well as the habitual attitudes of secular life. We can summarize the Chishti attitude towards *sama`* -- and at the same time stress its importance in Sufism as a whole -- by quoting Shaykh `Umar al-Suhrawardi: The deniers of *sama`* are either ignorant of the example of the Prophet, deluded by their own knowledge, or perverse by nature. Some masters of *sama`* can understand a hundred thousand mysteries filled with treasuries of secrets in the voice of the singer and the verse.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ `Umar al-Suhrawardi, cited (as "Shaykh al-Shuyukh") in *Shama'il*, p. 352.