

## **Sufism and Music: From Rumi (d.1273) to Hazrat Inayat Khan (d.1927)**

### **Grade Level and Subject Areas**

Grades 7 to 12

Social Studies, English, Music

**Key Words:** Sufism, Rumi, Hazrat Inayat Khan

### **Overview of the lesson**

A mystic Muslim poet who wrote in Persian is one of American's favorite poets. His name is Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273), better known as Rumi. How did this happen? The mystical dimension of Islam as developed by Sufism is often a neglected aspect of Islam's history and the art forms it generated. Rumi's followers established the Mevlevi Sufi order in Konya, in what is today Turkey. Their *sema*, or worship ceremony, included both music and movement (the so-called whirling dervishes.) The Indian musician and Sufi Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882-1927) helped to introduce European and American audiences to Sufism and Rumi's work in the early decades of the twentieth century.

This lesson has three activities. Each activity is designed to enhance an appreciation of Sufism as reflected in Rumi's poetry. However, each may also be implemented independently of the others.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

The student will be able to:

- Define the characteristics of Sufism, using Arabic terminology.
- Analyze the role music played in the life of Inayat Khan and how he used it as a vehicle to teach about Sufism to American and European audiences.
- Interpret the poetry of Rumi with reference to the role of music.

### **Materials Needed**

- The handouts provided with this lesson:  
Handout 1: The Emergence of Sufism in Islam (featured in the  
Handout 2: The Life and Music of Inayat Khan  
Handout 3: Music in the Poems of Rumi

- Suggested but not required: *Enemy of the Reich: A Muslim Woman Defies the Nazis in World War II Paris* by Unity Productions Foundation (<http://www.upf.tv/noorteachers>). Noor Inayat Khan, the daughter of Inayat Khan, is the subject of this documentary.

## Time

One class period per each of the three activities, plus preparatory homework.

## Procedures/Activities

### Activity 1:

Explain that in this lesson students will analyze two poems by Rumi, a mystic who lived in the thirteenth century and settled in Konya, in central Anatolia. Rumi's followers established the Mevlevi Sufi Order, famous today for its "whirling dervishes." Rumi believed that music played an important part in worship.

- Ask students to think about the relationship of music to religious worship. Can they name some religious traditions that have incorporated music into their worship? Sanctioned only voice, or only voice and particular instruments? Condemned it altogether?

Explain that before they read Rumi's poems, they are going to learn something about the Sufi tradition in Islam.

- Distribute Handout 1, *The Emergence of Sufism*, for homework. Ask students to circle the words in Arabic that are in italics and to make a list of them. [See glossary prepared for this lesson set.]
- The next day, divide the class into working groups to answer questions on Handout Sheet 1.
- Reconvene the class to review answers, using Answer Key 1 (below) as a guide.

Optional Activity ⇒ Distribute a blank Venn Diagram on which students can compare and contrast the Chishti to the Mevelvi Sufi orders. Where and when was each founded, and by whom? How did each incorporate local customs into worship? How did music play a role in the formation of each order? How is each remembered through pilgrimage? What new artistic forms did each create? Students can also further research how each order spread. (Both founders came from Persia; one settled in Delhi, India, and the other in Seljuk Turkey.) Music was important to both traditions. Rumi, the founder of the Melevis, is remembered as poet, while Chishti founder Nizamuddin Auwliya broke new ground in Indian music.

Optional Activity ⇒ Ask students to work in small groups to write a description of the life of a follower of a Sufi order, incorporating at least eight of the Arabic words that appear in italics in the text. [See glossary prepared for this lesson set.]

## Activity 2:

Explain that students will learn about how the Indian musician Inayat Khan was sent by his Sufi master to introduce Sufism to Europe and the United States. Remind students that in the first decades of the twentieth century, there was limited access to recorded music – “records” and no radio. To hear Indian or any other “world music,” one had to travel to the country of its origin or have traveling musicians come to you.

⇒ Play an example of Inayat Khan’s music for students to hear and respond to. There are several YouTube recordings of his music that are accompanied with a variety of still photographs. It is best to play a short segment of music more than once, since students will not be familiar with this style of music. Go to YouTube for Hazrat Inayat Khan 1909 vol: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gdq\\_V0miQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gdq_V0miQ)

Ask students

- How did Khan’s role as musician draw audiences to hear him speak as well as play?
- How do musicians today bridge cultural divides or produce “crossover music”? What musicians today have done this (Ricky Martin, Gloria Estefan etc.)? How did Indian musician Ravi Shankar influence the music of the Beatles?
- Do you think music is a “universal language”? Why or why not?
- Assign **Handout 2. The Life and Music of Inayat Khan**. Students can read it and answer the questions for homework or in small groups during class time.

⇒Optional: In a short essay, ask students to compare the goals and life of Inayat Khan to his grandfather Maula Baksh. (Both used music to foster bonds across musical and/or spiritual traditions. Both also founded organizations. However, Khan gave up his music, while music remained for Baksh a life-long calling.)

## Activity 3: Music in the Poetry of Rumi

In class, Distribute **Handout 3: Music in the Poems of Rumi**. Read out loud the introduction to the life and work of Rumi.



### *The Song of the Reed*

- Ask students to read and respond to this poem in class. After students read it to themselves, ask several students to read it aloud. Then play an example of music for the *ney*, or Turkish flute. The *ney* is an ancient instrument still used in Middle Eastern music. Originally it was made from a hollow cane or reed, such as bamboo. Ask students how the sound of this instrument makes them feel.
- Explain that “Love” in this poem refers to Divine Love and Love of the Divine.

Examples of music to play:

YouTube Traditional Turkish Musical Instrument ‘Ney,’ Rumi and Sufism  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3BZZuU2rgA>

Divine Embrace by Kandaman Babbar  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_K337TrtYOw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K337TrtYOw)

Pose the questions below to help students understand the poem. As students share personal responses, help them to substantiate their reasoning by asking, “What words in the poem make you think so?” Also ask students to connect the poem to what they have learned about Sufism, Inayat Khan and music.

The answers offered in parentheses are given as possible interpretations.

- Why is the Reed forlorn? [It has been taken from its rush bed, torn from its roots. There is pain in separation, and yearning to return to its origins, metaphorically speaking, God.]
- When in the poem does the Reed speak? [We can see that stanzas two and three are framed in quotation marks. The quotation marks indicate the beginning and end of the Reed’s plaint.]
- Why does the word “Hearken” appear so often in the poem and to what effect? [The poet demands that we listen to the Reed; the Reed also beckons us twice to listen. “Hearken” is the imperative form of the verb.]

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- What does the Reed wish for in stanza three? [To be understood by a soul-mate, the way in which Rumi and Shams understood one another's souls. While some "listen", "none can see and none can hear." The poet/Reed invites us to listen more carefully.]
- In what way is the Reed like the poet? [Answers may vary. Both are inflamed and inspired by Love. Both "speak." Both wish to be understood.]
- Inayat Khan wrote: "*Explaining about the soul Rumi says, 'The melodious music that comes as a cry from the heart of the flute of reed brings to you a message: the flute wants to say, 'I was taken away from the stem to which I belonged, I was cut apart from that stem, and several holes were made in my heart. And it is this that made me sad; and my cry appeals to every human being.'*" <http://hazrat-inayat-khan.org/php/views.php?h1=34&h2=5>. How does the sound of the *ney* reinforce this sentiment?

Optional ⇒ Poetry and music share rhythm and rhyme. Create a tune to which this poem could be sung, then try to sing it.

⇒ Optional Activity: Compare these two poems about music to "Where Everything is Music," a poem by Rumi translated by Coleman Barks, which is posted on the website of Bill Moyers PBS at

[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/foolingwithwords/main\\_barks.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/foolingwithwords/main_barks.html)

This poem can also be found in Coleman Barks with John Moyne *The Essential Rumi*. (New York: Harper, 1994), p. 34-35.

### ***Remembered Music***

After students read "Remembered Music" as translated by Nicholson to themselves, ask several students to read it out loud. Then pose the following questions:

- What questions do you have about the meaning of the first stanza? According to Rumi, where does "music" come from? What does "faith" do regarding music? Ask students to write down some possible answers.
- Now ask students to read the first stanza of the same poem as translated by Abdulla. Ask them to reconsider the answers to the questions: According to Rumi where does music come from? What does "faith" do in relation to music? Students should now rewrite their answers, putting together what they have gathered from *both* translations of the original poem in Persian. Did having a second translated version help students to decipher the poet's meaning? Why or why not?

[Possible answer: Music echoes the melody of celestial spheres. Celestial spheres are in motion; their rotations create the patterns of music. Faith surpasses reason. Faith is able to create harmony out of dissonance, which reason is unable to do.]

Continue to re-read the rest of the poem as translated by Nicholson.

- How does the second stanza reflect the Sufi understanding of *Tawhid*? (See background essay on Sufism, and the Glossary.) [We are all part of one universe in which everything is interconnected. We are part of Adam. Even though far distant from him in time, we retain a oneness with him of the experience of God. Music also remains in us as a primeval memory.]
- What does music do for us, according to the final stanza? [Music sustains our love of God; it is our spiritual ‘meat’ or sustenance. Music takes us out of our earthly realm to a higher one. The fire can be seen as purifying us. Listening to music, our now ever-more spiritual nature is deeply satisfied, and we are in harmony with one another (“joy and peace.”)]

Optional ⇒ Compare these two poems about music to “Where Everything is Music,” a poem by Rumi translated by Coleman Barks, which is posted on the website of Bill Moyers PBS at [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/foolingwithwords/main\\_barks.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/foolingwithwords/main_barks.html). This poem can also be found in Coleman Barks with John Moyne, *The Essential Rumi*. (New York: Harper, 1994), p. 34-35.

Optional ⇒ Write an essay about how Rumi uses simile and metaphor to help us understand the relationship of music to the Divine.

## Extension

- Hold a poetry reading festival of Rumi’s poetry, complete with appropriate musical accompaniment (either recorded or live). Students can find poems by Rumi they wish to read and also write poems in the style of Rumi.

## Assessment

### Activity 1.

How effectively did students fill in the Question Chart for the reading in Activity 1?

How effectively did students complete an Optional Activity if you assigned it?

- Optional Activity ⇒ Use a Venn Diagram to help students draw on what they know to compare and contrast the Chishti to the Mevelvi Sufi orders.
- Optional Activity ⇒ Ask students to work in small groups to write a description of the life of a follower of a Sufi order, incorporating at least eight of the Arabic words that appear in italics in the text

### Activity 2.

How effectively did students fill in the Question Chart for the reading in Activity 2?

How effectively did students complete the Optional Activity if you assigned it?

- Optional Activity ⇒ Write an essay in which you compare the goals and life of Inayat Khan to his grandfather Maula Baksh.

### Activity 3.

How effectively did students participate in discussions of Rumi's poetry?

How effectively did students complete the Optional Activity if you assigned it?

- ⇒ Optional Activity: Poetry and music share rhythm and rhyme. How would you sing this poem, or set it to music?
- ⇒ Optional Activity: Compare these two poems about music to "Where Everything is Music," a poem by Rumi translated by Coleman Barks, which is posted on the website (<http://www.upf.tv/noorteachers>).

## Answer Keys

### Answer Key: Handout 1. *The Emergence of Sufism in Islam*

Note: These suggested answers include some additional clarifying information.

Question	Response
Define Sufism and how it relates to <i>tassawuf</i> . To which Companions of the Prophet Muhammad does Sufism trace its roots?	<i>Sawf</i> means wool; thus <i>tassawuf</i> refers to those who wear wool, the ascetics who scorned worldly possessions, the Sufis. The term "mystical dimension of Islam" refers to Sufism. Sufis trace their origins to Ali or Abu Bakr.
During the so-called Golden Age of Islam the Sufi "quest for knowledge" or the Sufi Way was followed by a variety of types of people. Who were they?	Those who practiced crafts, authors, musicians, scientists. Sufism and the pursuit of science were not seen as antithetical; both were practiced in the pursuit of knowledge.
What were some of the sources in Ancient Greek philosophy that informed Sufi thought?	The Sufis were drawn to the philosophy of Plato, who posited that reality is not revealed through scientific inquiry alone. However, great Muslim scholars like the medical doctor and polymath Ibn Sina, who was influenced by Aristotle, also made an impact on Sufi thought.
What was a <i>tariqa</i> ? How were they named? Where did members meet? How did members meditate?	A <i>tariqa</i> was a particular Sufi path named after its founder. Followers met in <i>khanegahs</i> or <i>tekkes</i> , where fellow members (often travelers) could lodge and study. Depending upon their affiliation, Sufis practiced different <i>zhikr</i> , or forms of remembrance, usually a repeated sequence of words or actions to aid in meditation of



	the divine.
Were women permitted to be teachers of Sufism?	Women could follow a Sufi path and indeed be teachers within the path. Rabi'ah al Basri (born c. 713 CE) is one such example.
What philosopher integrated Sufi philosophy with traditional Islamic theology?	Al'Ghazali is regarded as the great thinker who synthesized the theological, legalistic and mystical components of Islam.
Which of the world's most populous Muslim countries converted to Islam because of the influence of Sufis?	India (originally including Pakistan) and Indonesia. This was a gradual process during which the Sufi lodges ( <i>khanegahs</i> or <i>tekkes</i> ) enabled Muslims to travel, study and live in regions as yet unacquainted with Islam.
Explain why <i>tawhid</i> is a central tenant of Sufism?	All Muslims attest that God is One in the <i>Shahada</i> , the First Pillar of Islam. The concept of <i>tawhid</i> , according to Sufism, posits a delicate balance between God and how he is manifest in the world. Among different Islamic traditions, these interpretations can be the source of disagreement.
How did the Chishti Order integrate music into Sufi practice?	The founder of the Chishti Order, Nizamuddin Auwiiya, used music to enhance spirituality. For this purpose, the Chishti Order designed instruments, such as the sitar and table, that have become part of the classical music heritage of India.
For what is Rumi most remembered for today?	Rumi came from Persia and wrote mainly in Persian. He settled in what is now Turkey, where the Melevi's found special favor by the Ottoman rulers. Within his order the prescribed practices of the "Whirling Dervishes" took root as a special form of <i>dihkr</i> . Rumi's poetry is read worldwide, and especially in the United States.
How was the mission of Hazrat Inayat Khan influenced by the Chishti Order ?	Khan's Sufi teacher was a member of Chisti Order, and thus Khan was encouraged to use music to enhance spirituality.

## Answer Key Handout 2: The Life and Music of Inayat Khan

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Question	Response
When and where was Inayat Khan born? How did his ancestry affect his life?	Khan was born in India in 1882. He had royal ancestry dating back to Tipu Sultan. This probably gave him entrance to elite circles in both India and in Europe. Through his grandfather Maula Baksh (1833-1896) he also had entry into the world of Indian classical music and became a musician.
What were the goals of Maula Baksh?	Baksh is a pivotal figure in Indian music. He wished to fuse the musical traditions of southern India (Hindu) and northern India (Persian and Muslim) such that both could be notated using the system he created. Thus traditions could be transmitted not only from master to apprentice but were now preserved by the academy he founded, the Gyanshala.
What is the relationship between Muslim worship and music?	In terms of Islamic textual sources, music is neither approved nor condemned. In practice some Muslim traditions condemn it, while others, such as the Sufis, feel that its purposeful use can enhance spirituality.
How did the Sufis use music in their lives?	According to Inayat Khan, Sufis used music to control both the body and mind. Music was set aside from daily routines and reserved for worship.
In the explanation of why he gave up music, how does Khan equate music with spiritual states of being?	Music has taught Khan to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tune instruments as well souls.</li> <li>• harmonize notes as well as people.</li> <li>• find the melody of thought.</li> <li>• use his heart as an instrument, the flute.</li> </ul>

## Resources

Abdulla, Raficq, trans. *Worlds of Paradise: Selected Poems of Rumi*. New York: Penguin, 2000.

Barks, Coleman, trans. *The Essential Rumi*. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.

Basu, Shrabani. *Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan*. New Lebanon, New York:

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Khan, Inayat. *The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan: The Mysticism of Sound*. Geneva: International Headquarters of the Sufi Movement, 1979 (1962).

Nasr, Seyyyed Hossein, ed. *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations*. New York: Crossroad, 1991.

## Standards

**Common Core State Standards** <http://www.corestandards.org>

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1  
Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.1  
Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.7.4
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.4
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7  
Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1.B  
Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2  
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.

**National Council for the Social Studies Framework for Teaching, Learning and Assessment** <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards>

Strand 1 Culture  
Middle Grades

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- Understand how individuals learn the elements of their culture through interactions with others, and how individuals learn of other cultures through communication and study.
- Understand how people from different cultures develop different values and ways of interpreting experience.

High school

- Understand how cultural diffusion occurs over time and place.

Strand 9 Global Connections

Middle Grades

- Investigate and explain the ways in which aspects of culture, such as language, beliefs and traditions, may facilitate understanding or lead to misunderstanding between cultures.

High School

- Understand the causes and consequences of various types of global connections.

**McRel Music 9-12:** Midcontinent Research for Education and Learning, Content Knowledge Standards and Benchmark Database.

<http://www2.mcrel.org/compendium/standardDetails.asp?subjectID=11&standardID=7>

1. Classified unfamiliar but representative aural examples of music (e.g., by genre, style, historical period, culture).
2. Knows various roles that musicians perform (e.g. entertainer, teacher, transmitter of cultural tradition) and representative individuals who have functioned in these roles.

## HANDOUTS

### Handout Readings, Questions and Activities

#### Handout 1. *The Emergence of Sufism in Islam*

[Note: This reading comes from “The Emergence of Sufism in Islam” from *The Arrival of “Oriental” Spiritual Traditions in the West in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, by \_\_\_\_\_. ]

Sufism, the gnostic current within Islam (the Greek *gnostic* means directing “knowing” or experience) and its teachers, had been responsible at the start for the spread of Islam to the Indian subcontinent. It blended harmoniously with the older Hindu religion and traditions in India -- which almost deprived Central Asian imperialist kings of the excuse that they were “converting idolaters” when they decided to invade India.<sup>3</sup> This merging

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of traditions was particularly swift in the Western part of India, the region from which Inayat Khan hailed. The actual name of Sufism in Islam is *tassawuf* in Arabic, which derives from the root word for “wool,” (*sawf*) as many early ascetics in the Middle East wore simple wool garments. Sufi Muslims for the last 1400 years have traced their view of spiritual practice to two companions of the Prophet Mohammad, either Ali ibn Abi Taleb, his cousin, or Abu Bakr. The term “mystical dimension of Islam” has been applied to describe Sufism by one of the greatest Islamic scholars in the West, Anne Marie Schimmel, in her influential book of the same name.<sup>4</sup>

In the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, the beginning of the Golden Age of Islam, while science and arts began to reach a peak of activity, Sufism had become part and parcel of much of the Islamic culture. Craft guilds, artists, authors, musicians, and the advocates of science were often affiliated with Sufism. Islamic scientific and philosophical inquiry was closely aligned with it as well; these quests for knowledge and understanding moved on parallel tracks in the Islamic world.

Ibn Sina, or Avicenna, the tenth century founder of the field of Medicine as we know it in both the East and West, was also the one of the most illustrious philosophers of the Islamic Golden Age. His work partly lined up with that of Sufi philosophers, as he was concerned with the nature of the “self.” However, because he cast doubt on the existence of an eternal soul, he was further from mainstream Islamic thinkers than the Sufi thinkers in that regard. Ibn Sina was influenced by the philosophy of Aristotle, especially in his scientific work, and was not much interested in Plato, who appealed both to nation builders and mystics. For Sufi scholars, the philosophy of Plato and Neo-Platonism were the most important works from classical antiquity. Still, Ibn Sina’s inquiries into the nature of “self” and the ways the self evolves -- in a theory he called the “Flying Man” -- constituted a philosophical inquiry that was of great interest to Sufis.

By the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, the groups dedicated to ‘irfan (translated gnosis: direct experience of the divine) had evolved into different “paths” (*tariqa*) often named for different founders. Their centers could be mosques, but in a more intimate and controlled manner, members would meet in lodges, or *khanegahs* or *tekkes*. There they might focus on contemplative practice or meditation, a form of “remembrance” of the divine (*zhikr*) based on aligning the breath with sacred syllables (*wazaif*) or the divine names. Using the breath to align the “heart,” they were engaged in constant remembrance of God in all they did and all they experienced. These seekers, practicing the teachings of the shaikh or master, were known as *dervishes* -- those who stand at the “threshold” -- or *fakirs* -- practitioners of spiritual poverty or humility. In many parts of the world women were also dervishes and teachers as well.<sup>5</sup>

### **The great tradition of “oneness,” which shaped the Inayat Khan and his family**

Abu Hamed Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), one of the most famous and influential theologians and scholars of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), determined there was an authentic and lasting relationship between Sufism and the rest of the Muslim community (*ummah*) in

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works such as *The Alchemy of Happiness* (*Kimiya'-yi sa'adat*) and *The Niche of Lights* (*Mishkat al-anwar*). He embraced the inner or *esoteric* Sufi practice combining it with his own “exoteric” religious practices. Al’Ghazali also established a firm connection between Sufi philosophy and traditional Islamic Theology. (He was associated with the important Ash’arite school of theology.) This created some new possibilities for the alignment of Islam more closely with practices prioritizing peace and restraint (*sabr*) through a mindfulness of Unity (*tawhid*).<sup>6</sup>

After Al-Ghazali, and until its arrival in the West in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sufism had a secure place within much of the *ummah* and the Islamic world, and in the Golden Age of Islam *tassawuf* became immensely popular in the areas of the former Persian Empire, Arab countries, northern Africa and Central Asia. Today a few hundred million Muslims — out of a total 1.5 billion -- openly align themselves with Sufism, even when they are not dedicated practitioners. But numbers matter little to Sufis, and in any case, Sufism’s traditions have become deeply embedded in the most populous Muslim countries of the world: both India (and Pakistan) and Indonesia. These are countries where Sufis originally drew populations to Islam without any coercion.

Sufi Muslims place special emphasis on the Islamic concept of *tawhid* or “Unity” or “oneness” – which does not simply mean monotheism. For Sufis, it points to the “Unity of all Being” (*wahdat al-wujud*), suggesting all is part of the One – and the Divine is present in us and we belong to the Divine. Some of these spiritual orders emphasized study of the Qur’an and meditation (*moaqabeh*) in a state of heightened awareness, or “sobriety.” Other orders were part of the “school of ecstasy.”

One of many Persian sages who settled in India was Moinuddin Chishti (1141-1246), whose teachings even in the pre-Mughal period were so powerful that his *Chishti* order became one of the widespread schools in India. The *pir*, or master, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi encouraged and refined the development of the forms of music to enhance spiritual states. (Sufis and Muslims in general have been split on the use of music for spiritual purposes.) His followers, like the great poet Amir Khusrow, began designing the instruments that have become the foundation of later classical Indian music (such as the sitar and tabla), and Qawwali music -- popular to this day -- emerged in Nizamuddin’s Chishti order. After his death, the mosque and shrine dedicated to Hazrat Nizamuddin became a great pilgrimage site Muslims all over central India, as did the other great Chishti center in Ajmer.<sup>7</sup>

In the Middle East, during the Seljuk and Ottoman Empires, the Mevlevi order was one of many that thrived. It had been named after the Sufi master and poet Rumi in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, who also came from the area of the Persian Empire. His widely influential spiritual poems, or *ghazals*, and six-volume work of stories and teachings, *The Masnavi*, had a widespread and lasting influence. Some in Rumi’s lineage have become known as “whirling dervishes,” who practice a ritual form of meditation involving turning with the

body, placing the breath on the heart God. This practice, which in central Asia emerged when people engaged in sacred chanting, or *zhikr* (remembrance), had been adopted by Rumi as a dervish practice. It was refined to a ritual dance with sacred music by his son Sultan Walad.<sup>8</sup> The Mevlevi order was held in special esteem for centuries by the Seljuk and Ottoman Empires, and Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent built them a splendid Octagonal Tekke in Galata in Istanbul, visited by many travellers in Istanbul to this day -- just as Rumi's tomb in Konya is a pilgrimage site for Muslims from all over the world. Rumi's experience of union or oneness gave rise to poems that break down barriers between peoples, religions and nations:

What can I do, Muslims? I do not know myself.  
I am neither Christian nor Jew, neither Magian nor Muslim,  
I am not from east or west, not from land or sea,  
not from the shafts of nature nor from the spheres of the firmament,  
not of the earth, not of water, not of air, not of fire.  
I am not from the highest heaven, not from this world,  
not from existence, not from being.  
I am not from India, not from China, not from Bulgaria, not from Saqsin,  
not from the realm of the two Iraqs, not from the land of Khurasan.  
I am not from the world, not from beyond,  
not from heaven and not from hell.  
I am not from Adam, not from Eve, not from paradise and not from Ridwan.  
My place is placeless, my trace is traceless,  
no body, no soul, I am from the soul of souls.  
I have chased out duality, lived the two worlds as one.  
One I seek, one I know, one I see, one I call.  
He is the first, he is the last, he is the outer, he is the inner.  
Beyond *He* and *He is* I know no other.<sup>9</sup>

Over the last few decades, Rumi, who died in 1272, has become the most consistently popular poet in the Western world, and has provided a gateway to a sincere appreciation of Islam to millions of readers who have no background in the Arab, Persian or Islamic world.

This work by Rumi is included here to provide a “taste” of the spiritual tradition of Noor Inayat Khan's father, who had been instructed by his teacher to bring Sufism to the west 120 ago. As had been the case in India a thousand years earlier, the Sufi tradition emerging from Islam has done much to break down stereotypes in the West and has helped contribute to a somewhat more welcoming environment, in North America especially, as Muslim immigration has begun to grow.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the renowned Indian musician Hazrat Inayat Khan, whose spiritual teachers were aligned with the Chishti order in India -- the father of French Resistance heroine, children's author and concert musician Noor Inayat Khan -- was instructed by his teacher to bring Sufism to the West. The spiritual institutions he shaped

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were among the first to spring from the Islamic world in Western Europe and eventually North America. At the end of a prolific teaching career, with thousands of followers in the West, he returned to India at the end of his life, and is buried at the *dargah* and mosque of Hazrat Nizamuddin in Delhi.

1 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*. Blacksburg VA: Wilder Publications, 2010

2 Vivekananda's Chicago Speech.

[https://arunshanbhag.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/vivekananda\\_chicagospeech.pdf](https://arunshanbhag.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/vivekananda_chicagospeech.pdf) (p.8)

3 *Macrohistory: And World Timeline*, "Islam Arrives: 711-1200."

<http://www.fsmitha.com/h3/india02.htm>

4 Anne Marie Schimmel, *Mytical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 3-6.

5 Yousef Daoud Martin, *The Rose and the Lotus: Sufism and Buddhism*. (Xlibris Spirituality: Thorofare NJ, 2009) 102-103.

Directions: Fill in the following Question Chart with answers based on the reading.

Question	Response
Define Sufism and how it relates to <i>tassawuf</i> . To which Companions of the Prophet Muhammad does Sufism trace its roots?	
During the so-called Golden Age of Islam the Sufi "quest for knowledge" or the Sufi Way was followed by a variety of types of people. Who were they?	
What were some of the sources in Ancient Greek philosophy that informed Sufi thought?	
What was a <i>tariqa</i> ? How were they named? Where did members meet? How did members meditate?	
Were women permitted to be teachers of Sufism?	
What philosopher integrated Sufi	

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philosophy with traditional Islamic theology?	
Which of the world's most populous Muslim countries converted to Islam because of the influence of Sufis?	
Explain why <i>tawhid</i> is a central tenant of Sufism.	
How did the Chishti Order integrate music into Sufi practice?	
For what is Rumi most remembered today?	
How was the mission of Hazrat Inayat Khan influenced by the Chishti Order?	

## Handout 2. The Life and Music of Inayat Khan

By Joan Brodsky Schur

Inayat Khan, also known with his honorific *Hazrat* Inayat Khan, was born in India in 1882. He was a highly respected musician of Indian classical music who founded the Sufi Order of the West, now known as Sufi Order International. Inayat Khan used music as a means to teach spirituality. To further this goal, he traveled widely on three continents, eventually settling with his wife and four children in France. Among his children was Noor Inayat Khan (1914-1944), who worked for the British as a secret agent in Nazi-occupied France. Inayat Khan returned to India at the end of his life and died there in 1927. His Indian lineage was illustrious. On his mother's side he was a descendant of Tipu Sultan, the 18<sup>th</sup> century princely ruler of Mysore, in southern India. He was also the grandson of a famous Indian musician, Maula Baksh.

Maula Baksh (1833-1896) was born in Baroda (also known as Vadodara), Gujarat, in the northwest of India. In 1860 he entered a musical competition held in the court of Mysore in southern India. There he played the *vina* (or *veena*), an ancient Indian stringed instrument. What distinguished his playing was his ability to combine South Indian Carnatic classical style with North Indian music. Carnatic music of the South descends from ancient Hindu tradition, whereas North Indian music reflects a legacy of Persian and Islamic influences. Historian Janaki Bakhle writes, "Maula Baksh envisioned a music that was nonsectarian, multilingual, and religiously inclusive. He also encompassed

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within the larger domain of music what later codifiers would separate into Hindu texts and Muslim practices.”<sup>i</sup> Baksh created a written notation system, such that Indian music could be learned by novices – including school children. He encouraged women to learn to play instruments. In order to preserve the legacy of Indian musical traditions into the modern era, Baksh established a musical academy, the Gyanshala, the first of its kind in India. Like his grandfather, Inayat Khan would also use music to cross cultural boundaries, this time beyond India.

As a young man, Inayat played for elite audiences throughout India. He also taught music at the prestigious Gyanshala music academy founded by his grandfather. It was Muhammad Abu Hashim Madani who initiated Inayat into Sufism, primarily into the Chishti Order. The Chishti Order was founded in 930 CE in Afghanistan and spread to northwest India by the middle of the twelfth century. Madani encouraged Inayat to leave India in order to introduce Europeans and Americans to the spiritual traditions of Sufism. The vehicle would be the classical music of India. In 1910 Inayat left India for New York City along with his brother and his cousin. There the Khans formed the Royal Musicians of Hindustan. They played at Columbia University and went on tour in the American West with avant-garde dancer Ruth St. Denis. In addition to playing, Inayat also gave lectures on Sufism. In California, he met his future wife, Ora Ray Baker, who would become Ameena Begum, mother of Noor Inayat Khan. The couple lived briefly in England and Russia and settled in France. Along the way Inayat Khan met and played for a wide array of the artistic vanguard of Europe, including composer Claude Debussy and sculptor Auguste Rodin. From France he traveled to Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Holland. Wherever he went, he built a following for his Sufi movement.

Inayat Khan espoused the use of music as a means to greater spirituality. In Islam the call to prayer as well as Quranic recitations are reserved for the voice alone. Neither is sung, although great training is required to render them beautiful to the ear. Only some Islamic traditions ban music altogether. Scholar Jean-Louis Michon writes, “No Quranic prescription explicitly aims at music. The *Sunnah*, the “customs” of the Prophet, cites only anecdotal elements, none of which constitutes a peremptory argument either for or against musical practice. The third source of Islamic Law, the opinion of doctors of the Law, spokesmen recognized by social consensus, varies extremely ranging from a categorical condemnation of music to its panegyric while passing through various degrees of acceptance and reservation.”<sup>ii</sup> In his *The Mysticism of Sound and Music* Inayat Khan wrote that, “The Sufis of ancient times, the great mystics, used to develop this art [of music] in order to bring about poise in life after everyday activity ... The great poets, such as Rumi of Persia, used to have music for their meditation, and by the help of music they used to repose and to control the activity of their body and mind.”<sup>iii</sup>

While most Sufi orders view their history and practice as residing within Islamic tradition, Inayat Khan saw the spirituality he espoused as surpassing any particular religion. As quoted on the website of the Sufi Order International, Inayat Khan said, “This is not the time to advance any particular sect, church, or belief. We have too many sects. They are only outer forms. The things that really matter are deeper.”<sup>iv</sup>

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Inayat Khan eventually gave up his music to concentrate on his Sufi message alone. In the Prologue to his book *The Mysticism of Sound and Music* he wrote:

I gave up my music because I had received from it all that I had to receive ... Now, if I do anything, it is to tune souls instead of instruments; to harmonize people instead of notes. If there is anything in my philosophy, it is the law of harmony: that one must put oneself in harmony with oneself and with others. I have found in every word a certain musical value, a melody in every thought, harmony in every feeling; and I have tried to interpret the same thing, with clear and simple words, to those who used to listen to my music. I played the vina until my heart turned into this very instrument; then I offered this instrument to the divine Musician, the only musician existing. Since then I have become His flute; and when He chooses, He plays His music.

Today one can listen to clips of Inayat Khan's recorded music on the web, such as <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s76lsNntsIE>. Many of the books he wrote are still in print and available in university libraries.

Directions: Fill in the following Question Chart with answers based on the reading.

Question	Response
When and where was Inayat Khan born? How did his ancestry affect his life?	
What were the goals of Maula Baksh?	
What is the relationship between Muslim worship and music?	

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How did the Sufis use music in their lives?	
In the explanation of why he gave up music, how does Khan equate music with spiritual states of being?	

### Handout 3: Music in the Poems of Rumi

Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273 CE) was born in the Persian Empire. He was descended from an illustrious line of Islamic jurists (*ulama*), teachers and scholars. Fearing the Mongol invaders, his father moved the family west to Konya, in what is today Turkey.

By 1244 Rumi had established himself, like his forbears, as a scholar and religious leader. His life changed when in that year he met Shams of Trabiz, a wandering Sufi mystic. Most saw only an old disheveled man. But in Shams, Rumi recognized a spiritual soulmate far more advanced than he along the Sufi Path. During the two years that they spent together, Shams inspired Rumi to love God through self-reflection, music, movement and eventually through poetry. Shams then disappeared from Konya, wandering once again, or perhaps murdered by Rumi's jealous followers. The pain of separation from Shams is reflected many times over in Rumi's poetry. Rumi wrote most of his poetry in Persian, some in the name of Shams (*Divan-e Shams*). His six-volume work is the *Masnavi*. Some of his poetic work is in quatrains; others are odes in the ancient Arabic-Persian poetic form known as the *ghazal*. Today Rumi's tomb in Konya is the site of worldwide pilgrimage.

## Music in the Poetry of Rumi



**An Ottoman Era Manuscript  
depicting Rumi  
and his spiritual instructor Shams-e-Tabrizi.**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumi#/media/File:Meeting\\_of\\_Jalal\\_al-Din\\_Rumi\\_and\\_Molla\\_Shams\\_al-Din.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumi#/media/File:Meeting_of_Jalal_al-Din_Rumi_and_Molla_Shams_al-Din.jpg)

### The Song of the Reed

Hearken to this Reed forlorn,  
Breathing, even since 'twas torn  
From its rush bed, a strain  
Of impassioned love and pain.

“The secret of my song, though near,  
None can see and none can hear.  
Oh, for a friend to know the sign  
And mingle all his soul with mine!

‘Tis the flame of Love that fired me,  
‘Tis the wine of Love inspired me.  
Wouldst thou learn how lovers bleed,  
Hearken, hearken to the Reed!”

From *Selected Poems of Rumi* by Jalalu'l-Din Rumi

Translated from the Persian by Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (1868-1945)

Dover Publications 2001 pages 2 and 3

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[Note: Love in Rumi's poetry refers to Divine Love]

### **Remembered Music**

'Tis said, the pipe and lute that charm our ears  
Derive their melody from rolling spheres;  
But Faith, o'erpassing speculation's bound,  
Can see what sweetens every jangled sound.

We, who are parts of Adam, heard with him  
The song of angels and of seraphim.  
Our memory, though dull and sad, retains  
Some echo still of those unearthly strains.

Oh, music is the meat of all who love,  
Music uplifts the soul to realms above.  
The ashes glow, the latent fires increase:  
We listen and are fed with joy and peace

Selected Poems of Rumi by Jalalu'l-Din Rumi  
Translated from the Persian by Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (1868-1945)  
Dover Publications 2001 and 3



Painting from Hasht-Behesht palace, Isbahan, Iran, from 1669, artist unknown. CC Wikimedia Commons at [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hasht-Behesht\\_Palace\\_ney.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hasht-Behesht_Palace_ney.jpg).

### **Untitled (Remembered Music)**

Music opens our hearts and surely ensnares  
With echoes that spill from celestial spheres:  
And faith far beyond the impaled cast of thought  
Turns ugly dissonance to honey by angels brought.  
Translated by Raficq Abdulla

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Raficq Abdulla, *Words of Paradise: Selected Poems of Rumi*. New York: Viking, 2000 (13).

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<sup>i</sup> Janaki Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005 (46).

<sup>ii</sup> Jean-Louis Michon, “Sacred Music and Dance in Islam” in *Islamic Spirituality: Manifestations*, edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr; New York: Crossroad, 1991 (469).

<sup>iii</sup> Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*. Boston: Shambhala, 1996 (52).

<sup>iv</sup> Sufi Order International, <http://www.sufiorder.org/vision.html>