

ECMSAS, Bonn 2010

Panel 33: New Approaches to the Study of Sufism in South Asia. Perspectives from the History of Emotions

Convenors: Maritta Schleyer & Mohammad Sajjad

First Session: Conceptualizing Emotions in South Asian Sufism

1. Maritta Schleyer & Mohammad Sajjad: Introduction to the panel
2. Marcia Hermansen: "Seeking/ Being Sought by the Object of Desire: Exploring the History of Emotion in South Asian Sufi Texts"
3. Mohammad Sajjad: "Purifying the Soul: Conceptualizing Emotions by Indian Sufis"
4. Thomas Dahnhardt: "The Power of Love and Fatal Attraction: Some Thoughts on the Meaning and Implications of the Concept of 'Devotion' in the Common Experience of Sufis and Bhaktas in Medieval India"

Second Session: Emotions in Various Sufi Genres

5. Gulfishan Khan: Love, Emotions and Passion as Depicted in *Siyar al-Awliya fi Muhabbat al-Haq Jalla wa ala*
6. Till Luge: The Quest for Self-Transformation and the Social Self in Indic Sufi poetry: Courtly Hindavi Romances and Popular Braj Poems
7. Hans Harder: "Telegraph, Phone, Internet: Electricity and Modern Means of Communication and Transport as Analogies of the Master-Disciple Relationship in Popular Bengali Sufism"

Evoking Emotions: Poetry, Music and Performance

8. Mikko Viitamäki: "Evoking Emotions Through Poetry in Assemblies of Sufi Music"
9. Michel Boivin: "The Shi'i Originated Repertoire of Emotional Fabric in South Pakistan Sufism"
10. Ute Falasch: "*Dhम्मal* – The Expression of Joy While Encountering the Sufi Master"

Managing Emotions in Sufi Politics

11. Nile Green: "The Politics of Pleasure: Islam, Emotion and Carnival in Colonial Bombay"
12. Maritta Schleyer: "A Realm of Love. Emotions in Sufi Nationalism"
13. Final discussion

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Purifying the Soul: Conceptualizing Emotions by Indian Sufis

The concepts of soul (*nafs*), spirit (*ruh*) and heart (*qalb*) have widely been discussed in Islamic mysticism. The Sufis consider them as subtle spiritual centers of the person (*lataif*) which can be influenced or awakened through spiritual practices. The Sufi manuals prescribe exercises and practices to cultivate or control the emotions and the positive and negative qualities (*sifaat*), associated with these subtle spiritual centers.

The present paper will address how emotions were conceptualized by the Sufis and which emotionology or emotional rules were prescribed by them. The paper will also explore the Sufi manuals to trace the changes in the emotional rules for cultivating or expressing certain emotions and controlling or suppressing others. The emotional rules will be examined in the light of the political, social and cultural contexts of north India in the late 18th and early 19th century, a period that marked the transition from the Mughal to the British rule and the emergence of reformist movement among the Muslims.

A study of the Sufi response to the reformist critique of certain practices related to the expression of emotions will help us understand the mystic concepts of emotions and will provide a fresh insight in exploring the cultural and political aspects of religious discourses among the Muslims in colonial India.

Dr. Thomas Dahnhardt
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The Power of Love and fatal attraction: some thoughts on the meaning and implications of the concept of ‘devotion’ in the common experience of Sufis and *bhaktas* in mediaeval India

The investigation of the link between the Immanent and the Transcendent has always been an important theme in the sacred Traditions in the world. As the central being among the manifold species populating the realms of the Universe, the responsibility to preserve and perpetuate the secret of the intimate relationship between the Divine and Its manifestation/creation fell to Mankind and the different races and cultures described by the Scriptures as descendants from a common ancestor.

Among the various possibilities for mankind to relate itself to, gradually approach and ultimately identify with the realm of the Divine described by Tradition in India, the ‘path of devotion’ broadly described by the comprehensive term of *bhakti mārga* is one of the best known within and beyond the cultural borders of the Subcontinent. Setting out from the conceptual implications of the term ‘bhakti’, this paper intends to investigate the common ground as envisaged by this peculiar approach, or rather attitude, towards the

Divinity and the underlying possibilities of a shared experience of those affiliated to Islamic esoterism as described in the treatises of the Indian Sufis and the Hindu initiates into the divine mysteries according to the teachings of the spiritual disciplines (*sampradāya*) of the *bhakti-mārga*. In the course of our investigation and on the basis of an analysis of a few selected elements, we will argue that the importance of the emotional impact on the human psyche as operated by the spiritual authorities of both lineages represents the key to understanding the reason why this ‘middle path’ (*madhya-mārga*) has been so essential in establishing and maintaining the link between these two Traditions during the many centuries of peaceful co-existence on the Subcontinent.

Till Bornemann, M.A.

Visual Imagery of Emotions in Popular South Asian Sufi Music

Commercially available recordings featuring popular idioms of *qawwali* music form an integral part of the sonic sphere in South Asian *dargahs* since the advent of the audio cassette in the 1970/80s. In more recent years a number of self-labeled genres of Sufi music that are not necessarily associated with the traditional performance context of the *qawwali* have emerged.

Actors (e.g. artists, producers, record companies) of both roughly distinguished categories of contemporary Sufi music employ various strategies towards the expression of Sufi concepts, such as *sama*, as is apparent in textual, musical, and visual form.

On the basis of iconographic and typographic analysis of CD and VCD covers, this paper aims to identify images depicting emotional qualities such as ecstasy, rapture, longing and passion through which the various forms of Sufi music achieve spiritual arousal, a state that scholarly discourse has determined to be the primary function of this musical form. Further the interconnection of this emotional imagery with the symbolism of poetics and sound will be emphasized.

Considering the commercial aspect of Sufi music, strategies of popularization and commodification can be observed, whereas from a sociological perspective the usage of such imagery can be interpreted as a process of representing and constructing religious and social identities.

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Maksud Ahmad Khan (Senior Research Associate in History)

Abstract

"Love, Emotions and passion as depicted in *Siyar al-Awliya fi Muhabbat al-Haq Jalla wa ala*"

This paper would seek to analyse a fourteenth century Sufi text *Siyar al-Awliya Siyar al-Awliya fi Muhabbat al-Haq Jalla wa ala* known as *Siyar al-Awliya* the earliest biographical account of Chishti-Sufi saints written by Sayyid Muhammad bin Muhammad Alawi Kirmani better known as Amir Khurd, a young intellectual disciple of the Chishti Sufi saint Shaikh Nizam al-Din Awliya. The paper would focus on passions such as the love of God (Ishq-i-Ilahi), feelings of friendship, mother-son relationship, and above all, the teacher-pupil (pir-murid) relationship by presenting the well-known death events of Chishti Sufi masters- the pre-death ecstasy experienced by Khwaja Bakhtiyar Kaki and the death of Nizam al-Din Awliya especially the emotional reaction of his learned and devoted disciple and friend, the famed Indo-Persian sufi poet Amir Khusrau Dehlawi, as depicted in the above text. "The beloved sleep on her couch with her face covered with her curled lock; Oh Khusrau, Return to your own home for the entire world is covered by night." Interalia, other aspects associated as with the teachings of the great sufi-saint Nizam al-Din Awliya such as returning evil with good, forgiving the insolent, and advocacy and practice of non-violent and pacifist methods towards those inviting retaliation, hatred of sin not the sinner, and the concepts of happiness, grief, and sorrow and the idea of sympathy to the downdrodden will also be focussed.

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Telegraph, Phone, Internet:

Electricity and modern means of communication and transport as analogies of the master-disciple relationship in popular Bengali Sufism

The concept of *rabita* or "rapport" between the master and his disciples is central to Sufism as a whole and has been dealt with in uncounted expositions and writings. Popular Bengali expositions of the twentieth century often use analogies such as trains, electricity, e-mail etc. to describe the establishment of that rapport and the *pir-murid* relationship in general. To quote an example: "You have set up a telegraph network in our hearts" sings Ramesh Shil of the Majibhandari Sufis of Chittagong in the 1930s. This

paper presents and examines such metaphors and draws conclusions regarding this apparent “modernisation of traditional mystical idioms”.

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Evoking emotions through poetry in assemblies of Sufi music

The paper discusses the ability of Sufi poetry to evoke emotions in the audience when performed in an assembly of mystical music, *mahfīl-i samāʿ*. As a Sufi practice, *samāʿ* is concerned with emotions and immediate experience while theoretical subtleties and metaphysical theories recede to the background.

In South Asia, the musical genre most closely associated with *samāʿ*, qawwali, is distinctively text-oriented and poetry occupies a central role. The focus of my paper will be the emotions encouraged between the human being and God in the poetry of Shāh Niyāz Ahmad Barelvī (d. 1834) and contemporary qawwali lyrics. Not only are the two groups of poems separated by a gap of almost two centuries but also by the rise of reformist Islamic movements. I take these historical developments into account in analysing the change in envisioning the relationship between human and divine.

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THE SHĪʾĪ ORIGINATED REPERTOIRE OF EMOTIONAL FABRIC

IN SOUTH PAKISTAN SUFISM
(provisional title)

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The study of emotions has recently made progress in the context of South Asian Islam. For example, it is noteworthy to mention R. W. Wolf's seminal paper on the production of emotion in South Asian Muharram drumming (Wolf 2000). His paper was nevertheless restricted to the specific context of Muharram, as well as to musical production of emotion. On the other hand, the one who pays visit to Sufi shrines of South Pakistan, especially in Sindh, can observe that many factors that trigger emotion are rooted in Shî'î tradition, mainly related to the figure of the first *imâm* `Alî, as well as to the tragedy of Kerbela.

This paper therefore wishes to address the Shî'î originated repertoire as used in the production of emotion in Sufi context. The first part will provide a historical contextualisation of the entanglement of Shî'î tradition and Sufi culture of Sindh. The second part will propose a typology of the elements of this Shî'î originated repertoire, including inscriptions (`Alî Allah), shoutings and/or exclamations (Yâ `Alî), artefacts like Hazrat `Abbas `alams, diverted Shî'î traditional literary forms like *noha*, and so on. The third part will identify the occasions for which they are used, and how they are correlated to specific emotions. The paper will try to conclude on how this specific repertoire fits itself in the broader repertoire for producing emotions as used in the Sufi shrines milieu.

10. Falasch

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The Politics of Pleasure: Islam, Emotion and Carnival in Colonial Bombay

The emergence of an urban Muslim working class in nineteenth century Bombay was accompanied by the development of a range of popular festivities drawn in many cases from the villages and towns from which the city's workers had migrated. While drawing on such older idioms of festivity as the saintly wedding and Muharram procession, the new context and scale of these carnivals raised widespread concerns that linked

emotionalism, disorder and the urban lower classes. While the attitudes and interventions of the colonial state and Christian missionary societies are already well known, the reactions of Muslim religious leaders to the city's festivals have remained more obscure. This paper uses a Persian 'etiquette book for novices' written by one of Bombay's leading nineteenth century Sufis, Habib 'Ali Shah (d.1906), to argue that *sharif* Muslim leaders were similarly concerned with controlling the emotional expressions of their followers. By accepting rather than rejecting popular festivals, and presenting rules for proper behaviour while attending them, the new metropolitan Sufis found an effective vehicle from which to shape the emotional contours of a new proletarian clientele.

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A realm of love. Emotions in Sufi nationalism.

This paper seeks to trace emotions and their role in Sufi politics. As a case study, the practices of the Chishti Sufi master, author and Muslim activist Khwaja Hasan Nizami from Delhi (1878-1955) will be analyzed.

Nizami commented in large parts of his work on contemporary political developments and the Indian nationalist movement. It is argued that interweaving Islamicate and Indic idiom he managed to address all Indians and to transcend the boundaries of the religious communities in his construction of an Indian nation. This imagined nation is anchored in shared feelings of its subjects which the author evoked by emotionalizing the memory of past events of the worldly and spiritual histories of Muslim and Hindu Indians.

Nizami's inclusive nationalism didn't draw on a secular rhetoric. Instead, it is suggested that the mobilized feelings and related themes are situated within a Sufi worldview. Khwaja Hasan Nizami thus presented a spiritual alternative to the idea of a secular Indian nation which would allow the Sufis to demand a central position in modern Indian society.