Selection of Quranic verses referencing Time in different contexts

On duration of creation

Truly your Lord is God, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then ascended the Throne. He causes the night to cover the day, which pursues it swiftly, and the sun, the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His Command. Do not creation and command belong to Him? Blessed is God, Lord of the Worlds.

Quran, Chapter 7: Verse 54

On reckoning/accounting for time

He it is Who made the sun a radiance and the moon a light, and determined for it stations, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning [of time]. God did not create these, save in truth. He expounds the signs for a people who know.

Quran, Chapter 10: Verse 5

On pre-Islamic views of Time

They say, "There is naught but our life in this world. We die and we live, and none destroys us save time (dahr) but they have not knowledge thereof.

Quran, Chapter 45: Verse 24

Divine oath by Time; affirmation of values and actions leading to salvation

By (the Token of) Time (Aṣr);

truly mankind is in loss;

save those who believe, perform righteous deeds,

And exhort one another to truth, and exhort one another to patience.

Quran, Chapter 103, Verses 1-3

Selection of sayings attributed to Prophet Muhammad and other revered early Muslims

Prophet Muḥammad said, "God says 'The son of Adam vexes Me when he curses Time, for I am Time (Dahr). In my Hands lies the affair, and it is I who alternate the day and the night."
Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (Chapter on Quranic Exegesis)

The man who best knows Time is the one who is not astonished by its proceedings.
Attributed to Ali ibn Abi Talib (son-in-law and cousin of Prophet Muhammad and first leader of Shi'a).
From *Ghurar al-Ḥikam* (Beirut, 2002), 38.

Whoever trusts Time is betrayed by it, whoever attaches great importance to it is abased by it, whoever is angry with Time, it spites him even more; and whoever takes refuge with Time is forsaken by it. Not everyone who throws hits his target. When the sultan changes, so does the time.
Attributed to Ali b. Abi Talib. in compilation *Biḥār al-Anwār*.
Arabic may be referenced at Shi'a online library (*Biḥār al-Anwār*, 74:213)
[http://shiaonlinelibrary.com/الكتب_1505-العلامة-المجلسي-بحار-الأنوار_الصفحة_21-ج-٧٤/المجلسي](http://shiaonlinelibrary.com)

People all blame Time.
But the only trouble with Time is ourselves.
We rebuke Time when the fault lies within us.
If Time could speak, it would certainly mock us.
The wolf avoids the meat of his fellow wolf.
But we devour each other in plain sight.
We don, in deception, musks of perfume.
But woe to the stranger when he approaches us.
Attributed to ʿAli b. Musa (d. 819 CE) the eighth Shi'i Imam, who credited it to his forefather ʿAbd al-Muttalib.
Arabic source may be referenced at ʿ*Uyūn Akhbār Riḍā* 1:190 at
[http://shiaonlinelibrary.com/الصفحة_189-ج-١-الشيخ-الصدوق-ع-الرضا-أخبار-عيون_1142/الكتب](http://shiaonlinelibrary.com)

<u>Note to readers</u>

*The Concept of Time in Islam" is among the best overviews of approaches to the"
concept of Time in the Quran and classical Muslim thought (with the caveat that the
first few pages unfortunately recycle clichéd and inaccurate ideas about Islam and
fundamentalism). Those pressed for time can focus on pp. 56-65.* a

The Concept of Time in Islam*

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Today the world of Islam is estimated to count almost one billion people, one fifth of humanity. Islam occupies the center of the globe. It stretches like a broad belt across the map from the Atlantic to the Pacific, encircling both the "haves" of the consumer North and "have-nots" of the disadvantaged South. It sits at the crossroads of America, Western Europe, and Russia on one side and black Africa, India, and East Asia on the other. Islam is not contained in any national culture; it is a universal force. Stretching from Morocco to Mindanao, it is built of five geographical blocks, the Muslims of black Africa, the Arab world, the Turco-Iranian lands, the Muslims of South Asia, and the inhabitants of the Indonesian archipelago.

Islam is also at a crossroads in history, destined to play an international role in politics and to become the most prominent world religion in the decades to come. In the seventh century of the Common Era, Islam entered the global scene with Muhammad at a turning point in time. With spectacular conquest and organic growth, it expanded through the centuries and became stretched taut in a bow of tension between striving for God and struggle for dominion. As we enter the third millennium of the Common Era, Islam looks back nostalgically at its medieval glory, when the Judaeo-Christian West studied at its feet, and sees fundamentalism as the fulcrum of its future in the struggle for preeminence with the secular and technologically superior West.

How does Islam understand the ideas of past and future, of time and temporality, in which it strives to realize its eternal destiny? Picture yourself in a downtown McDonald's taking a short lunch break at the office or grabbing a bite to eat between errands. Now picture yourself in an Arab coffee house nursing an espresso after your siesta. We all know from lived experience that these two settings carry with them quite dif-

ferent senses of time. In the first scenario, time pushes relentlessly onward; in the second, it lazily winds its way forward in the afternoon sun. Move from fast food to edification of a more intellectual sort and check the entry on the philosophy of time in a major encyclopedia. What you will find there is learned articles contrasting the linear progression of time predominant in Western culture with the cyclical concept of time prevalent in India. Both conceptions, we are told, belong to the defining characteristics of these two cultural worlds. With regard to Islam their geographical neighbor, however, the same sources of reference identify no such characteristic notion of time.[1]

Does the world of Islam, occupying the center of the globe, possess a concept of time characteristically its own, or can the Islamic notion of time be exhaustively explained by a cluster of borrowings from its neighbors and cultural ancestors? Is there a unity to the Islamic notion of time, or is Islam a universal culture encompassing many languages and ethnic groups, each with its own notion of time? Can one only speak of a spectrum of ideas on time in Islam or are there constants that would provide parameters defining Islam authentically as a religion and culture? On the one hand, are there distinct and perduring elements in the Islamic notion of time that challenge the current clash-of-civilization theories to articulate a definition of Islamic civilization upon which to base their axioms? On the other hand, do developments in the Islamic concept of time reveal the monolithic claims of Muslim fundamentalism to rest upon an idealized and homogenized vision of the past?

The search for defining characteristics of Islamic culture and religion might begin with many notions, including monotheism, revelation, prophethood, or religious law. I have chosen the concept of time for two reasons: first, time appears to provide a more neutral point of comparison than other more religiously charged notions; second, time is not limited to one particular field of Islam, but can be traced in a broad cross-section of Islamic writings.[2] Time is pervasive in Islamic history, central to

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1. The abbreviation of journal titles follows J. D. Pearson, *Index Islamicus*, London 1958. *EI (reprint 1987)* stands for *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (ed. M. T. Houtsma et al., Leiden 1913-38; repr. Leiden 1987), *EI (new edition)* for *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (ed. H.A.R. Gibb et al., Leiden 1960-), *EIr* for *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (ed. E. Yarshater, New York 1982-), *ER* for *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. M. Eliade, New York 1987) and *ERE* for *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (ed. J. Hastings, Edinburgh 1908-26; reprint New York 1980).

2. There is no scholarly monograph on time in Islam or on time in Islamic mysticism. F. Rosenthal, *Sweeter Than Hope*, Leiden 1983, pp. 1-58, S. Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen*

language and poetry, indispensable in Islamic astronomy and music, constitutive for Islamic ritual and law, and crucial in Islamic theology, cosmology, and philosophy. From the great range of these fields I would like to select four points for my reflections in the present paper: the vision of time in the Qur'ān and Muslim tradition, the atomism of time peculiar to Islamic theology, the paradigm of time prevalent in the medieval mystical philosophy of Islam, and the rhythm of the Muslim calendar that provides the basis for Islamic historiography.

In the pre-Islamic era, Arab time was characterized by fatalism, *dahr*, which erases human works without hope for life beyond death.[3] Also called the "days" or the "nights," dahr is the cause of earthly happiness and misery; it is death's doom and the measure of destiny; it changes everything, and nothing resists it. While dahr held sway like fate, it could be transcended by a moment marked out in tribal memory and often preserved in poetry. Dahr was thus punctuated by the Days of the Arabs, *ayyām al-ʿArab*,[4] the days of vengeance in combat and tribal prowess, when memorable events placed markers in the recollection of the course of events.

The Qur'ān rejects the pre-Islamic fatalism of dahr. Instead, it explains time from the perspective of a transcendent monotheism promising paradise and threatening eternal damnation. Just as the pre-Islamic Arabs had their days of victory and vengeance, so Allāh had His days of deliverance and punishment. God's personal command, "'Be!' and it is, *kun fa-yakūn*" obliterated the spell of fate. God gave His command when He formed the first human being and made the heavens and the earth. He determines the beginning of a person's life and calls each individual to a

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2. (...continued)

Atomenlehre, Gräfenhainichen 1936, and *Nouvelles Etudes sur Awhad al-zamān Abu -l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī*, Paris 1955, include ground-breaking observations on "time" in Islam. E. Behler, *Die Ewigkeit der Welt*, München 1965, offers a thorough historical analysis of the controversy on the beginnings of the world and its eternity in Arabic and Jewish medieval philosophy. Some helpful specific articles on aspects of "time" in Islam are enumerated in G. Böwering, "Ideas of Time in Persian Sufism," *Iran* 30 (1992), 86; reprinted in *Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi*, edited by L. Lewinsohn, London–New York 1993, p. 203.

3. T. Nöldeke, "Vorstellungen der Araber vom Schicksal," *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* 3 (1885), 130-35; J. Pedersen, "The Islamic Preacher: wā iz mudhakkir, qāṣṣ" *Goldziher Mem.* 1 (1948): 226-51; H. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, Leiden 1955, pp. 43-44.

4. E. Mittwoch, "Ayyām al ʿArab," *EI (new edition)*, 1: 793-94; W. Caskel, "Aijām al-ʿArab," *Islamica* 3 supplement (1930), 1-99.

final account after death. There is no place in the Qur'ān for impersonal
time; each person's destiny is in the hands of the God who creates male
and female, gives life and brings death, and grants wealth and works
destruction. God is active even in a person's sleep, for "God takes the
souls unto Himself at the time of their death, and that which has not died
in its sleep. He keeps those on whom He has decreed death, but looses the
others till a stated term."[5] From the "Be!" of a person's creation to the
time of death, human existence falls under the decree of God: Allāh is the
Lord of each instant; what He has determined happens.

Muslim tradition, or *Ḥadīth*, amplified the divine determination
included in the Qur'ān, and transformed Muḥammad's stress on divine
omnipotence into a rigid predeterminism. Saving dahr from Qur'ānic
condemnation, Ḥadīth identified dahr with God through a powerful
divine utterance and warned against slandering dahr through a famous
saying of the Prophet.[6] In order to establish that Allāh's unalterable decree
is invariably fulfilled, another strand of Ḥadīth introduces the notion that
everything that happens is written in a heavenly book. While each em-
bryo is still in the womb, an angel writes down the daily ration, the
works, the moments of misery or happiness, and the hour of death of the
man or woman it will become.[7] Combining pre-Islamic notions of all-
pervasive time with the idea of God's decree in the Qur'ān, Muslim
tradition saw time as a series of predetermined events binding divine
omnipotence to the certain occurrence of each instant of a person's life
span.[8] Unavoidable as fate and irreversible as time, each instant happened
solely through God's very own action.

The most common Islamic term for time, *zamān*, does not appear
in the Qur'ān, nor does *qidam*, its counterpart for eternity. The Arab
lexicographers, however, had a great variety of terms for time. In general,
they distinguished dahr, time from the beginning of the world to its end,
from zamān, a long time having both beginning and end; *ʿaṣr*, a span of
time; *ḥīn*, a period of time, little or much; *dawām*, duration; *mudda*, a
space of duration; *waqt*, a moment in time; *ān*, present time; *awān* time

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5. Qur'ān 39:42.

6. Cf. A. J. Wensinck, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane*, 8 vols., Leiden
1936-88, 1: 50, 101; 2: 92,155.

7. H. Ringgren, *Studies in Arabian Fatalism*, Uppsala 1955, pp. 117-18; idem, "Islamic
Fatalism," in: *Fatalistic Beliefs*, ed. H. Ringgren, Stockholm 1967, pp. 57-59.

8. For the implications of these strands of Ḥadīth on Islamic doctrines of predestination,
see J. van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīt und Theologie*, Berlin 1975, pp. 75-81.

or season; *yawm,* a time, whether night or day; and *sāʿa,* a while or an hour. *Abad* was duration without end and *azal* duration without beginning, to which qidam, time without beginning, corresponded to its primary sense as distinct from *sarmad,* incessant continuance. *Kulūd* , perpetual existence, was implicit in the Qurʾānic day of eternity, the entrance to *dār al-kulūd,* paradise.[9] It is obvious that these distinctions do not reflect a quasi-technical usage of each term to the exclusion of others, but rather an approximately predominant meaning that often blends with the neighboring terms in the actual literary use. When it came to translating Greek philosophical texts into Arabic, the most commonly employed correspondences were *chrónos,* translated by zamān, *aión* by dahr, *kairós* by waqt, and *diástasis* by mudda.[10]

Through the exposure of Greek thought, the philosophers of Islam became familiar with two powerful and mutually opposed philosophical notions of time. For those who followed the Aristotelian view, time was an accident of motion, while for those who espoused the Plotinian concept, time had no extra-mental reality; rather it was the stream of consciousness of a thinking mind, a duration existing independently of motion. Aristotle had attempted to prove the eternity of the universe from the nature of time. In the Plotinian view, time did not come into existence with the creation of the universe, but existed from eternity as the duration of God's infinite consciousness.

While Islamic philosophical notions of time oscillated between Aristotelian motion and Plotinian duration, it was the atomism of Democritus that appealed most strongly to the creators of normative Islamic theology. Atomic theory opened a way to link the immutability of reality with the observable changes and manifold forms in nature by describing reality as composed of simple and unchangeable minute particles, called atoms. The atoms and their accidents exist for only an instant. In every instant, God is creating the world anew; there are no intermediate causes. God can be thought of as continually creating the

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9. For details on these terms, see, e.g., E.W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon,* London 1863-93.

10. S. Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre,* Berlin 1936, pp. 49-51 (Ibn Sīnā [d. 428/1037] refines the terminology by the distinction of zamān, dahr, and sarmad). See also T. J. DeBoer, "Zamān," *EI (reprint 1987),* 8: 1207-9; W. Hartner, "Zamān," *EI (reprint 1987),* 8: 1209-12; A. J. Wensinck, "Mikāt," *EI (reprint 1987),* 5: 492-93; D. Pingree, "Kamar," *EI (new edition),* 3: 517-18; S. van den Bergh, "Abad," *EI (new edition),* 1: 2; E. Schmitt, *Lexikalische Untersuchungen zur arabischen Übersetzung von Artemidors Traumbuch,* Wiesbaden 1970, pp. 13-19.

universe from nothing.[11] Subverting Greek "materialistic" atomism, the Muslim theologians made atomism an instrument of divine providence and held that each moment within time is the direct creation of the eternally active God. Of itself, creation is discontinuous; it appears continuous to us only because of God's compassionate consistency.

Islamic atomism may be illustrated by the famous example of a person engaged in writing.[12] Allāh creates within the human being first the will and then the capacity to write, creating both will and capacity anew in every instant. Then God creates, anew in every instant, the movement of the hand, and finally, the motion of the pen concurrent with it. Every instant and action in the process of writing is independent from every other; all stages of the process issue from God alone. It is only in appearance that there is a coherent action of writing. Similarly, a self-consistent world in space and time, working harmoniously, is only an appearance. The one true actor is God alone. The link of causality that appears to rule the world and human life becomes subordinate to Allāh, and natural causes give way to divine will. As a rule, God does not interrupt the continuity of events, though He is able to intervene at any moment by what is commonly termed a miracle but simply means an interruption of His customary activity. Atomism was not only most congenial to a vision of God acting instantaneously in the world as the sole true cause, it also proved most closely akin to Arabic grammar, which lacks genuine verbs for "to be" and "to become." Neither does Arabic employ the tenses of past, present, and future. Instead, it uses verbal aspects of complete and incomplete, marking the degree to which an action has been realized or is yet to be realized without distinguishing precisely between present and future.

While Muslim philosophers and theologians sought to explain time, the mystics of Islam set out to experience it. For the Sufi mystics the paradigm of time is suspended between two days, the Day of Primal Covenant at the dawn of creation and the Day of Final Judgment when the world comes to its catastrophic end. Time resembles a parabola stretching from infinity to infinity, an arc anchored in eternity at its

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11. S. van den Bergh, "Djawhar," *EI* (*new edition*), 2:493-94; S. Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre*, Berlin 1936, pp. 94-102; L. Massignon, "Time in Islamic Thought," in: *Man and Time. Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, ed. J. Campbell, Princeton, 1957, pp. 108-14; C. Baffioni, *Atomismo e antiatomismo nel pensiero islamico*, Naples 1982, pp. 79-114; cf. also H.S. Nyberg,"Muʿtazila," *EI (reprint 1987)*, 6: 787-93; J. Van Ess, "Muʿtazilah," *ER*, 10: 220-29; R M. Frank, "Ashʿarīyah," *ER*, 1: 449-55; cf. Also S. Sambursky and S. Pines, *The Concept of Time in Late Neoplatonism*, Jerusalem, 1971.

12. T.J. De Boer,"Atomic Theory: Muhammadan," *ERE*, 2: 202-3.

origin and end, which reaches its apex in a mystic's ecstatic moment of
memory and certitude. The early Sufis discovered the decisive religious
moment for humanity in preexistence, when all human beings heard and
understood God's self-revelation for the first time at the very birth of
creation.[13] By recognizing the preexistential origin of all humanity on the
Day of Covenant, the Sufis established a dimension of time that traces the
present moment back to eternity in the past and balances the eschato-
logical thrust of the Qur'ān from the present to eternity in the future,
reached at the Day of Judgment.

Through a distinct meditational technique, known as *dikr*,
recollection of God, the mystics return to their primeval origin on the
Day of Covenant, when all of humanity (sym-bolically enshrined in their
prophetical ancestors as light particles or seeds) swore an oath of allegiance
and witness to Allāh as the one and only Lord.[14] Breaking through to
eternity, the mystics relive their waqt, their primeval moment with God,
here and now, in the instant of ecstasy, even as they anticipate their
ultimate destiny. Sufi meditation captures time by drawing eternity from
its edges in pre- and post-existence into the moment of mystical
experience.

The medieval Sufi, Ibn al-ᶜArabī, analyzed the concept of time on
the basis of the Prophet's tradition that Allāh is time or dahr.[15] Just as
God's being is everlasting, so is God's time; it is eternity, beginningless
and endless. Human beings, who are called in Sufi language sons of their
moments, may also be understood as being, not having, time or waqt.
Human time is momentary. Each moment is the reflection of God's
eternity in the person's receptivity to the divine action at each and every
instant. Seen in this way, there are two levels of time: that of God, dahr,
and that of human beings, *waqt*. Yet both levels are inconsistent with our
ordinary conception of time, because God's time stretches out to eternity
while the time of humans shrinks to a mere instant, a dot without
duration. Caught between these two modes, divine everlastingness and
mortal momentariness, we human beings construct a notion of time,

13. G. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*, Berlin 1980, pp. 145-
75; "The Islamic Case," in: *The Other Side of God*, ed. P. Berger, New York 1981, pp. 131-
53; R. Gramlich, "Der Urvertrag in der Koranauslegung (zu Sure 7, 172-173)," *Der Islam*
60 (1983), 205-30.

14. L. Gardet, "Dhikr," *EI (new edition)*, 2: 223-27; G. Böwering, "Dekr," *EIr*, 7: 229-33;
idem, *Mystical Vision*, 201-7.

15. G. Böwering, "Ibn al-ᶜArabī's Concept of Time," in: *Gott ist schön und Er liebt die
Schönheit* (Festschrift für Annemarie Schimmel), ed. A. Giese and J.C. Bürgel, Bern 1994,
pp. 71-91.

zamān or chrónos, that is imaginary and subjective, though inspired by the real and objective time of dahr and waqt.

The imaginary zamān can be understood through two principal models: that of cosmology and that of relativity. The cosmological model is based on an image of the universe that is largely derived from the Ptolemaic system of the spheres and the story of creation known from Scripture. Its central notion is the idea of the complete day, yawm, a sequence of night and day, which complement each other like male and female or like activity and passivity. Night and day come into being with the revolution of the spheres setting the universe in motion, but become discernible only through the creation of the sun and its course. In the model of relativity, however, God and the world are seen as the two terms of a quasi-temporal relation between Creator and creatures. Time viewed from the side of God is real but has no existence apart from God. Perceived from the vantage of human beings, time is imaginary and lacks any existence of its own. Whether conceived from the human or the divine side, time is a mere relation. Yet this mere relation is infinite, just like empty space. It can be divided into ever smaller or larger time-segments in a duration that has neither beginning nor end. There is, however, an implicit link between our imaginary time and God's real time, which can be aptly described by one of Ibn al-ᶜArabī's images: Any point along a circle may be seen as the point separating past from future. While having no extension whatsoever, this point of the "now" is still part of the actual extent of the circular line. In other words, although a product of our imagination, time is, in each moment, the virtual and actual object of interaction with eternity. Eternity belongs to God alone, but God's creature participates in the present moment.

The theocentric vision of time in Qur'ān and Hadīth, the theological atomism of time governed by an eternally active God, and the Sufi paradigm of time coupled with imaginary relativity give expression to the vertical dimension of Islamic thought: the individual's overpowering dependence on the Creator. The horizontal dimension, one's autonomous self-realization through one's earthly interactions with other human beings, seems to be diminished in these theoretical doctrines of time. The picture changes dramatically, however, when the focus is shifted to the immensely practical aspects of Muslim thought. Islam possesses a strong sense of law and ritual on the one hand and of the order of history and society on the other. One of the most characteristic ordering principles created by Islam to define its ritual and measure its history was the Muslim calendar, its own measure of time in the

horizontal realm.[16]

Long before Muhammad, the Arabs observed a solar year and at times also followed a lunar reckoning. Their acquaintance with a solar year is indicated by the Arab months, named for definite seasons, such as the dead of winter or the grazing season, as well as by the festivals and markets.[17] The Arabs, however, had no firmly established calendar or a uniform method of counting the years, but reckoned on the basis of particular events, such as the fire of Abraham, the building of the Kaʿba, the tribal emigration from the Tihāma, or the death of a pre-Islamic lord of Mecca.[18] The inhabitants of Mecca knew two most notable starting points, the sacrilegious war of Fijār, toward the end of the sixth century C.E., fought over tribal control of the trade routes, and "the year of the elephant," in which the expedition led by the king of Yemen to curb the commercial power of the Meccan sanctuary ended in disaster in about 554 C.E. The pre-Islamic Arabs also used a cycle of twenty-eight time periods, reckoned according to the setting of a star and the heliacal rising of its opposite, which suited the nomads in predicting periods of rain and good pasture grounds.[19] They also learned to distinguish the mansions of the moon and adjust them to their time periods and the solar zodiac, thereby following a type of lunisolar year with the day beginning at sunset.[20]

The lunar year, peculiar to Islam, was established when Muhammad gave a solemn address during his last pilgrimage to Mecca. In it, he arranged for the year to consist of twelve lunar months. He also proclaimed the divine injunction against intercalation, which is the procedure of correlating the cycle of lunar months with the solar year of the seasons by inserting a thirteenth month into a lunar year at certain intervals.[21] Muhammad's motive for the interdiction of intercalation, cited in the

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16. The standard reference to Muslim calendars is B. Spuler and J. Mayr, *Wüstenfeld-Mahler'sche Vergleichungs-Tabellen*, Wiesbaden 1961.

17. M. Höfner, "Die altsüdarabischen Monatsnamen," in K. Schubert (ed.), *Vorderasiatische Studien: Festschrift für Viktor Christian*, Wien 1956, pp. 46-54; A.F.L. Beeston, *Epigraphic South Arabian Calendars and Dating*, London 1956, pp. 10-25.

18. A. Fischer,"Tag und Nacht' im Arabischen und die semitische Tagesberechnung," *Abhandlungen der sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* 27 (1909), 741-58.

19. R.B. Serjeant, "Star-Calendars and an Almanach from South-West Arabia," *Anthropos* 49 (1954), 433-59.

20. A. Sprenger, "Über den Kalender der Araber vor Muhammad," *ZDMG* 13 (1859), 139-59.

21. A. Moberg, *An-nasī ' in der islamischen Tradition*, Lund 1931.

Qur'ān as an expression of unbelief,[22] may have been twofold. On the
one hand, the interdiction unflinchingly maintained Allāh's rule over the
order of time, manifested and observed in nature through the appearance
of the moon's crescent. On the other hand, it deprived an Arab clan of its
traditional rights to proclaim publicly the intercalary years and to
preserve the pagan festivals and markets within the seasons of the solar
year. The Prophet's interdiction killed two birds with one stone. First, it
drew the believers away from pagan cults and turned them to Allāh, the
true creator, cause, and preserver of all things. Second, it allowed
Muhammad to wrest economic power away from tribal interest groups by
detaching the festivals from their pagan moorings in the seasons.

    Not simply a matter of adjusting the lunar year to the seasons,
intercalation also had an impact on tribal warfare. The Qur'ān upheld the
Arab tribal custom of four inviolable months that were not to be
disturbed by internecine battles. One month fell in the middle of the year,
but the other three followed one another as a block of time at the turn of
the year. Since the intercalary month was most likely inserted at the end
of the year, it either interrupted the time block of the inviolable months,
or changed the status of a sacred month to profane.[23] In either case, the
intercalary month disturbed the sacred order of time. This manipulation
appeared to Muhammad's eyes as a sacrilegious intervention in the divine
order because it facilitated warfare and bloodshed within a period of time
ordained to be an inviolable season.

    While Muhammad introduced the Muslim lunar year, he did not
establish the uniform Muslim calendar. Its innovation is traditionally
attributed to ʿUmar, the second caliph. According to tradition,ʿ Umar
called a council to resolve the confusion of reckoning time in the light of
difficulties with raising taxes and collecting tribute. After lengthy
discussions the decision was made to adopt the standard Muslim calendar
that remains in use today. A coin struck at Damascus during ʿUmar's
reign and, shortly thereafter, a papyrus of Egypt and a tombstone of
Cyprus provide solid evidence for the calendar's existence.[24] ʿUmar's role
in its uniform establishment, however, may be overstated in the sources
since early Muslim biographers and historians continued to quote
different sets of dates in random fashion.

    With the increasing conquests of Islam, the standard Muslim
calendar, based on the observation of a pure lunar year, no longer

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22. Cf. Qur'ān 9:37; cf. J. Fück, "Zu an-nasī' (Koran 9,37)," *OLZ* 36 (1933), 280-83.

23. R. Paret, *Der Koran, Kommentar und Konkordanz*, Stuttgart 1971, pp. 202-3.

24. A. Grohmann, *Arabische Chronologie*, Leiden 1966, pp. 9-36.

responded to all circumstances of a vast empire. A consistent calendar was required for the administration of state and the collection of taxes and tribute. This need led to the concurrent use of different types of calendar. The popular lunar year, based on the actual observation of the moon's crescent, was supported by the scholars of law and religion. The Muslim astronomers, however, established a mathematically computed standard lunar calendar of 354 days that added one day to the last month in an irregular sequence of leap years. The astronomers also substituted uniform hours of equal length for the formerly variable hours of the day, twelve during the period of daylight and twelve during nighttime. By contrast, Muslim rulers resorted to a kind of adapted Sassanian solar calendar.[25] This makeshift adjustment was required to overcome the incongruity of the lunar calendar with the agricultural cycle, which created periods of many years when the tax came due before the crops could be harvested. One way to resynchronize with the lunar calendar was to drop a tax year every thirty-two years. Over the centuries a number of attempts were made by Muslim rulers to administer the empire efficiently by intro-ducing solar calendars that fixed the beginning of the calendar year at the vernal equinox.[26]

As I come to my short conclusion, you realize that I stressed the role of atomism in my reflections on Islamic theories of time and highlighted the practical implications in Islamic history of the calendar that measures time. Seeing the theoretical side as the vertical dimension of Islamic thought and the practical side as its horizontal dimension, Islam appeared as categorically theocentric in tying the individual irrevocably to God, while being immensely down to earth in determining the course of its communal history. The powerful atomistic conception of time expressed the vertical dimension of the individual as marked by a series of flashes of existence with momentary breakthroughs to eternity in ecstasy. These flashes foreshadowed the final moment that freezes time in irreversible ultimateness, when the individual stands alone before God in the trial of the last judgment. At the same time it recalled the moment when all of humanity heard God's self-revelation for the first time at the dawn of creation. In the horizontal dimension, however, the community of believers, a galaxy of individual atoms, was forcefully conscious of shaping its own temporal framework through the calendar as it began a new and ultimate era of human history.

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25. R. Abdollahy, "Calendars, II. Islamic Period," *EIr*, 4: 668-74.

26. For the conversion of Islamic dates to those of the Common Era, cf. J. Mayr, "Islamische Zeitrechnungen," *MSOS* 30 (1927), 203-5.

I wonder whether you felt all the while as if you were relaxing in an Arab coffee house or being pushed through the fast food line at McDonald's. To console yourselves, however, please note that I have not talked about the intricate timing of ritual prayer in Islam, the complex literature on time in Islamic astronomy, the work of al-Bīrūnī's Chronology, al-Ṭūsī's work on the duodecennial animal cycle, the reflec-tions of Islamic historians on their use of time in annals and biographies, or the role time plays in poetical meter and musical mode. I also neglected aspects of time brought to light by anthropologists and sociologists in the myriad ethnic traditions of Islam. One thing, however, I hope to have conveyed to you: there are parameters of Islamic time that give its culture and religion cohesion and structure in theory and practice. The four points of analysis I selected in elaborating an Islamic concept of time integrate cross-cultural borrowing with original inspiration. The vision of Islam they reflect is not a monolithic phalanx moving through history but rather a dynamic religion imparting a distinct form and content to its civilization.

Exploring Time Cross-Culturally: Ideology and Performance of Time in the Sufi Qawwālī
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Exploring Time Cross-Culturally: Ideology and Performance of Time in the Sufi *Qawwālī*[1]

REGULA BURCKHARDT QURESHI

> Die endliche Ruhe wird nur verspürt,
> Wenn sich der Pol mit dem Pol berührt,
> Drum danket Gott, ihr Söhne der Zeit
> Dass er die Pole auf ewig entzweit.[2]
>
> Goethe

T he journey of discovery always begins some-
where else, whether literally or cognitively. My point of origin for
exploring the puzzle of time in Sufi music resides in a complex of time
notions absorbed and distilled from Western experience and con-
cepts. Participation in the time world of Sufis[3] and their music has
expanded and challenged these notions at many levels, some only
dimly perceived. The resulting search is therefore uneasy and tenta-
tive: as yet an ongoing translation rather than the pursuit of a herme-
neutic goal.

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[1] I dedicate this paper to Christopher Lewis, a true friend and a partner in
exploring musical meaning.

[2] A sensation of final repose is felt,
   When poles apart unite.
   Thank God, therefore, you sons of time
   That he has sundered the poles forever.
(This and all other translations in this paper are by the author.)

[3] This participation took place in Sufi centers all over India and Pakistan, during
1968–69, 1975–76, and 1984: most intensively in the Nizamuddin Auliya Shrine, Delhi
during 1975–76.

When exploring the theme of time one is immediately struck by the diversity of perspectives encompassing the human and physical sciences. Approaches and tools from physics and mathematics, philosophy and history, psychology and sociology, anthropology, music, and literature serve to highlight the phenomenon in its multiple dimensions. Integrated at best historically, or not at all, this intellectual panoply arises not only from the unbounded and abstract nature of the phenomenon Time, but also from the unresolved divergence between homocentric and universal vantage points, and between perceptual and cognitive foci. Integration through historical sequencing or logical ordering provides little comfort in the face of a bewildering panorama as fragmented as twentieth-century consciousness itself.[4] Considerations of time in music are more narrowly focused but equally characterized by unintegrated divergences, for they take on multiple vantage points as well; these generally start from the premise that music itself is a cultural encapsulation of time which is revealed through time-related musical concepts and articulated in the units and processes of musical sound.[5]

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The search for the whole of which multiple time[6] perceptions constitute the parts has proceeded in two directions: the first is chronological-causal or historiographic and conceptually related to the temporal sequencing of events through cognition into a successive series. In terms of time studies, this direction invokes McTaggart's "B series"[7] and is based "in the way we normally *contemplate* a sequence of events in time."[8] In terms of time studies, this conception has generated objectifications of time, whether the object be the universe,[9] musical pitch sequences,[10] or units of temporal measurement.[11] In general, histories of time account for durational change at the expense of simultaneous occurrence; a chronological focus tends to have little room for simultaneity or what is (inappropriately)

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[4] The collections entitled *The Study of Time*, vols. 1–4 (New York, 1972, 1975, 1978, 1981) provide a good overview of the field.

[5] The major study is Jonathan Kramer, *The Time of Music: New Meanings, New Temporalities, New Listening Strategies* (New York, 1988). For the scope of the field see bibliography in Jonathan Kramer, "Studies of Time and Rhythm: A Bibliography," *Music Theory Spectrum* VII (1985), 72–106.

[6] I am using this term without the implications of underlying lineality suggested for musical analysis by Kramer in his article, "New Temporalities in Music," *Critical Inquiry* VII/3 (Spring 1981), 545.

[7] John M. E. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence* (London, 1927), 10–13.

[8] G. J. Whitrow, *The Natural Philosophy of Time*, 2d. edition (Boston, 1956), 347.

[9] Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York, 1990).

[10] J. T. Fraser, "The Art of the Audible 'Now'," *Music Theory Spectrum* VII (1985), 181–84.

[11] Nigel Thrift, "Vivos Vocos! Ringing in the Changes in the Historical Geography of Time Consciousness," *The Rhythms of Society*, ed. Michael Young and Tom Schuller (London, 1988).

termed synchrony or polychrony.[12] Both these terms invoke tempo-
rality by default as it were. This is clearly indicative of the lineal-
sequential-causal bias in the intellection that generated the terminol-
ogy and hence the conception. In relation to music, too, time reality
is generally invoked as an "audible present" perceived in entirely
linear terms; this means, musical sounds set up expectations which
imply the future and invoke memories which imply the past.[13] Func-
tional harmony provides surely the most systematic index of a
temporal-lineal sequence driven by causality.[14]

The second direction toward apprehending the whole of multiple
time perceptions points toward simultaneity embedded in a homo-
centric vantage point; it emanates from the social sciences and their
focus on individual actions inside a human universe. This applies to
the social psychologists who focus on relating individual life patterns
within society,[15] or to anthropologists who are concerned with ex-
ploring the terms on which individuals share the present within and
between cultures.[16] Both concern themselves with time as a social
aggregate of individual experiences. Social psychologists are also ex-
amining "virtual" and "specious" time events for their differential
temporal qualities, although they do so generally in reference to a
conventional linear grid of objectified time (and space).[17] Their focus
is on transaction rather than on content.[18]

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[12] James M. Jones, "Cultural Differences in Temporal Perspectives: Instrumental
and Expressive Behaviors in Time," *The Social Psychology of Time: New Perspectives* ed.
Victor W. Turner and Edward M. Bruner (Urbana, IL, 1986), 26.

[13] Fraser, op. cit.

[14] Probably inescapable, the "lineal bind" in which Western minds find themselves
caught is compelling as well as constraining for studies of time where the absence of
lineality invariably is either conceived of as multilineality or, to parallel time, the con-
cept of spatiality is used to evoke simultaneity, but without motion, hence also some-
times termed "static time"; see Kramer (1988), op. cit., 7. The ultimate concept pro-
duced by this thinking is, of course, "space-time"—where time becomes an explanation
of spatial distance, thereby allowing time to be absorbed in a spatial and therefore
visually apprehensible grid, see Whitrow, op. cit., 230 ff., and Hawking, op. cit., 12.

[15] John Hendricks and Calvin B. Peters, "The Times of Our Lives," *American
Behavioral Society* XXVIII/6 (1986), 662–78. See also Joseph L. E. McGrath ed., *The
Social Psychology of Time: New Perspectives* (Newbury Park, CA, 1988).

[16] George E. Marcus and Michael M. Fisher, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique. An
Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (Chicago, 1986).

[17] James M. Jones, "Cultural Differences in Temporal Perspectives: Instrumental
and Expressive Behaviors in Time," *The Social Psychology of Time: New Perspectives* ed.
Joseph E. McGrath (Newbury Park, CA, 1988). See also Carol M. Werner et al., "Tem-
poral Qualities of Rituals and Celebrations: A Comparison of Christmas Street and
Zuni Shalako," *The Social Psychology of Time: New Perspectives,* ed. Joseph L. E. McGrath
(Newbury Park, CA, 1988).

[18] Bruce Kapferer, "Performance and the Structure of Meaning and Experience,"
The Anthropology of Experience, ed. Victor W. Turner and Edward M. Bruner (Urbana,
IL, 1986), 188–203.

In challenging traditional anthropology's Western scholarly procedure of objectification in the study of others, Fabian[19] casts his focus on time as the crucial dimension, calling for what, in terms of time studies, amounts to a shift from the B to the A series, or from the contemplation to the experience of temporality.[20] To achieve such a shift concretely, however, requires nothing less than to enter the time experience of others experientially, by living it with them. "Coevalness"[21] as an intellectual program is most centrally located in the realm of the oral/aural, a domain of shared experience par excellence. Indeed, the call for multivocality to replace individual exegesis is also a call for focusing on the shared presence of oral/aural interaction.

How to make this shift in the concrete, however, is as yet largely an unanswered question, for little is offered by way of a concrete research procedure.[22] The quest for assessing human time experience, whether the active agent is individual consciousness of time[23] or the sharing of such consciousness between individuals,[24] leads the investigator to what Hendericks and Peters broadly term a "symbolic or performance" event, so as "to integrate the various dimensions of time."[25] For in such a shared occurrent event, concepts and experience of self and other converge, and cognition is integrated into perception, thereby inverting the standard analytical procedure of accessing experience through cognitive processing. In Kapferer's words, "participants in a ritual or performance event have a common isolation in the world of experience" but also "a capacity to disengage themselves from experience while it is being experienced."[26]

In addition to these two major directions, there are of course studies that frankly limit themselves to addressing particular aspects of time, or of time and music: these aim at contributing a specific piece to the puzzle, but tend to assume an underlying grid or reference point of temporal linearity. Among time studies of music, this comprises works which address temporal elements in music as sound properties only.[27] But many pieces do not necessarily make a whole.

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[19] Johannes Fabian, *Time and Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, 1983).
[20] Whitrow, op. cit., 345.
[21] Fabian, op. cit., 34 passim.
[22] Turner's experiment of "acting out" ethnography is interesting but questionable because of the dependence on the ethnographer as the source, see Victor W. Turner. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York, 1982).
[23] Hendricks and Peters, op. cit., 664.
[24] McGrath, op. cit.
[25] Hendricks and Peters, op. cit., 666.
[26] Kapferer, op. cit., 197–98.
[27] Grosvenor Cooper and Leonard B. Meyer, *The Rhythmic Structure of Music* (Chicago, 1960). Other rhythm and music studies include Rene Dumesil, *Le rhythm musical*.

To go beyond the scope of self limitation, a vantage point must be found capable of generating a diversity of perspectives, both cognitive and perceptual. Such a vantage point needs to be homocentric so as to encompass the experience of time itself.

Existing studies of time experience, largely philosophical or psychological, variously explore cognitive, perceptual, biological, intuitive channels in their considerations of an individual's experience of time, but they mostly do so on the basis of analysis and reflection, relying on the memory of experience—that is, abstracting it.

Time as experience is the primary reference point for studies focusing on music. Interestingly, the prime impetus for exploring time in music has essentially been philosophical; it emanates from the recognition that "our sense of time is an intellectual construction," and "our conscious awareness of time depends on the fact that our minds operate by successive acts of attention."[28] Thus philosophers rather than music analysts have addressed the phenomenon of time in music from an experiential perspective. For if time experience can only become accessible through what goes on in time, then a succession of events which are of a homogeneous yet individually distinct nature may well present the most appropriate locus for exploring experienced time, to make the abstraction "time" manifest to the senses. To this effect, philosophers have called attention to music and more generally to the performing or "occurrent" arts.[29]

Music in fact is uniquely suited for providing access to time experience in its own terms, precisely because it presents a durational sequence without dependence on referential meaning or, more concretely, on verbal or visual clues. A number of philosophers[30] have focussed on music as capable of concretizing time experience, starting with Hegel who sees time as "dominant in music"[31] and Guyau who identified hearing as the sense that appreciates succession

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Essai historique et critique (Paris/Genève, 1979), John Miller Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* (Chicago, 1979), Maury Yeston, *The Stratification of Musical Rhythm* (New Haven, 1976), Wilhelm Seidel, *Uber Rhythmustheorien der Neuzeit* (Bern, 1975), and William Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York, 1989).

[28] Whitrow, op. cit., 64–65.

[29] Suzanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art (Developed from Philosophy in a New Key)* (London, 1953), 121.

[30] Eric Emery, *Temps et Musique* (Lausanne, 1975). Henri Bergson, *Essai sur les données immediates de la conscience/Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Conscienciousness.* Trans. F. L. Pogson (New York, 1960). Edmund Husserl, *Vorlesungen Zur Phänomenologie de inneren Zeitbewusstseins/The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* ed. Martin Heidegger, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington, IN, 1964). Theodor Adorno, *The Philosophy of Modern Music,* trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (New York, 1973). Langer, op. cit.

[31] G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetik,* trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford, 1986), 163.

par excellence, since "the ear locates stimuli admirably in time."[32] In clarification, Husserl shows that the process of listening to musical sound provides the most immediate means of apprehending temporal flux, as against what is constituted within that flux.[33] And Bergson points to the continuity and indivisibility of a sound sequence.[34] That sound is a most compelling means of experiencing duration—that is, change and coherence—arises from the compulsory participation in a sound event through auditory perception and from processing it into a *Gestalt* organized durationally.[35]

However, since they focus on human experience rather than the musical object, philosophers mostly limit themselves to a humanistic epistemology addressing, and anchored in, individual cognition and yielding such valuable but essentially static insights as "music is time made audible."[36] For their treatment of the musical process tends not to go beyond its remembered experience, cognitively processed; it is effectively no more than an individual distillation of such experience, and a musically undifferentiated one at that.[37] Left largely unattended is the concrete complex of messages conveyed by the musical text to which the non-music specialist tends to have little conscious access. For while philosophers—mostly non-musicians—have most aptly assessed the capacity of the sound idiom to convey temporal dimensions of meaning, it takes music specialists to apprehend and identify the richly varied temporal content of musical sound, based on their performative competence of musical idioms and utterances.

Time studies by music specialists share an essentially reflexive approach, but they tend to be oriented toward music as cultural product and production. Thus, where they deal with the experience of duration they locate it in the music rather than in the act of its perception. In accordance with time-honored (no pun intended) analytical procedure, the processual nature of the experience is translated into a cognitive arrangement oriented along a sequential continuum. As a result, the musical process is primarily addressed through an analysis of the formal properties and relationships as they present themselves simultaneously in an isolated visual representation of the composition, the score. The fact that the score constitutes the ontological embodiment of the musical work fully enshrines the primacy of written over sounded music as the raw material or primary

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[32] J. M. Guyau, *La genèse du l'idée de temps,* 2d edition (Paris, 1902), 74–75.

[33] Husserl, op. cit., 7.

[34] Bergson, op. cit., 164.

[35] Juan G. Roederer, *Introduction to the Physics and Psychophysics of Music Sound Characteristics* (New York, 1974), 5.

[36] Langer, op. cit., 113.

[37] The lucid *exposé* by Husserl, op. cit., 37 passim, well exemplifies this limitation.

source of analysis. Furthermore, the structural complexity of the music thus "written" by composers inevitably invites the use of visually-based analytical procedures.

While the issue remains to be explored systematically, I have come to believe that our systematic mediation of aural musical perception through a notational filter tends to separate the analytical/ cognitive process from our primary sensory experience of music. The result is a scholarship in the conceptual grip of the objectified lineal-durational frame of notation. Thus Barry, in her widely ranging study of Musical Time, goes as far as to equate "analytical time" with "objective investigation of score," and "experiential time" with "subjective experience of performance."[38]

Interestingly, this procedure is being challenged in contemporary, especially avant-garde, music which lacks or negates built-in temporal linearity. Here scholarly engagement has generated what in fact amounts to time-negating notions such as "spatial"[39] or "vertical."[40] More important, it has also stimulated a pioneering search for explanations in the changing contexts of musical life. Kramer in particular engages in such a search by liberally drawing on his own listening experience,[41] although his musical analyses remain within the individual-cognitive frame that characterizes the humanities. Rowell, on the other hand, focuses attention on the different cultural-ideological bases of time conceptions.[42]

In general, analyses of time content or meaning in musical compositions are based on sensibilities evolved and shared by art-music connoisseurs. In accordance with the established tradition of Western music writing, the focus of study is on a "great literature" of music and musical norms, and the approach is predominantly one of exegesis in which time concepts are used as a key to decode musical utterances and to identify time articulation in sound form.[43] Here, important forays are being made in decoding the semantic complexity

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[38] Barbara R. Barry, *Musical Time: The Sense of Order*, No. 5 in the series Harmonologia: Studies in Music Theory, (Stuyvesant, NY, 1990), 242.

[39] George Rochberg, "The Structure of Time in Music: Traditional and Contemporary Ramifications and Consequences," *The Study of Time* 2, ed. J. T. Frazer and Nathaniel Lawrence (New York, 1975).

[40] Kramer (1988), op. cit., see also Lewis Rowell, "Time in the Musical Consciousness of Old High Civilizations—East and West," *The Study of Time* 3, ed. J. T. Fraser, Nathaniel Lawrence, and David Park (New York, 1978). He documents the spatial metaphors for time from Greek and Latin.

[41] Kramer, op. cit., 378 ff.

[42] Rowell (1978), op. cit.

[43] Lewis Rowell, "The Subconscious Language of Musical Time," *Music Theory Spectrum* I (1979); "Time in the Musical Consciousness of Old High Civilizations—East and West," *The Study of Time* 3, ed. J. T. Fraser, Nathaniel Lawrence, and David Park (New York, 1978).

of Western classical music idioms as to time meanings. This literature on time in music expands out of the much articulated premise that music is "a working model of time," and thus "provides a synthesis of a culture's conflicting understanding of time."[44] Building on Meyer's early study of musical meaning,[45] Rowell discusses how time experience is created and fulfilled through patterns that are set up and on the basis of temporal concepts and the memory of time events. More recently, Lewis is exploring the significant movement toward the disintegration of unilinear time in late nineteenth-century music.[46]

The preceding review clearly suggests that the sophisticated use of cultural and semantic norms of time provides an essential strategy to complement and enhance musical analysis in reference to what is in fact a deeply cultural matter. That such norms must be appropriate to the period and repertoire being considered has increasingly become a standard tenet for a culturally sensitive musicology.[47] To this end the specifics of musical analysis need to be subjected to scrutiny, for analytical tools and procedures, too, are culturally contingent.[48] This becomes more crucial when such tools are applied to the study of time in a musical culture outside the Western orbit.

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A second crucial element in this review, though conspicuous more by its absence, is the place of performance in the study of music and time. The almost secondary position performance occupies in the scheme of Western music scholars, or at least its close dependence on notated music, appears to marginalize the perceptual-experiential dimension of the topic. This would explain the paradoxical fact that the best thinking on the time experience in music comes from non-specialists who appear to draw more directly on the process of listening to music—and even music-making, as evidenced in the seminal work of Alfred Schutz.[49] But even within the field of music moves

[44] Lewis Rowell, "The Temporal 'Spectrum'," *Music Theory Spectrum* VII (1985).
[45] Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago, 1956).
[46] Christopher Lewis, "The Mind's Chronology: Narrative Times and Harmonic Disruption in Post Romantic Music," *The Second Practice of 19th-Century Tonality*, ed. William Kinderman and Harald Krebs (Lincoln, NB, and London, in press).
[47] Gary Tomlinson, *Music and Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others* (Chicago and London, 1993); Peter Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning Past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology in the Study of Gregorian Chant* (Chicago and London, 1992).
[48] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London, 1972), Don Michael Randel, "The Canons in the Musicological Toolbox," *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons,* ed. Philip Bohlman and Katherine Bergeron (Chicago, 1992), 10–22.
[49] Alfred Schutz, "Making Music Together, A Study in Social Relationship," *Symbolic Anthropology, A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings*, eds. Janet Dolgin, D. S. Kemnitzer and David Schneider (New York, 1977). Reprinted from *Social Research* XVIII (1951).

toward reflexivity and the exploration of new paradigms are generating more broadly conceived notions of analysis, stimulated in part by new kinds of musical experiences generated by contemporary Western as well as non-Western music. The following exploration of *qawwālī* is meant to contribute toward this trend.

In contrast to students of Western art music, most ethnomusicologists are denied the luxury of perusing a musical literature. This places them in the salutary, if challenging position of having to gain access to musical repertoire and musical thinking through listening to performed music and through conversations about it. From this the impetus follows naturally to tackle the problematic of multiple dimensions and vantage points in the time-music domain by inquiring into the differentiated but undivided whole of musical experience in performance. A performance incorporates participants and the idiom that they share in musical communication, by invoking concepts of time through sound, and by articulating—and responding to—the perceptual level of sound experience. For an ethnomusicologist analyzing time in performance means considering these two levels in tandem as tools for decoding the time dimension of musical sound.

My own extensive study of the performance interaction in *qawwālī*   *499* has rendered explicit the premise that their music is a multi-channeled code capable of conveying different message dimensions simultaneously. *Qawwālī* musical sound is a perceptual package of several dimensions that claim attention collectively or individually, so that even in the presence of a text, musical sound dimensions can both reinforce textual meaning as well as convey referential or non-referential meaning independently of the textual narrative.[50] The implication for the study of time meanings is that this—and perhaps other musics—may be articulating more than one "time" at once and thus offering the listener a plurality of time experience. To explore this premise in relation to time I propose to examine a single *qawwālī* song and its performance. Performed in the Sufi assembly, *qawwālī*, presents a textual-musical idiom richly endowed with ideational and contextual content, including a purely musical structure accessible to verbal explanation by its practitioners. Furthermore, its improvisational character renders *qawwālī* musically responsive to the ongoing durational flow of the performance and thus makes the process observable.

[50] Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, "Music Sound and Contextual Output: A Performance Model for Musical Analysis," *Ethnomusicology* XXXI/1 (1987), 229.

Methodologically, my starting assumption for this exploration[51] is the unity of text and enactment articulated in the philosophy of aesthetics. According to this concept a work is irreducible to its performances, yet graspable only through them.[52] I aim to test the notion that the work-centered approach of conventional musicology can be expanded to encompass relevant contextual dimensions of analysis. Beginning with the listening encounter, rather than with the work as a separate entity, further tests the notion that the immediate perceptual impact of a musical utterance reaches beyond cognitively acquired tools of listening. With relation to time, the assumption is that the musical work embodies cognitive time notions or concepts but that its performance generates a time experience through sound perception which transcends, yet incorporates cognition by creating an existential reality of a "continuous present."

Decoding the complex of time experience in performance thus presupposes an underlying familiarity with relevant cultural norms and concepts as a starting point for appropriate participation in the musical event. Concepts of time are rooted in ideology and embedded in language itself.[53] The following minimal set of music-cultural premises are therefore offered as a prelude, with reference to further sources, so that the exploration of a qawwālī song in performance can then proceed in culturally appropriate terms. A primary key to Indo-Muslim time experience is Urdu, the standard and literary language of Muslims in South Asia, along with classical Persian, the language of Sufi poetry, from which Urdu draws its conceptual vocabulary. Equally important are the ideational norms of Sufism within the conceptual frame of Islam.

Time in Urdu and Sufism

Western time studies are informed by—albeit implicitly—a conception of time as an objective experiential grid which is reflected and altered in music. An unsuccessful attempt to locate such a grid appropriate to Sufi music—first in time-related terminology of Urdu and second in the locally relevant literature on Sufism—reveals more than anything else the limitation of such a

[51] It goes without saying that the cultural outsider can only achieve the necessary reflexivity through bringing to consciousness everything of relevance related to the musical experience. The validity of analysis ultimately depends on the quality of understanding and Einfühlung—a claim rendered less awesome to this author by the expectation of appropriate testing and scrutiny by cultural insiders.

[52] Mikel Dufrenne, The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience (Evanston, IL, 1973), 27.

[53] Benjamin Whorf, Language, Thought and Reality (Boston, 1956).

venture typical of Western analytical thinking which fragments its objects and is founded in the disarticulation of concepts from their context. For time as an objective dimension of reality, along with space, and now in conjunction with it, as Space-Time,[54] is a construct simply not embodied in the Indo-Muslim, Sufi cultural matrix.[55]

In Urdu, purely durational terms denote short temporal units of two kinds, one is the equivalent of a "moment" (*lamha*), the other of divisions of the day (*ghari, pahar/prahar*). Terms conveying larger durations come close to the Western notion of time (*waqt, zamāna,* as well as the rarely used Hindi *kāl*) and invoke what in essence also amounts to "moments," only of much longer and indefinite duration; they constitute the "present" of a period or era. These time concepts are defined not durationally but connotationally, as either favorable or damaging, as the source of experience, not just the temporal basis for it—not unlike the pre-17th-century definition of the English "time."[56] In Urdu a rich array of metaphors and idioms, some of them musical, testify to the consistently affective content of "time" and coincidentally to the contextual or "occasion-linked" association of music.[57]

This situation is paralleled in the specialized domain of music; musical concepts referring to the durational dimension or invoking time[58] are likewise connotationally linked to non-durational meanings, except where they denote short specific durational units (e.g., *mātrā,* the duration of a pulse). Durational terms like *lai* (speed of pulse, pace) and *tāl* (metric pattern) are widely used by non-musicians to denote aspects of rhythm as well as, by extension, the sounds that rhythm controls, so that *lai* can mean a musical tune or setting, even melody.[59]

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All this clearly reinforces the sense of connotational embeddedness associated with what Western usage has objectified into a tool to measure rather than connote, emanating, as it does, from scientific-rationalist thought. Urdu time notions, on the other hand, are embedded in a conceptual frame informed by Islamic ideology that has

[54] Whitrow, op. cit., 230 ff.

[55] The great 20th-century poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal's construct of time-space—*zamān-makān,* discussed in Raziuddin Siddiqi, "Iqbal's Conception of Time and Space," ed. Khwaja Abdur Rahim (Lahore, 1968). This is a Westernized reinterpretation of two individual Sufi concepts of *zamān* and *makān* (see note 82).

[56] Oxford Universal Dictionary, 3d edition, revised, (Oxford, 1955).

[57] *waqt kā rāg,* "A raga for the (particular) time or moment," meaning "a statement made to suit the situation." This is a pun, for ragas do in fact have a designated time of performance. Another idiomatic expression is *zamāna sāzī,* or "playing along with the needs of time."

[58] So ubiquitous in English (but not in German, for instance).

[59] It took me years to recognize that these usages are not simply mistakes made by unmusical people!

been essentially unaffected by secularist or scientific-rationalist trans-
formation, since such trends were introduced from Europe and thus
came to exist separately from, rather than being incorporated into,
the indigenous world view.[60]

Islam, no less than Judaism and Christianity,[61] is founded in a
notion of temporality linking life from Creation and the Past (*azal*) to
the end of time, the Last Judgment and the Future (*abad*). But time is
part of Creation, and outside of it God's reality exists in infinity or
eternity (*qidam*). Time therefore is no way a universal measure but
something meted out by God and ultimately relative—"Creator of
time" *khāliq-e-zamān* is one of His scriptural titles.[62] For Muslims,
then, temporal lineality is standard but not temporal causality, for
God alone, not temporal sequence, is causal. Natural causation is thus
superseded by "ultimate causation" which bestows intelligibility and
significance on natural processes in their entirety.[63]

Time, as articulated in the doctrines of *tajaddud-i-amthāl* (renewal
of similars) and of *kashf* (manifestation), does not signify a continuous
duration but a constellation of "nows"[64] each caused by the Creator.
His will is the ultimate cause of time and hence of events in time, so
that specific causes are not independently meaningful.[65] Temporal
lineality has been conceptualized as the dynamic connective of the
present with the past which provides a record of divine causation[66]—
not by accident does historiography constitute one of the great
achievements of Islamic civilization, notably in ideologically ahistori-
cal Hindu India.

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[60] Characteristically, Muhammad Iqbal wrote his modernist interpretation in the
form of English lectures; they exist intellectually quite apart from his equally profound
but more traditional Persian and Urdu poetry (and have not been translated into either
language).

[61] A careful review of the history of European "time" indicates a great deal of
parallel between pre-Renaissance Christian and Islamic conceptions and usage.

[62] A. Arnaldez, "Kidam," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, E. van
Donzel, B. Lewis, and Ch. Pellat, V, (Leiden, 1986), 95–99.

[63] Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qu'ran* (Chicago, 1980), 66.

[64] This conception is beautifully articulated in the famous poem by the 13th-
century mystic and poet Jalaluddin Rumi which likens time to a burning stick that
moves, generating a line of light, see Aziz Ahmad, *Change, Time and Causality with Special
Reference to Muslim Thought* (Lahore, Pakistan Philosophical Conference, 1974), 113.

[65] Ahmad, op. cit., see also Louis Massignon, "Time in Islamic Thought," ed.
Joseph Campbell, Bollingen Series 30–33 (New York and Princeton, 1957). See further
Jean During, *Musique et Extase: L'audition mystique dans la tradition Soufie* (Paris, 1988), 91,
where he points out that Arabic does not have verbal tenses; rather its usage implies an
atomistic vision of time. This however is so for a great many other languages outside
the Indo-European category.

[66] Peter Hardy, "Islam in Medieval India," *Sources of Indian Tradition*, comp. by
W. T. de Bary et al., (New York, 1958).

The Sufi world view[67] partakes of this temporal lineality with its dynamic of divine causation. It looks back, and up, to founding saints, to the Prophet, and thereby to God. A spiritual genealogy and chain of transmission (*silsila*) links each Sufi to this hierarchy through his[68] spiritual preceptor (*sheikh*), while a spiritual path (*tarīqa*) with appropriate stages (*maqām*) leads him forward in his quest toward closeness with God through those saintly figures who are near Him, culminating in his permanent union with God in death (*wisāl*). By thus looking both backward and forward the Sufi partakes of a dynamic that in effect reinforces, but at the same time reverses linear time. Linear time is thus transformed through spiritual progress toward that source from which all spiritual life originated.

Cutting across this dual lineal structure—comprising a spiritual genealogy established in the past, and a spiritual path with its stages reaching into the future—is the "state" of direct knowledge of the "eternal."[69] This state is experienced in *hāl*, divine ecstasy, in which past and future are subsumed within the eternal Present of God. Though contained within each heart, this experience of "eternal time" (*qidam*) is a special blessing beyond deliberate striving, sparked by the mystical force of love which alone can bridge the distinction between Created and Creator, leading to divine union. Permanently achieved only with the individual's final extinction on his death, this union with the ultimate Beloved (termed *wisāl* or *ʿurs*, i.e., wedding) can be experienced in life as a temporary state of ecstasy (*hāl, wajd*) in which the self becomes submerged in the *sheikh*, a saint, or ultimately in God. Sufis seek this goal through cognitive or ritual sensory processes as well as through verbal-musical invocation. However the occurrence of *hāl* is beyond human causation; its timing is by "divine accident" and it occurs on "divine time" which is relative, for God is ultimately arbitrary and not subject to natural causation. In fact, one of the foundational documents of Sufism and its musical ritual (*samaʾ*)[70] places *hāl* in direct juxtaposition with time: "The *hāl* is that

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[67] Presented here are concepts relevant to Sufism in South Asia. See also Qureshi, op. cit., (1987), 79 ff.

[68] The consistent use of the masculine pronoun is deliberate, given that Sufism (and Islam generally) addresses primarily men who are also its prime practitioners. I was almost consistently the only woman in attendance at the Sufi assemblies that I recorded.

[69] Titus Burckhardt, *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, trans. D. M. Matheson (Lahore, 1983), 15.

[70] *Samaʾ* literally means "listening." The Persian treatise *Kashf-al-Mahjūb* by Ali-al-Hujwiri (d. ca. 1072), one of Sufism's earliest authorities and a major saint in Pakistan whose shrine is in Lahore.

which descends upon time and adorns it as the spirit adorns the body."[71] Of course, the living Sufi remains within time, but while his striving or "activation" leads him to be "with himself in the pleasure of *waqt* (time)," he is "with God in the delight of *ḥāl*, a state which is "received" and transtemporal."[72]

Sufism has enshrined this temporal dualism in the complementary concepts of *fanā* and *baqā* (annihilation and sustenance), as juxtaposed in the famous Persian verse by the mystic Abd-al Quddūs Gangōhī (d. 1537):[73]

> Guft Quddūsī faqīr-e-dar fanā-o-dar baqā
> Khud bakhud āzād būdī khud giraftār āmadī.
>
> Quddusi says: the mystic exists in both annihilation and sustenance
> Spontaneously he attains freedom, spontaneously he becomes contained anew.

Beyond, and in addition to what is essentially "cognitive" time accessible through personal experience, organic life is oriented to natural processes which govern external (creation) time and are manifested in the movement of cosmos and nature. The divinely ordained arbitrariness and relativity of time is clearly articulated in the coexistence of two time systems which never converge, the cosmological-ritual (lunar) system and the seasonal (solar) systems of time reckoning. The result is a ritual time framework separate from, but totally intertwined with secular, agricultural or now Western clock time, so that the Muslim lives in (at least) two time systems at once, activating one or the other, while both continue. This simultaneity stands in contradistinction to the Western juxtaposition of two mutually exclusive realities which Langer terms "virtual" versus "profane" time,[74] and to the alternating co-presence of one with the other. Dualism clearly operates at several levels in the Muslim reckoning of duration and time; this forms part of the highly dualistic universe of Islamic, and particularly Sufi, thinking which becomes manifest in the frequent use of paired concepts to delineate a cognitive domain.[75] The

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[71] Hujwiri, al-, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, trans. R. A. Nicholson, Gibb Memorial Series no. 17 (London, 1959 [1911]), 319.

[72] Hujwiri, op. cit., p. 370, see also the discussion of time in Islam by L. Gardet, "Hal," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. B. Lewis, C. H. Pellet, and J. Schacht, III (Leiden, 1971), 83–84, with reference to Harith al Muhasibi.

[73] Zahur Ahsan Sharib, *Khumkhāna-e-Tasawwuf* (New Delhi, 1965), 339.

[74] Langer, op. cit., 125. See also Kramer (1988), op. cit., 17.

[75] To name just a few within the Sufi domain: *umarā-fuqarā* (the worldly rich—the spiritually rich/worldly poor), *ḥāl-qāl* (ecstasy-cognition), *mashrab-mazhab* (mysticism-orthodoxy) *naql-asl* (imitation—genuineness).

dual conception of time itself is expressed by several perspectives in the complementary concepts of *fanā* and *baqā*.[76]

The goal of transcending the abyss between the dual domain of time and to experience their simultaneity or mutual "entrainment"[77] is pursued through the quest for ecstasy, the ritual core of Sufism. The primary means employed to achieve this divine union is "remembrance" by verbal invocation (Arabic *dhikr* or *zikr* in Farsi/Urdu).[78] The dynamic principle of *zikr* is repetition, a motion in time of an essentially circular nature. Sufis themselves explain this as *lai kā halqa* (encirclement of pace or rhythm) a cyclical temporal pattern that carries the verbal repetition even when the words are not actually spoken. What marks each temporal pattern is *zarb* (stroke, blow, also heart beat),[79] meant to stir the heart at the culmination of each verbal invocation. In the classical *zikr* recitation it is marked by a vocal accent and reinforced by a strong downward nod. This nod is the arrival point of a circular head movement carried out during each *zikr* phrase in a counter-clockwise direction, so that the head rises toward the right and descends bowing toward the heart.[80] Figure 1 presents the most important *zikr* in Islam which is known and practiced universally.[81] *Zikr* has a profound temporal association with the Covenant between man and God and thus with the beginning of created time.

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Time in the Ritual of *Samaʾ*

The declared purpose of a *samaʾ* or *qawwālī* assembly is to guide the Sufi toward mystical knowledge and, most of all, to arouse mystical emotion, to the state of spiritual ecstasy. The primary medium used for the path of conscious striving is a powerful poetic idiom evoking nearness to sheikh saint Prophet, and God through the bond of mystical love.

The ritual of *samaʾ* thus embodies the notion of *zikr* together with the notion of spiritual teaching through the insights of Sufi masters

[76] Rahman, op. cit.

[77] The term is adapted from social psychology, Janice R. Kelly, "Entrainment in Individual and Group Behavior," *The Social Psychology of Time: New Perspectives*, ed. Joseph E. McGrath (Newbury Park, CA, 1988).

[78] For a discussion of *zikr* and its relationship to the *samaʾ* concept see During, op. cit., 155 ff.

[79] The original meaning of the term in Persian is also accented beat, or "downbeat," Gen'ichi Tsuge, "Avaz:" A Study of the Rhythmic Aspects in Classical Iranian Music, Ph. D. Dissertation (Ann Arbor, MI, 1974), 75.

[80] An analogous circular gesture is in standard use when a donor circles a gift of money above the recipient's head to evoke divine blessing upon him.

[81] The words constitute the first part of the *shahādā*, the "testimony" or credo of Islam: *Lā ilāhā ilallāh Muhammad al rasūlallah* (there is no God but God and Muhammad is his Prophet).

FIGURE 1. Zikr Recitation: "La Ilaha Ilallah" (there is no God but
God).

verbal recitation	Lā i-lā-hā il-al-lāh
durational pattern	♩. ♪♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
verbal accent	> >
head movement (view from above)	

which were encapsulated and expressed in poetry since the beginning
of Sufism. Established at least since the 11th century, sama' took local
musical forms but retains its basic adherence to the zikr principle.
Thus, in South Asian qawwālī cyclical rhythmic patterns are tonality
expanded, but they remain marked with a percussive zarb of hand-
clapping and of strongly accented drum strokes, while melodic in-
struments occupy a non-obligatory background function of hetero-
phonic accompaniment. The standard ensemble is a vocal group with
a lead singer who normally plays the portable harmonium and a
drummer who plays the dholak (barrel drum). A sheikh (spiritual
leader) is in control of the proceedings.

Sama', or qawwālī singing, is set within the ritual calendar and time
frame of Islam. It occurs in relation to the five daily prayer times
(before zohr or between asr and maghrib in the afternoon and after
maghrib or 'ishā in the evening); weekly on the day for commemorat-
ing the dead (Thursday) and on the day of community prayers (Fri-
day); monthly and yearly—in accordance with the Islamic calendar
—on special saints' days, most prominently on the day of a saint's
union with God ('urs). Zamān (Arabic: time), to choose the right time
for holding a sama' ritual, is the first of the three conditions laid down
in the tenets of classical Sufism by its prime exponent, Abu Hamid al
Ghazzali (d. 1111), which continue to inform Sufi consciousness in the
sama' assembly.[82]

The performance sequence is broadly defined by a procedure
that calls for songs invoking first God, the Prophet, and then saints

[82] zamān, makān, ikhwān (right time, place and participants, see Abu Hamid
Ghazali, Al Ghazali on Islamic Guidance, trans. with a commentary by Muhammas Abul
Qasem (Mangi, Malaysia, 1979), 84; see also Duncan Black Macdonald, "Emotional
Religion in Islam as affected by Music and Singing, being a Translation of a Book of the
Ilhya Ulum ad-Din of al-Ghazzali," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1901–02), and
Syed Sabah-ud-Din Abdur Rahman, Bazm-e-Sūfiyā (Azamgarh, 1971).

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along with mystical states. Although not rigidly observed in its en-
tirety, this convention nevertheless insures an invocational progres-
sion from the realm of temporally prior and spiritually exalted toward
the here and now of spiritual experience, which in turn opens up the
entire realm of the mystical past to simultaneity. Evoked in the songs
performed, such simultaneity or coevalness finds articulation among
listeners in two distinct ways suggesting two experiential modes; one
is the result of deliberate striving, the other of intuition. The timing
of these experiences and even of the songs that evoke them is essen-
tially arbitrary, for they are conceived of as divine blessings, subject to
God's will at that moment, although it is mediated by the *sheikh* who
controls the assembly in his role of living representative of the saintly
hierarchy which culminates in God himself. A *sama'* assembly is thus
convened and structured arbitrarily; exact starting and ending time as
well as the duration of individual song performances are all in the
hands of the *sheikh*. Acting on behalf of the saint puts him literally in
a different "time frame," activating his identity as a saint's represen-
tative.[83] This complete readiness for the unpredictably occurring tem-
poral sequencing of events is also reflected in the often arbitrary
timing of attendance by listeners and most of all in the entirely intu-
itive, moment-based choice and sequence of songs being performed.
Altogether the *sama'* setting sets the stage for actually experiencing
"moment time" or what Corbin terms the characteristic Islamic notion
of a "galaxy of instants."[84]

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    Within this situational frame, the performance of *qawwālī* creates
a sequential process in which the textual message unfolds line by line,
verse by verse, and song by song. Along its discursive flow any portion
or facet of the text message can become the focus of intense mystical
engagement, to the point of ecstatic arousal. For such engagement
to actually take place requires dwelling on the particular text unit so
that the full impact of its meaning can be allowed to unfold. This is
achieved through repetition, so that the "audible" present is filled
with the single meaning of its message as in *zikr*. Thus the perfor-
mance occasion of Sufi songs, central to a major arena for the expe-
riential life of the mystic, takes place in a frame of linear time, but its
flow can at any moment be overlaid by the more powerful experience

    [83] This became strikingly evident on two occasions when respected *sheikhs* at the
great shrines of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti in Ajmer and Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi
refused to accept offerings by this author after the ritual events of the saint's anniver-
sary were concluded, since outside of their temporary impersonation of the saint they
would have accepted the gift on behalf of themselves only. Syed Haleem Chishty,
Discussion (Ajmer: Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti Shrine, November 14, 1975) and Khwaja
Hasan Nizami, *Discussion* (New Delhi: Nizamuddin Auliya Shrine, January 2, 1976).
    [84] Massignon, op. cit., 108.

of an eternal "now." This is well-expressed in the much quoted classical Farsi verse which also alludes to the essentially divine origin of the effect evoked by *sama'* songs:

> Khushk tār o khushk chob o khushk posh,
> Az kujā mī āyad īṅ awāz-e-dost
> Nai ze tār o nai ze chob o nai ze posh,
> Khud bakhud mī āyad īṅ awāz-e-dost

> Dry strings, dry wood, dry skin (the materials of musical instruments),
> Whence comes the voice of the Beloved?
> Not from strings, not from wood, nor from skin,
> From Himself comes the voice of the Beloved.

Text and Time

A *qawwālī* song consists of poem and strophic musical setting, along with melodic variants that serve structuring purposes. It is usually prefaced by an Introductory Verse (*rubā'ī*) and the entire performance is introduced by an Instrumental Prelude (*naghma*). At the core of *sama'*, however, is the poem. Poetry has always been the primary language of Sufism,[85] in particular the *ghazal*, an Arab-Persian poetic genre that also predominates in the *qawwālī* repertoire. The song chosen for this exploration of *qawwālī* relative to time is a *ghazal* by the 13th-century Sufi poet Amir Khusrau with its traditional musical setting ascribed by some performers to the poet himself; it is one of Indic Sufism's favored classical songs.[86] Figure 2 presents the complete text as contained in two standard Sufi collections.[87]

The *qawwālī* poetic idiom is declarative, expressional, didactic, confessional, but not narrative. Its units of content are self-contained verses, linked to each other by general thematic character and by a common metric and rhyming scheme. The binary structure of each verse has a highly developed dynamic between antecedent and consequent, or statement and answer. This dynamic is reflected in the paired literary terms for first and second verse line: *dāvā* (assertion) is followed by *javāb-e-dāvā* (reply to assertion) or *tamsīl* (illustration) by *dalīl* (proof). What amounts essentially to an iambic or "upbeat-downbeat" structural pattern is reinforced by the rhyme scheme and

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[85] For a comprehensive discussion of Sufism and poetry see Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1975).

[86] Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context and Meaning in Qawwālī* (Cambridge, 1986), 21 ff.

[87] Hakim Muhammad Idris Khan, *Risāla-e-Sama' aur Naghmāt-e-Sama'* (Bareilly, 1973), 393.

FIGURE 2. The Poem "Chasm-e- Maste ʿAjabe."

I   Chashm-e-mast-e-ʿajabe zulf
tarāz-e-ʿajabe
Maiparast-e-ajabe fitnā tarāz-e-
ʿajabe

Ecstatic eyes so wondrous, long
locks so wondrous
Wine worshippers so wondrous,
beguiling Beloved so wondrous.

II   Bahr-e-qatlam chū kashad te<u>gh</u>
neham sar basujūd
Ū banāz-e-ʿajabe man banayāz-e-
ʿajabe

As He draws the sword, I offer
my head in prostration
His beneficent deed: how
wondrous, my submission:
how wondrous

III   Waqt-e-bismil shudanam chashm
barūyash bāz ast
Mehrbān-e-ʿajabe bandanawāz-e-
ʿajabe

In the spasm of being killed my
eyes beheld Your face
Benevolence so wondrous,
guidance and protection so
wondrous

IV   Qaid kardī ba ālam keh tamāshā
kardī
Dīda bāz-e-ʿajabe zulf tarāz-e-
ʿajabe

Have you imprisoned me or made
me a spectacle to the world?
Your glance is everywhere; how
wondrous, and Your beauty:
how wondrous.

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V   Turk tāz-e-ʿajabe shoba babāz-
e-ʿajabe
Kajkulāh-e-ʿajabe arbada sāz-e-
ʿajabe

Amorous teasing so wondrous,
beguiling so wondrous.
Tilted cap so wondrous, tormen-
tor so wondrous.

VI   Tāq-e-abrū-e-to chūṅ qibla sar-e-
man basujūd

Chashm-e-bad dūr keh hastam
banamāz-e-ʿajabe

Before the arch of your eyebrow
my head is prostrate in adora-
tion;
May evil gaze be averted at this
prayer so wondrous.

VII   Gul ʿajab husn-o-jamāl-o-<u>kh</u>at-o-
<u>kh</u>āl-o-gesū
Sarw-e-qad-e-ʿajabe qāmat-e-
nāz-e-ʿajabe

O wondrous flower of beauty,
delight and adornment,
A cypress-like stature so
wondrous, a figure alluringly
wondrous.

VIII   Haq mago kalma-e-kufr ast dar
īn jā Khusrau
Rāzdān-e-ʿajabe sāhib-e-rāz-e-
ʿajabe

Do not reveal the Truth in this
world of heresy, o Khusrau.
The Source of mystery is won-
drous, the Knower of secrets is
wondrous.

echoed by the poetic meter at the level of divisions within the verse line, as illustrated in Figure 3. In contrast, the phonemic semantic coherence between verses is only connotational, not sequential; what unites all verses equally is their structure, both durational (meter) and phonetic (rhyme scheme). Appropriately, the *ghazal* has been called "a showcase in which *shers* (verses) are elegantly displayed and from which they can be pulled out (in any order)."[88] Only the opening and closing verse give the poem a limited lineal frame.

The "showcase," that is the formal scheme of metric and rhyme constraints, is what has earned the *ghazal* the epithet "musical"; these constraints find their acoustic expression reinforced by the phonetic scheme of Arabic loan vocabulary in Persian and Urdu. Since both facets of the formal scheme are rendered with accuracy in oral performance, the metric long-short arrangement with its prevalence of longs over shorts and its ending in longs, and most of all the final rhyme scheme in each verse transmit their strong iambic feel of structural up and downbeat to the text line. In the rhyme scheme the same time pattern occurs at two levels. Between the two verse lines the first open-ended line is followed by the conclusive and rhyming second line. This pattern is reinforced within the second line between its beginning and ending portion, culminating in a doubly emphatic conclusion of the line and verse. Within each verse content and form thus coincide; the durational dynamic reinforces the dynamic of the meaning sequence embodied in the antecedent-consequent structure.[89] The result is a powerful dynamic of suspense and release whose acoustic-semantic effect is cathartic, as any listener of *qawwālī* can affirm.

In addition to, and quite apart from the structural temporality of the poem, lexical content conveys a different sort of temporal meaning, starting with the language itself. *Chashm-e-maste* is in classical Farsi. Unlike Hindi and Urdu, the more contemporary languages used in *qawwālī*, Farsi evokes the hallowed era of classical Sufism and its Persian roots; it is the idiom of mystical expression *par excellence*. Farsi also evokes the glorious past of Muslims in India where Persian was the court and elite language for centuries. Here this focus is rendered more specific through the author of the poem, Amir Khusrau, who was not only a great Sufi but also an important member of the Imperial Court in 13th-century Delhi. But the primary association

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[88] Frances W. Pritchett, "Orient Pearls Unstrung: The Quest for Unity in the Ghazal," *Edebiyat*, vol. NS 4 (1993), 119–35.
[89] First discussed by Tsuge, op. cit.

FIGURE 3. Ghazal Verse: Iambic Structural Pattern.

Text: 1. Chashm-e-maste 'ajabe zulf tarāz-e-'ajābe 2. Maiparast-e-ajābe fitna tarāz-e'ajabe

Poetic meter: — ˘ — — / ˘ ˘ — — / ˘ ˘ — — / ˘ ˘ — /   "

Metric
  groupings: ˘ —   ˘ — ˘ — ˘ — /   "

Line division: ⌣_____⌣ _____   "

Verse lines: ⌣_____⌣ _____
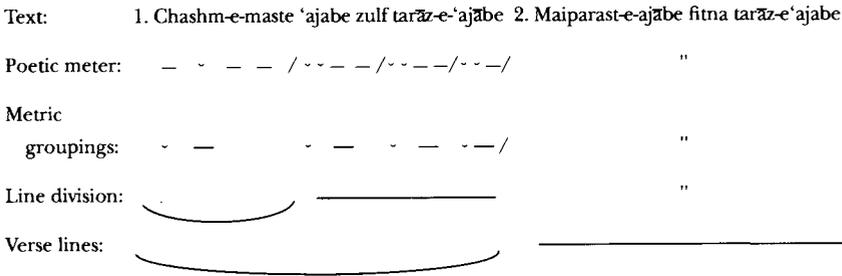
of this authorship is the contemporary saint Nizamuddin Auliya who
was Amir Khusrau's spiritual preceptor, his *sheikh* or *pīr*.

What this text invokes, however, is not a historical past, distant
from the present, for the poetic content itself brings the relationship
between Sufi and Sheikh into the experiential realm of the present.
The mystic is ecstatic in the contemplation of the eternal Beloved,
in the experience of attraction and separation, of annihilation and
union. Expressed in the metaphors of the Persian past (the titled cap
of the "Turk"[90] who is the cupbearer of the wine of gnosis), this
experience knows no temporal bounds; its fulfillment lies beyond this
life, in the realm of eternity.

Within this general theme, each couplet offers a complete facet
of the mystical experience and brings into sharp focus the duality of
Lover and Beloved, aided by the highly symmetrical verse structure.
The regular structure of the poetic meter receives further emphasis
through the internal repetition of the monorhyme *'ajabe* ("won-
drous"). This augments the arrival points within each verse, thereby
intensifying the effect of the downbeat-like "punch word" *'ajabe*, cen-
tral in its meaning to the mystery of the mystical quest.[91]

Considering the narrative content of the poem, then, each verse
presents itself as a complete whole—it unfolds as a "moment" in time.
Couplets follow each other in a sequence of "mobile form"[92] which is
freely modified in performance, though anchored by a marked open-
ing and closing verse. This is well-illustrated by a comparison of five

[90] In classical Persian literature, *turk* stands for beautiful and fair-skinned; the
tilted cap (*kajkulah*) was a standard adornment of young men.
[91] I have tried to convey the dynamic of this quintessentially iambic structure in
the translation, although the syntactic limitations of English required stretching the
limits of good usage.
[92] Kramer (1988), op. cit., 50.

different performances of *Chashm-e- Maste ʿAjabe* by three well-known hereditary *qawwāls* (Meraj Ahmad Nizami, the late Aziz Ahmad Khan Warsi, and Aslam Sabri), as tabulated in Figure 4.[93] Starting with the text, each Sufi Indian musician in effect creates a unique time-experience for each performance, a "macro-movement" in time.

In its entirety, then, the *ghazal* conveys a dual time perspective. In contrast to the essentially non-linear character of the *ghazal* as a whole, the content within each verse is highly sequential, or, in Kramer's terms, "processive," that is, the implications of the second line arise from events in the first line.[94] The couplet in fact, is structured on the principle of structural upbeat (arsis), followed by structural downbeat (thesis). Thus, whereas author, language, idiom, and mood unite the poem in a general way, it is its formal structure that provides internal coherence, relating, not connecting, the verses to each other by rhyme and strongly patterned metric consistency. Structure also marks the beginning of the poem by a rhyme in both lines of the opening verse, and its end by the insertion of the poet's name in the final verse.[95] But the *ghazal* is clearly not a sequential event; in Kramer's terms it is distinctly non-linear, for its internal parts are determined not by preceding parts but rather "in accordance with implications that arise from principles or tendencies governing the entire piece."[96]

Of course the discursive text message, in addition to its inherent structural flow, has referential content to duration and time, both as to temporal sequence linking present to past, and to the unique temporal moment involving the mystical experience of a "specious present." On the basis of its semanticity, any such text unit, even a narrative one, can inspire a listener and become the focus of a "moment" experience. The musician then converts it, through continuous repetition, into a non-narrative unit of "specious time," and it becomes separated from its sequential temporal connotation.[97] Finally, in a performance, the total textual-musical utterance is also embedded in the durational frame of religious calendrical time reckoning, with its relevant associations of religiously significant "moments." The

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[93] Performances: Meraj Ahmad Nizami, *Chashm-e- Maste ʿAjabe* (Gulbarga: Syed Muhammad Gesudaraz Shrine, 1975), *Chashm-e-Maste ʿAjabe* (Bombay: Private Sufi Assembly, 1975), *Chashm-e- Maste ʿAjabe* (New Delhi: Nizamuddin Auliya Shrine, 1976). Aziz Ahmad Khan Warsi, *Chashm-e- Maste ʿAjabe* (New Delhi: Nizamuddin Auliya Shrine, 1975). Akhtar Sabri, *Chashm-e- Maste ʿAjabe* (New Delhi: Khwaja Hasan Nizami Shrine, 1975).
[94] Kramer (1988), op. cit., 20.
[95] This latter device is considered standard but optional.
[96] Kramer (1988), op. cit., 20.
[97] Discussed further on p. 520, below.

FIGURE 4. Verse Arrangements of Five Performances of "Chasm-e-
Maste ʿAjabe."

Meraj Ahmad Nizami 1976	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Meraj Ahmad Nizami 1975a	1 2 3 5 6 7 8
Meraj Ahmad Nizami 1975b	1 2 3 4 6 8
Aziz Ahmad Khan Warsi 1975	1 5 2 7 3 8
Akhtar Sabri 1975	1 2 6 3 7 8

day of a saint's anniversary, the weekly day of the dead (Thursday), the hour approaching prayer time can each reinforce, augment, or delimit the ongoing temporal messages of the song. Their temporal meanings thus become inscribed in the textual-musical utterance, enriching, expanding, or delimiting it, or infusing it with a unique specificity of meaning.

Time and *Qawwālī* Music

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Qawwālī music enhances poetry, but it does more: the stirring effect of beautiful musical sound affects the listener at a different, more immediate sensory level, a challenge addressed by Sufi writers since its beginnings.[98] The essence of *sama'* has always been musical sound,[99] but it must be linked to the spiritual message of the poem to be spiritually legitimate.

The *sama'* ritual is concretely defined by unceasing musical sound created by a seamless continuity between songs (except when per- formers change). Two distinct kinds of durational arrangement are heard in juxtaposition both sequentially and simultaneously, one is a regular, strongly articulated metric pattern, the other a non-metric temporal sequence based on verbal rhythm.[100] The *qawwālī* song proper contains both, whereas the two standard introductory items feature each in turn. First the instrumental prelude (*naghmā*, liter- ally, melody) presents a fast and smartly accented duple meter ($\frac{8}{8}$)

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[98] Fear of the powerful and instant effect of music prevents some Sufis from attending *qawwālī* performances; in several Sufi lineages it is also the basis for prohib- iting *qawwālī* altogether.

[99] Hujwiri, op. cit., 393–420. The same poetry is recited among Sufis outside *sama'* in an entirely discursive frame.

[100] The analogy with Bartók's *tempo giusto* and *parlando rubato* may be appropriate in more than one way, given the possible Muslim-Mediterranean cultural origin of this dual pattern.

together with a melody composed of sequential patterns that rein-
force the metric cycle; together they invoke the durational sequence
of the zikr *Allāhū* (♩♩♩) which is thereby to be implanted in the
listener's consciousness.

Next, the Introductory Verse (*ruba'ī*) offers a short, self-
contained verse sung in the pattern of speech rhythm to a chant-like
melody, projecting the sequence of the verbal message. The aim is
discursive: to introduce a thematic focus for the song that is to follow
immediately. Example 2 illustrates both textual content and melodic-
rhythmic character of the *ruba'i*. In the song proper, finally, recurrent
metric and discursive speech-rhythmic durational arrangements con-
verge, for here the verbal sequence is integrated into, and adapted to
the drum's durational pattern, as shown in Example 3.

Tension between these two temporal modes is at the base of every
performance of *qawwālī*. For on the one hand, verbal rhythm alone
lacks that compelling regularity of *zikr* and the sense of divine supra-
temporal presence it invokes. On the other hand, a rhythmic pattern
without verbally articulated spiritual content is suspect because it is
potentially un-spiritual. Ecstasy based on only sound alone has always
been considered of a low order indeed; only the uninitiated and un-
lettered, especially women, partake of it.[101] Thus the relationship
between the two durational modes is ideationally anchored, creating
a blueprint for performance. But only in the presence of, and in
response to listeners do the two sound modes engage with each other
across the wide range of combinational alternatives that are built into
the *qawwālī* musical idiom. Performers thus create a unique web of
temporal interaction which articulates the flow of experience unique
to each assembly.

The musical setting reinforces this durational dynamic, first of
all in the metric articulation of the poetic long-short pattern. In the
song proper, this pattern is regularized to fit a musical meter. The
drum pattern (*theka*)[102] provides an independent acoustic frame for
the meter and in fact functions much like an ostinato underlying the
melodic setting of the song,[103] at the same time it also incorporates the
duple accentuation that invokes *zikr*.

With regard to the formal scheme, the principal feature is the
contrast between first and second verse lines by means of tessitura. An
initial tune with a higher tessitura leads into a concluding tune with a

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[101] Hujwiri, op. cit., 500. Meraj Ahmad Nizami, *Discussion* (New Delhi: Nizamud-
din Auliya Shrine, April 19, 1976).

[102] *Theka* is the Sufi musicians' term for *tāl*, the standard term used in Hindustani
art music.

[103] Meyer's discussion of repetition and ostinato, op. cit., 137, are pertinent here.

EXAMPLE 1. Instrumental Prelude (Naghmā).

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lower tessitura once again creating an iambic pattern of succession but through melody. The "downward" pitch movement from first to second line acts as a literal melodic equivalent of the general thrust toward the "downbeat" embodied in the second line.

The rhythmic setting of the tune fits the long-short arrangement of the verse meter but adapts it musically to turn each of the four poetic feet into an iambic structure of its own. This is achieved on one hand by the shortening of all "upbeat" syllables at the beginning of the foot, including the long syllable that follows the caesura, and on the other by the lengthening of each final syllable, thereby adding melodic weight to the structural "downbeats" within each foot. The long penultimate syllable ingeniously carries a grouping of short notes which not only mark it as structurally "upbeat" but intensifies

EXAMPLE 2. Introductory Verse in Recitative (Rubā ī).

1. Shud dilam shefə- ta- e_____   zulf ə chalī- pā- e kase_____

2. Kard ə bī- mārə mārā_____   nargis- e-shahlā_____ e   kase

3. Ai khushā tā- la-e-man gird- e-sarash mī gardam_____

4. Khūn-e-man rang-e-hinā_____ shud bakaf-e- pā_____ e kase_____

the drive to the structural "downbeat." To accommodate the expansive durational musical arrangement this particular song features a $\frac{4}{4}$ meter, rather than the more common $\frac{3}{4}$ meter which more closely fits the long-short pattern of the prosodic meter. In this way the music multiply reinforces the iambic temporal feel of each verse. (See Figure 5 and compare with Figure 3).

Keyed to the $\frac{4}{4}$ meter articulated by the drum, the distinct time organization of this tune corresponds to two hypermeters of four metric units in each line. The drummed pattern of this meter, itself called qawwālī tāl (qawwālī kā thekā), is itself likewise "progressive" in structure, with a downbeat portion of two strong pulses and an upbeat portion of two subdivided, light pulses, as illustrated in Examples 2 and 4. It is worth noting that in this song the opening phrase of the main melody exactly replicates this durational arrangement (♩♩♫♫♩), so that drum pattern and melody together intensify each other in performance.[104]

The melodic setting of Chashm-e- maste, apart from serving the durational articulation of the poem, also conveys its own temporal meaning as an "old" tune, associated with a past era of spiritual

[104] A "drive to the downbeat" is also a prime characteristic of rhythm and drumming in Hindustani North Indian art music generally where it is linked to the concept of sam. Significantly, the musicians' term for this forward drive is the Persian amad, (coming, arrival), discussed in Sushil Kumar Saksena, The Winged Form: Aesthetic Essays on Hindustani Music (New Delhi, 1979), 128 ff.

EXAMPLE 3. The Song Setting: "Chashm-e- Maste 'Ajabe."

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FIGURE 5. "Iambic" Character of Ghazal Verse Reinforced Musi-
cally.

Poetic meter

("thesis" syllable)

Musical realization in 8/8

("thesis" syllable prolonged)

Musical realization in 6/8

("thesis" syllable accented)

authority. This is reflected in performance by a respectfully con-
trolled tempo strictly within the confines of *barābar kī lai,* a measured
pace not exceeding a pulse speed of about MM = 108.[105]

Equally significant to the musical elements embedded in the com-
posed setting of the song are those musical elements required to
create the process of its performance so as to convey the spiritual
message of the poem. At the core is the structuring process that
enables the performers to single out and intensify a salient text phrase
to serve the goal of arousing and sustaining the emotion of mystical
love. Those processes may be subsumed under an expanded concept
of repetition. Sufis distinguish three kinds of repetition: *dohrānā, girah*
and *takrār;* they may loosely be translated as: recurrence, restatement
(after insertion) and multiple repetition. All three are subject to the
same syntactic procedure characteristic of *qawwālī* music.

Repetition in song differs fundamentally from its verbal counter-
part, for while spoken repetition interrupts the flow of discourse,
music is capable of embedding repetition within that flow, thereby
enabling the simultaneous experiencing of both. Musically this is
achieved very simply, through a process of melodically contextualiz-
ing the phrase which is to be repeated. The melodic "context" is
provided by an ending which integrates the phrase with the beginning
of the unit to be repeated, in contrast to its regular ending which
integrates it with the unit that follows next.[106] Thus the musical units
reiterated are melodically adapted to sequential functioning through
an "allomorphic" procedure at the end of a musical unit that may be

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[105] While today some "modern" and "light" *qawwālī* songs are performed at a
faster pace, older performers and Sufis refer to the consistently slow pace of *qawwālī* in
earlier times.
[106] The procedure clearly resembles that of "first" and "second" endings in Com-
mon Practice compositions.

EXAMPLE 4. Melodic Ascent to Indicate Repetition.

euphemistically termed "functional melody." Melodic function is based on the general principle that a rising melodic movement at the end of a unit signals the continuation or extension of the same message through some form of repetition, whereas the standard melodic ending or a descending movement signal its completion and onward movement to the next musical unit. In this way, the multiple repetition of a brief melodic phrase can be completely integrated in the larger melodic structure, for the ending provides the phrase with structural clarity as to its sequential direction.

All three structuring processes serve the intensification of a single semantic unit, be it a text phrase or even a single word, by filling the perceptual present with nothing but the experience of its message, eliminating from perception any connectives to either prior or subsequent parts of the utterance. In essence this isolation is achieved by repetition, a procedure whose negative valuation in Western thinking has caused it to be both ignored and misunderstood.[107] Far from creating what Western writers like to term "redundancy" because it prevents the introduction of new information, repetition serves to enrich and expand the meaning of a "meaningful moment" by creating for it an exclusive perceptual space, an autonomous existence in the "specious present," that is, "the time interval . . . in which we experience the flow of events as being simultaneously available to perceptual or cognitive analysis."[108]

In *qawwālī*, this basic goal of repetition is achieved by reiteration (*dohrānā*) which involves restatement, implying a semantic character of the repeated unit. *Dohrānā* in effect achieves a balance between reinforcing a discursive message cognitively apprehended and an intuitive or connotative message. That is, a perceptual "moment" of simultaneous apprehension—the "specious present" of psychology—is filled and extended with a single message unit.

Recurrence, by means of an intervening Verse Insertion (*girah*), expands the cognitive span of the "meaningful moment," by offering semantic enrichment of the message, as is illustrated in Example 5. Multiple repetition (*takrār*) on the other hand, reduces the cognitive span of the "meaningful moment" above all by fully aligning the "message" with the acoustic span of the drummed metric unit—

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[107] Interestingly, the study of literature rather than music has generated the insight that "repetition, much more than linearity, is a primary category of time." See W. Wolfgang Holdheim, *The Hermeneutic Mode: Essays on Time in Literature and Literary Theory* (Ithaca, NY, 1984), 31.

[108] John A. Michon and Janet L. Jackson, "Attentional Effort and Cognitive Strategies in Processing of Temporal Information," *Proceedings of the Conference on Time, Perception, and Timing*, ed. J. Gibbon and L. G. Allen (New York, 1984), 90. See also Kramer (1988), op. cit., 311–14.

EXAMPLE 5. Recurrence through Verse Insertion (Girah).

(Song)   (Recitative)

V2. Kaj- ku- lāh_____   e_____   (Inserted verse begins):

1. San- sā- rə har ko pu- je   kul ko   jagat   sa- rā   he

2. Mak- ke men ko- ī dhun- dhe   Kā- shī   ko ko-   ī chā- he

3. Dun- yā men ap- ne pī   ke   pay- yān parūn   na kā- he

4. Har qaumə mil- lat e   rāh   dī- ne wa qib- la- gā- he

5. Man qib- la rāst ə kardam   bar sim- tə kaj- ku- lā-   he: (Return to Song):

V2. Kaj- ku- lā_____   he_____   'ajabe. _ .

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thereby activating pulse and accent with their link to biological rhythm. *Takrār* is musically simple because its repeated units are short and accelerated in pace—a process of pure repetition where even melodic endings are secondary to the continual durational pattern. Drumming reinforces this dimension by strong accents marking each *takrār* unit and by an accelerating pace.

In performance all three kinds of repetition are most effectively used in tandem, but their culmination is always *takrār* with its effect of total intuitive involvement. For the aim of *sama'* music is to transcend cognition, to move beyond the "stage" (*maqām*) of achieved insight into a "state" (*hāl*) of received illumination. Yet a cognitive presence

is at the same time of the essence, for, as has been mentioned, perceptual-intuitive experience unenlightened by cognition is considered crude, even non-spiritual. Thus the duality of cognition-perception or cognition-intuition set forth by Sufi ideology provides a flexible frame for enabling the Sufi to enter into a temporal mode of "simultaneity" or "verticality" where, in Kramer's formulation "the moment becomes the piece,"[109] while at the same time the durational continuity of discursive time is maintained: "the piece goes on."

The musical process of singling out individual phrases through reiteration, recurrence and multiple repetition requires variants that embody these structural alternatives. Such variants are created by *qawwālī* performers in all songs as needed. *Chashm-e- Maste 'Ajabe* is particularly rich in opportunity for such variants because the musical setting extends the final portion of each metric unit ($\smile\smile$ ——) so that it can then be "filled in" to serve both structural need and compositional fancy. As Figure 6 shows, the special technique used here is responsory, adding anything from filler syllables to a text phrase in diminution.

All these alternatives essentially serve to announce repetition of a textual-musical unit shorter than a full verse line; this allophonic melodic function is to raise the final part of the unit in pitch to suggest restatement of the unit while preserving melodic continuity. The obverse melodic principle is applied to achieve conclusion and continuation. The use of descending melodic motion is particularly prominent at the end of an introductory recitative (*ruba'ī*) and equally so at the end of a *girah,* a new verse that is inserted between statements of a repeated song unit to enhance its meaning. Here—as also in the introductory verse (*ruba'ī*)—, the last line of the verse moves downward in pitch to signal conclusion and continuation either to the beginning of the song proper in the case of an Introductory Verse, or to the song portion from which the singer had earlier departed to insert a verse. Since a high pitch is required in order to descend from it, both introductory and inserted verses leave their mid-octave tessitura and ascend to the upper tonic, usually in the penultimate verse line, so as to achieve an effective descent in the last line, as the conclusion of Example 5 above illustrates clearly.

Perhaps the most important time repetition used to structure a *qawwālī* song is *takrār,* the multiple repetition supporting intense mystical emotion or ecstasy. *Takrār* is the most characteristic feature of *qawwālī* to most people; in performance, however, it is usually heard

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[109] Kramer (1988), op. cit., 52.

FIGURE 6. Response in Diminution (Takrār).

after the reiteration or restatement that follows an insertion, for it reflects an advanced phase of audience arousal.

EXAMPLE 6. Recitative becomes Subject to Metric Control for Takrār.

In *Chashm-e- Maste ʿAjabe, takrār* can be carried out in a variety of ways, including a responsory which alternatively states the text unit in normal tempo and in diminution (see Figure 6 above). Any text portion can become subject to the need for multiple repetition, including, on occasion, a phrase from a recitative. In that case it becomes necessary to introduce metric control, achieved by bringing speech rhythm into the frame of a musical meter and then to convert the recitative monotone into an adequately shaped pitch sequence. This took place in an emotionally charged performance of *Chashm-e- Maste* as shown in Example 6. In a sophisticated musical move the performer chose a triple meter to represent the poetic meter of the insert and superimposed it polymetrically on the slower-paced drummed

duple meter of the ongoing song. The melodic simplification process is also exemplified. At the same time, pitch clues direct and move the repeated phrase toward more repetitions or toward the next text segment, thus enabling its integration into the larger melodic structure.

Takrār, then, is the musical means *par excellence* of converting discursive into moment time while at the same time integrating the two into one temporal sequence. But one needs to remember that this musical process is not autonomous, it takes place in conjunction with the verbal utterance of the song text, so that the musical sound is semantically fused with the temporal content of the text. And, once again, the entire textual-musical utterance is semantically enriched and informed by the durational frame of calendrical time reckoning with its relevant experiential associations.

Conclusion

To sum up, the explicit ideology of time brings the temporal meaning of *qawwālī* music into such clear relief that it not only informs but indeed generates its performance. The substance of these meanings, however, can only become manifest in the experience of participants who create the performance, transforming a generalized blueprint into a specific reality. This process makes each performance a unique moment within time created by divine will, placed within, but also transcending, the temporal order of creation. The ultimate consequence of this musical experience is metaphorically encapsulated in the famous account of one of the great ecstatic moments in Sufi history. That moment arose in 1237, during a *qawwālī* performance for the Saint Qutabuddīn Ba<u>kh</u>tiār-i-Kākī at the place where his tomb now stands.[110] The *qawwāls* were singing a profound verse[111] that dramatically encapsulates the mystic's dual temporal existence:

> Kushtagān-e-<u>kh</u>anjar-e-taslīm rā
> Har zamāṅ az ghaib jān-e-dīgar ast
>
> For the victims of the dagger of submission
> The Unseen brings a new life every moment

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[110] Qutabuddīn Ba<u>kh</u>tiar-i-Kākī's shrine is located in Mehrauli, South of Delhi. He was the spiritual successor to founder saint Muinudden Chishti of Ajmer and second in the Chishti spiritual dynasty of India; he died in Delhi in 1236.

[111] The verse is by the 12th-century Sufi poet Ahmad Jām, see Idris Khan, op. cit., 29.

Sufi tradition[112] recounts how on hearing this verse the Saint Qutabuddīn Ba<u>kh</u>tiar-e-Kākī entered an extended state of ecstasy. *Takrār* repetition of the verse continued for four days while the saint appeared alternately to die on the first verse line and arise anew on the second, until annihilation and sustenance, *fanā* and *baqā*, merged in his *wisāl*, the mystic's final union with God in death.

For Sufis, this episode is more than a metaphor, it is iconic with that which transcends but also embraces time's multiplicity: Mystical Love. Music, by conveying the experience of this emotion in time becomes its catalyst, likewise transcending but also encompassing particular messages. Among innumerable poetic statements Muhammad Iqbal's Sufi voice succinctly articulates Love's concluding integration of all preceding detail in a famous verse line:[113]

Ishq kī ek jast ne tai kar diā qissā tamām

Love, with a single leap, has cut across the entire story (of life).

In considering what this exploration of time in *qawwālī* contributes in relation to the broader realm of time-music perspectives, several characteristics stand out. Perhaps the most striking characteristic is the explicitly performative nature of time articulation in *qawwālī*, and of musical processes that are directly linked to the emergent quality of experienced time. The interactive and variable nature of the musical execution of *qawwālī* songs certainly reinforces this dominant aspect of *qawwālī*. It also rivets the music to human agency, not only in the historical sense of musical-cultural authorship but in the larger sense of its multiple, immediate impact on every musical production. The condition of orality thus profoundly affects the musical research process. Since investigating time in this music is perforce performance-based, these connections become part of the investigator's experience. True, for analytical purposes the musical sound in transcription may be fixed and contemplated as a static object, but throughout, the memory of its temporal flow remains the paramount connection to the "total fact" of the performance as the ultimate source of analytical priorities.

The second outstanding characteristic is the multiple character of the musical time experience in *qawwālī*, made available and mediated

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[112] This episode is known to every Sufi in South Asia and is widely recorded; for a standard account see Rahman, op. cit., 103.

[113] Muhammad Iqbal, *Bāl-e-Jibrīl* (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1925), 29.

through the multi-parameter system that music constitutes. The musical idiom therefore acts as a catalyst for the separate, yet simultaneous apprehension of different kinds of time into a synthesis that can be profoundly moving. This is the meaning of that ecstatic union that fuses the multiple experience not just of time, but of existence itself. Implied in this interpretation is the deeply qualitative and richly connotational character of time and thus of the musical time experience in the culture of *qawwālī*. This resonates fully with an ideology of time that is frankly homocentric, and also with a clearly articulated role of music as an active agent of time, not a static icon.

This brings us to third characteristic: the role of ideology and the realm of the normative. The clearly drawn blueprint for the structure and role of Sufi music offer the ethnomusicologist access to specific notions of time in the performance of the music. Indeed, ideology clearly emerges as the most immediate cultural key to notions of time and their musical realizations. But this exploration also shows that ideology and normative concepts need to be tested against the sound experience itself, if the time content of music is to be decoded.

In the case of the Sufi assembly, only intensive and culturally guided participation as an active, involved listener could reveal the musical embodiment and articulation of the multiple temporal experience conveyed by *qawwālī* songs. True, the music is informed by an explicit ideology and elicits a demonstrative expressional idiom of audience participation, but the musical code itself, especially in its durational facets, is only partially accessible either through the musicians' vocabulary or through the discourse of Sufi participants. Hence what is required is the synthesizing of musical analysis with Sufi concepts in the light of their joint articulation in performance, and, above all, through experience, both musical and mystical.

A final characteristic that complicates but also clarifies the time-music relationship is textual. The rich semantic reference of poetry contributes dimensions of temporality, but the holistic integration of differential temporal experience[114] cannot be achieved by text alone;[115] it is achieved musically, even though the primary "message" of the song is enshrined in its text. For unlike verbal sound, music is not pervaded by continuous reference to external meanings whose unidimensional flow claims and receives perceptual precedence. Since any verbal utterance is sequential at a fundamental level of

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[114] Akin to the somewhat unwieldy concept of "spiraling cyclicity," see Werner et al., op. cit., 208.
[115] Although the spiritual content of such poems is often shared among Sufis in spoken recitation and discussion.

structure;[116] isolating semantic units from this sequence by repetition interrupts the flow of the narrative and results in verbal discontinuity and structural—though not durational—stasis.[117] Herein lies a unique and fundamental capacity of *qawwālī* music: to convey not only multiple but simultaneous temporal messages.

In relating these remarkable findings to our general consideration of time and music in Western thought, several ideas suggest themselves. The time experience of music is rooted in organically-based perception, it is profoundly and specifically shaped by cultural learning through linguistic structure and ideology whose specificities are powerful guides to an appropriate decoding of the whole—as well as the details—of musical structures; at the same time, overall congruities exist between Sufi and Western time concepts, especially the dualism of lineality and simultaneity, as has already been noted.[118] And there is a more than superficial resemblance between homocentric, qualitative notions of time in both cultures. This allows us to consider the possibility of comparison at least in the sense that the nature of the *qawwālī* genre as well as its analysis offer an example of how music articulates these central notions of time, and how highly abstract cultural norms are encoded in the concrete sonic detail of a song.

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What appears to be absent from the Urdu-Muslim time universe is the objectification of time, a product of post-Renaissance thinking even in Europe.[119] It is worth noting that universal time notions and objectified time grids are gradually expanding concepts linked to Enlightenment thinking and to Industrialization;[120] to use them as objective tools for measuring time and music is inappropriate not only

[116] This is not to deny that semantically verbal utterances may be layered, non-narrative, and certainly non-linear, as in Javanese or in contemporary Western writing. See Judith and Alton Becker, "A Musical Icon: Power and Meaning in Javanese Gamelan Music," *The Sign in Music and Literature*, ed. Wendy Steiner (Austin, TX, 1981); see also David L. Higdon, *Time and English Fiction* (London, 1977), and finally Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et Recit*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1983).

[117] However, repetition per se is not durationally static, for its rhythmic pattern generates a powerful expectation of continuity which is the essence of motion rather than of stasis. I have difficulty with the term and with much of Kramer's discussion of temporal "stasis" because it does not differentiate between structure and duration, Kramer (1988), op. cit., 54 ff., 385 ff.

[118] See p. 503ff.

[119] Georges Poulet, *Studies in Human Time*, trans. Elliott Coleman (Baltimore, 1956), 3–13.

[120] The expanding uses of the term time mirror this development. Some salient examples are the following: a system of measuring time (1706), the duration of a work contract (1795), and the name of a newspaper (1788), see Oxford Dictionary, op. cit., 2193–94.

for non-Western music cultures but also for Western music that is historically "other."[121]

Thus the study of time in music is itself constrained by cultural priorities: The Western analytical focus on large-scale structure is fueled by a fascination with temporal control which generates the desire to bring the largest possible number of sound units into meaningful relation with each other. Emanating from this is a preference for cognitive informational content and a high valuation of cognitive complexity in music as in all forms of "art."[122] A corollary is the relative neglect of non-informational musical content, temporal or other. For a Westerner, confronting the cultural priorities of Indian Sufism and its manifestation in *qawwālī* music offers alternatives in time perception through live musical experience that may inspire more concrete ways of exploring Western music of earlier periods, and of the twentieth century.

Finally, to the power of music and its relationship with time: Exploring *qawwālī* leaves no doubt as to the power, even life-and-death power, of a music that not only expresses but creates time. This essay has addressed itself to a realm of meaning in Sufi music beyond the reach of manifest religious or latent social-economic content.[123] Time or temporality constitutes a fundamental system of coherence within a culture, offering means rather than subjects of thought. Indeed, what renders *qawwālī* powerful beyond its Sufi constituency may well be its iconicity with the natural coherence system of time in Indian Muslim culture. Transcending what can be accessed cognitively, this iconicity can be apprehended in musical sound instantly and totally, a powerful source of deep aesthetic and existential satisfaction.

This leaves us with a last question. Is music powerful because its essence remains darkly perceived beneath the impact of its lived or remembered experience, or because aural, unlike visual perception is dimly connected to cognitive processing; or is it powerful because music, to be experienced at all, must also create?

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[121] Gary Tomlinson, op. cit., offers a sophisticated approach to the problematic of appropriately researching a historically remote music culture.

[122] That complexity literally defines the Western category "art music," at least by implication, is evidenced in the fact that the attempt to discover complexity in apparently non-complex music often constitutes a favored procedure by which such music is admitted to the fold of "art" and thus deemed worthy of academic study.

[123] These dimensions are explored in Qureshi, op. cit. (1986).