

**SPIRITUAL HEALING**  
**POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF MUSIC ON HUMAN SOUL**  
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**ABSTRACT**

*As it is known, Mevlevî lodges in Turkey are the foremost places amongst lodges where music is performed.*

*Not only have Mevlevî's 'ayin-i sharif', 'Religious and Sacred Musical Service' that are performed with music for centuries have resulted in many great composers to come from the Mevlevî Order, but it also allowed Turkish Music to reach the pinnacle due to these composers.*

*The secret behind these melodies that have had us captivated for years are the sounds and words that are taken from the hearts threshing with guidance of spiritual feelings and have been arranged in certain order, strung up like rosary beads. This is what Hazrat Mevlânâ has said about music in Mathnawi-i Sharif:*

*"Those with wisdom refer to themselves as 'we', saying 'we took these pleasant melodies from the divine sounds the sky and the turning of the stars create. Sounds from the brake drum and voices are all sounds that come from rotation of the skies"*

*"The desire and pleasure that comes from hearing well played music, is a result of remembering and sensing the voice of Allah saying 'Am I not your Lord'."*

*"So, this means that listening to pleasant sounds is nourishment to those in love; and these beautiful pleasant sounds carry the dream of coming together, of reuniting. In remembering the spiritual*

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*comfort and discourse of Almighty Allah, there exists the dream to re-live that same pleasure”.*

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### **There Is Music In Music, Within Music**

There aren't many that do not know the words '*There is a self in me, within myself*' of Yunus Emre who is one of the great spiritual elders. It is also a fact that people of the heart, those with wisdom also say '*There is music in music, within music*'. And for this reason, music in Mevlevî lodges has become a prayer itself rather than an opportunity or a way to reach peaks of divine exaltation.

As it is known, Mevlevî lodges are the foremost places amongst lodges where music is performed.

Not only have Mevlevî's 'ayin-i sharif', 'Religious and Sacred Musical Service' that are performed with music for centuries have resulted in many great composers to come from the Mevlevî Order, but it also allowed Turkish Music to reach the pinnacle due to these composers.

The secret behind these melodies that have had us captivated for years are the sounds and words that are taken from the hearts threshing with guidance of spiritual feelings and have been arranged in certain order, strung up like rosary beads. This is what Hazrat Mevlânâ has said about music in *Mathnawi-i Sharif*:

*“Those with wisdom refer to themselves as ‘we’, saying ‘we took these pleasant melodies from the divine sounds the sky and the turning of the stars create. Sounds from the brake drum and voices are all sounds that come from rotation of the skies”.* (as cited in Can, 1997, v.4, no 733)

*“The sparkles seen in the sky of this surpassing blue vault of heaven are graceful reflections of angels and spirits chants”.* (as cited in Can, 2000, v.1, no 234) And Hazrat Shams-i Tabrizi in his book *Maqalat* says, *“Whatever Hazrat Mevlânâ says, there would be a stamping of the Quran and hadith under it”.*

When viewed within this framework, key source of above verses from *Mathnawi* are Surah Al-Isra verse 44, and Surah Az-Zumar verse 75.

*“The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts Allah by His praise, but you do not understand their way of exalting...”, “And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne, exalting Allah with praise of their Lord..”*

We may not be able to hear the melody from exalting of spirits, angels or every atom in the universe but, those who can hear or have the wisdom to feel it in their hearts were able to vocalise the dhikr from turning of the sky as much as their capabilities and comprehension in various styles and rhythms as music which appeal to our spirits.

This is what the Invaluable philosopher Platon has said about music:

Know that the wise have put forward music not for fun and games but rather for benefits such as spiritual pleasure, mental relaxation, hydration of blood, stress relief, physiological balance and to regulate blood flow. Those who reject this knowledge, without grasping the fundamentals and purpose for its creation, have said that it is religiously inappropriate due to the assumption that this knowledge is purely for fun and entertainment purposes.

It must also be accepted that, as not every style of music is a melody that is reflected from the turning of the skies, unfortunately majority of the rhythms, sounds and voices have adverse effect our thoughts and feelings.

It has been proven in recent history that though some music types effect the crystals in water positively, others have a negative impact and disrupt the core structure of the water.

This been no new news to us, have only become widely accepted after scientific proof providing certainty.

In Islamic tradition, a fairly well-known culture that has been practiced for centuries is where a jug of water is placed in middle of the room where *Quran* is recited, Mawlid (celebrating birth of the Prophet) or dhikr is taking place, and

then for healing purposes it is drunk to benefit from the positive energy of divine melodies chanted have had on it.

In the past when people went to pilgrimage, they would also bring back water mugs that were decorated with religious inscriptions inside them. Many more examples can be given where the basis of them all is the same thought. Objective is the same, *“benefit from the positive energy of religious inscriptions and words that are reflected onto the water”*.

It needs to be also added that nature of sounds, words and various rhythms not only impact water but all creation in a positive or negative way.

As a result, since the amount of water in the human body is around three quarters, it can be clearly seen that music is closely relevant to our spirit. It is also no longer a secret that centuries ago some illnesses were treated with music.

Semâ performance that is integrated in Mevlevî Order again has a very close relationship with music. As it's not possible to think of one without the other, it is the music that is essential before the Semâ (whirling), in a Semâ Ritual.

What is accepted as a rhythmic turning accompanied by music, origin of Semâ comes from the Arabic word 'Sam-i', meaning to hear. In other words, Semâzen (whirling dervish) isn't turning in accordance with certain rituals, but in actual fact is the one who hears.

The 'hearing' we are speaking of aren't the sounds we hear with our ears but rather, are divine sounds that can be heard and felt with our hearts.

Semâ Ritual comprises of seven main sections that have individual spiritual interpretations to them. Here, we will only touch on Semâ and music that are inseparable.

In a Semâ Ritual, music symbolises voice of Almighty Allah, and the Semâzen (whirling dervish) is a symbol of a *'lover of Allah'*.

When the Semâzen, whirling dervish hears the music that symbolises Almighty Allah's divine sound of voice that penetrates the heart, entranced by the harmony, grace, glory and grandeur, begins the Semâ in trance. And for this reason, in a Semâ Ritual music is taken as the fundamental principal before the Semâzen.

In a Semâ Ritual, Almighty Allah who is pure from shape and image and conceals Himself in everything, even hides the music that symbolises His voice behind the Semâzen.

When Semâ is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind are the Semâzens' flying around like a butterfly with their white attire, whereas main purpose and aim of Semâ is the music. As Hazrat Mevlânâ says, a Semâzen whirling without hearing the divine sounds in their heart is nothing more than a game and amusement. Music that symbolises Almighty Allah's voice and Semâzen symbolising a lover of Allah is mentioned in *Mathnawi* as:

*The desire and pleasure that comes from hearing well played music, is a result of remembering and sensing the voice of Allah saying 'Am I not your Lord'.*" (as cited in Can, 1997, v.4, no 731)  
*"So, this means that listening to pleasant sounds is nourishment to those in love; and these beautiful pleasant sounds carry the dream of coming together, of reuniting. In remembering the spiritual comfort and discourse of Almighty Allah, there exists the dream to re-live that same pleasure".* (as cited in Can, 1997, v.4, no 742)

As it is known the abovementioned *Mathnawi* verses are pointing to decree "*Alastu bi Rabbikum (Am I not your Lord)*" in *Surah Al-A'raf* verse 172 of the *Quran*. This is how Şefik Can Dede annotated these *Mathnawi* verses:

*"Elders in Sufi tradition say: The divine sound heard from Almighty Allah's decree, left such an impression of spiritual delight and taste that this delight remained eternally within the soul. And whenever a beautiful melody is heard, souls remember the spiritual delight and joy from Almighty Allah's speech in eternity. As you see, this is the real reason for the pleasure and joy received in music. It is about hearing that voice once again from the spiritual realm and re-living that moment".* (as cited in Can, 1997, v.4, p.436 footnote)

In *Diwan-i Kabir*, Hazrat Mevlânâ says:

*"Not just humans, but all creation that heard this celestial sound started to run, enchanted with their Creator. They didn't exist, they*

*came from nonexistence. Rose, tulip, hyacinth, willow tree, all creation, came to the universe of existence with drunkenness felt from that sound''*. (as cited in Can, 2000, v.2, no.866)

*''It's not only me who is captivated with that declaration, the beauty of that divine voice. If there is even just one person who is not drunk amongst all, who is sober from that voice, then I am a nonbeliever''*. (as cited in Can, 2000, v.4, no.147)

First verses of another ghazal, a lyric poem that narrates Semâ (whirling dance) with its spiritual aspect is as follows:

*''Do you know what Semâ is? It is hearing souls' saying 'Yes, you are our Lord' to Allahs' decree 'Am I not your Lord' in eternity, and losing oneself, reuniting with Allah''*. (as cited in Can, 1995, p.264)

As stated, music reached the honour of becoming a symbol of Allah's voice due to remembrance of His decree in eternity, and through experiencing that moment, re-living it again. And it is for this reason that Mevlevî's hold it in importance that, while many Rituals are composed with the drunkenness of the decree in eternity, many lovers of Allah have performed the Semâ in ecstasy from the harmonious sounds. This situation is expressed and explained differently in some of the verses of *Mathnawi* and *Diwan-i Kabir*.

*''There is a sense where Allah is felt, understood and heard, but it is not a sense from this world. That sense is a different feeling, a different way of seeing''*. (as cited in Can, 1997, v.6, no.2206)

*''Though your visible ear can hear the letters and words, know that your heart's ear is deaf. And it is for this reason you can't hear the secrets of the essence of meaning''*. (as cited in Can, 1997, v.1, no.3395)

*''If everybody had the ear to hear the divine sounds that come from the unseen realm, than divine inspiration wouldn't have come to the Prophets from the sky''*. (as cited in Can, 1997, v.6, no.1659)

*''If you can rid yourself of love of the world, you too can hear Almighty Allah's voice every morning at dawn, will find the track*

*for the true path, and reach a level of sublime”.* (as cited in Can, 2000, v.3, no.1306)

Hazrat Tahirü'l-Mevlevî, an invaluable Mevlevî elder and Mesnevîhan says this about music in his annotation of *Mathnawi*:

*“When an ordinary person listens to music, they like the various tones, and that is all that the pleasure consists of.*

*But, when a knowing person hears the music, they listen to it differently and hear different things. They feel and understand real meanings that we cannot.*

*As lovers of Allah say, ‘The ear listens but a pure, virtuous heart is needed to hear. The ear listens, whereas the heart can hear and sense”.*

We think that sounds from musical instruments are vibrational sounds that come from various harmonic sounds but, spiritually mature, knowing people perceive music much, much differently to us. Hazrat Mevlânâ said he heard ‘*Ante Hasbî Ante Qâfi Yâ Vadood*’ from the sounds of the lute. (*O darling, You are enough for me, You are all I need*). And it is reported that Hazrat Ali said he understood and explained the words as ‘*Subhanallahi Haqqa Ennel Mevlâ Yekba*’ when he heard the sound of a gong (*You, Allah far from incompleteness, definitely are our Creator, Almighty*).

Hazrat Mevlânâ informs us that the sound a stork makes isn’t just a call but rather, it’s real meaning is ‘*Lord, You are the owner of all, praise is to You*’. (as cited in Olgun, 1971, v.1, p.58)

I wonder what those knowing, competent of the heart who heard divine sounds from a church gong, a stork’s call, heard and felt in a reed flute that they put the heart-scorching melodies from it equal to voice of an ‘*insan-ı kâmil*’, an enlightened person.

Starting with ‘*Listen from the reed flute*’ and carefully rhyming in language of Allah almost twenty six thousand verses without writing, has radiated noor, divine light to four corners of the world. Has lit so much darkness... Scorching so many hearts...

It has been narrated that during Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) ascension, treasure of secrets that were not opened until that day were unveiled in his honour.

Our Prophet (pbuh) shared the grandeur of ascension, divine passion and divinely secrets that he was made aware of with Hazrat Ali. And Hazrat Ali who couldn't tell anyone the secrets of Consciousness of God, ecstasy and zeal that passed onto him from our Prophet (pbuh), shared these divinely secrets with water that was inside a well.

The water inside the well who listened to the utmost secret knowledge that is today known as the 'Ali' secret, in the face of these secrets overflowed, flooding in joy and excitement. Cane grew from that water which had gathered around the well. And a shepherd who was passing by saw this cane that he had never seen before. He then cut it and started blowing into it like a reed flute during grazing of the sheep. The cane that became drunk with the water it had absorbed started singing the secrets it heard from Hazrat Ali with each blow pleasantly, freeing the shepherd and the sheep to many, many passions.

According to another narration, that shepherd was *Hazrat Veysel Karani* who realised the divine manifestations of the cane and cut it, using it as a flute during grazing of the sheep. Narrations on formation of the reed flute reaching until today are all similar. And in a ghazal, lyric poem in *Diwan-i Kabir*, Hazrat Mevlânâ sheds light onto what is been said above:

*"I can't find a close friend, a confidant to tell of my troubles, why I sigh. And for this reason, just as Hazrat Ali, I too sigh to water. That water in the well enthuses, and turns to cane in my mouth. But if that cane would turn to a reed flute and start to cry, then that is when wailing of my heart will spread around".* ( as cited in Can, 2000,v.3, no.1190)

Even this legend puts forth that the impact of sounds, words and therefore various rhythms were known for centuries. Not only in *Mathnawi*, but Hazrat Mevlânâ also told in *Diwan-i Kabir* tens of ghazals, lyric poems using the language of the reed flute. Here, I wish to share one of the ghazals with you:

It is shameful to have a mind on the path of love.



- Reed flute! You have such beautiful sounds because you know of all secrets that not everybody knows. It is only those who are aware of these secrets, all things, can make these beautiful sounds that are pleasant to those who are sensitive anyway.
- O reed flute! Just as the nightingale bird, you too are in love with that unsurpassed, that rare rose. Don't pretend not to know this is why you wail, why you moan! You know of that rose without a thorn, that is one of a kind.
- I said to the reed flute: 'You must be a close friend of the friend, a beloved. It is for this reason, you know everything. Don't hide the secrets from me!' The reed flute said to me: 'Don't make a fuss over it, let it go. For if you sense what I know completely, if you hear and understand it, you will perish, and die'.
- I said to it: 'My salvation is in me perishing, been desolated. If you want to do something good, then onset sparks, blazing fire onto me! Inflammate me until I have no feelings, knowledge or comprehension left'.
- The reed flute said: 'How can I stand in the way of the convoy of love with my wailing and scorched sounds? I know the head of convoy (spiritual guide) is someone who knows and understands everything'.
- I said to him: 'Since beloved isn't searching for those lost on the path of love, and isn't taking further interest, than awareness must be frustrated with awareness in this instance anyhow. Then for this reason, it is a necessity to not understand, not hear, not know or see'.
- You, observing, seeing everything, savvy but, you don't even have an idea about yourself. For us lovers, savviness and awareness have become a drape in front of our eyes.
- O reed flute! They've cut your head, and that's why you've become a friend, beloved of the lips of who is blowing in the reed flute. It's shameful and a shortcoming to have a mind, and to think on the path of love anyway. And to comprehend and be knowledgeable is a state of embarrassment.
- O reed flute! You have left yourself and are free from being. You have escaped the ego, and are hollow inside. This is why you were completed with secrets that nobody knows. You cry and wail, wanting to say something with the news

you hear from the other realm. But we don't have the ear to understand those secrets. You know, even though they are a shadow of a being, those who are worshipping themselves. And you know those who negate Allah!

- It's visible that you attained fulfillment, came together with the unseen Beloved, became very close to Him. You know the unknown secrets. When it's like this, then why are you crying, and wailing like this? Let us cry and wail in understanding that we have poor knowledge, and in our inability to understand, and comprehend Allah.
- No, no, O you gracious reed flute, you aren't wailing for yourself! You're crying and wailing for those who have fallen far from unity and oneness, for those in this world of multiplicity, who assume and are in duality. (as cited in Can, 2000, v.3, no.1192)

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