

Excerpts from Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*
(c. The International Headquarters of the Sufi Movements, Geneva, 1991)

God is not in time. Therefore He is in the silence. Sound is part of the world of time.
(p.117)

All things and beings in the universe are connected with each other - visibly or invisibly - and through vibrations a communication is established between them on all the planes of existence. As an ordinary instance: if one person coughs in an assembly, many others begin to do the same, and the same is the case with yawning. This also applies to laughter, excitement and depression. This shows that vibrations convey the condition of one being to another. The seer therefore knows of the past, present and future, and perceives conditions on all planes of existence. Vibrations work through the chord of sympathy existing between man and his surroundings, and reveal past, present and future conditions....The influence of vibrations is left on the chair on which one sits, in the bed where one has slept, in the house where one lives, in the clothes one wears, in the food one eats, and even in the street where one walks. (p.126)

The Sufi, like a student of music, trains both his voice and ear in the harmony of life. The training of the voice consists in being conscientious about each word spoken, about its tone, rhythm, meaning and the appropriateness for the occasion. For instance, the words of consolation should be spoken in a slow rhythm, with a soft voice and sympathetic tone. When speaking words of command a lively rhythm is necessary, and a powerful distinct voice...The Sufi avoids all unrhythmic actions; he keeps the rhythm of his speech under the control of patience, not speaking a word before the right time, not giving an answer until the question is finished. He considers a contradictory word a discord unless spoken in a debate, and even at such times he tries to resolve it into a consonant chord. (p.136)

The effect produced by singing depends upon the depth of feeling of the singer. The voice of a sympathetic singer is quite different from that of one who is heartless. However artificially cultivated a voice may be, it will never produce feeling, grace and beauty unless the heart be cultivated also. Singing has a twofold source of interest: the grace of music, and the beauty of poetry. In proportion as the singer feels the words he sings, an effect is produced upon the listeners; his heart, so to speak, accompanies the song...Man's state of mind can be read by his touch upon any instrument, for however great an expert he may be, he cannot produce by mere skill without a developed feeling within himself, the grace and beauty which appeal to the heart. (p.164-5)

Wind instruments, like the flute and the algosa, especially express the heart quality, for they are played with the breath which is the very life; therefore they kindle the heart's fire...Instruments stringed with gut have a living effect, for they come from a living creature which once had a heart. Those stringed with wire have a thrilling effect, and the instruments of percussion, such as the drum, have a stimulating and animating effect upon man. (p. 165)

The Sufi especially loves music, calling it *ghiza-e-ruh* - food of the soul.

The Yogis and the Sufis in their meditation have always had music. Music is the greatest mystery in the world. The whole manifestation is made of vibrations, and vibrations contain all its secrets

The vibrations of music free the soul and take from a person all the heaviness which keeps him bound. Music reaches the soul in a moment, as the telegraph reaches from London to New York...

Music, the word we use in our everyday language, is nothing less than the picture of the Beloved. It is because music is the picture of the Beloved that we love music. But the question is: What is our Beloved, or where is our Beloved? Our Beloved is that which is our source and our goal. What we see of our Beloved before our physical eyes is the beauty which is before us. If only we would listen to the voice of all the beauty that attracts us in any form, we would find that in every aspect it tells us that behind all manifestations is the perfect Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom. (p.2)