Elements of Sufism in the Philosophy of the Order: An Examination of the Lectures and Writings of Hazrat Inayat-Khan and Zia Inayat-Khan

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In 1910, when Hazrat Inayat Khan left India to visit New York and the United States for the first time, he began his journey as a traveling musician, having come from a family of highly respected musicians in Baroda, India. Before long, however, he began publicly teaching a form of primarily Chishti Sufism. The next seventeen years of his life would be spent crisscrossing the Western world giving lectures to thousands of Europeans and Americans in an attempt to spread this philosophical message. This message shifted over those first seventeen years and the subsequent century from one that heavily emphasized specifically Sufi elements of teaching and philosophy to a religious message that placed heavy emphasis on the universal elements that it considered to be the core of all religions. This philosophy is most readily observable and easily understood by studying its current iteration, the Inayattiya, who developed out of a number of schisms and splits in the mid twentieth century and trace their *silsila*, or spiritual lineage, back to HIK by way of his siblings and cousins, to his son Pir Vilayat Inayat-Khan, and his grandson, the current head, of the Order Pir Zia Inayat-Khan. Much has been written in Western academic circles regarding the Universalist nature of Hazrat Inayat Khan's philosophical Sufi teachings, and this thesis is an attempt to reorient that literature, adding to the scholarly conversation around the place of the Inayati Order in the contemporary Western religious milieu.

My goal is to push back on earlier academic assertions that disassociate the Inayati Order from its Indo-Islamic and Chishti Sufi roots, as advanced by authors like Marcia Hermansen and Gisela Webb, both of whom focus on the Order's exterior presentation of philosophy and ritual practice without focusing upon the strongly developed and complex philosophical system that supports these more outward facing

elements. In an early work Hermansen argues that the Order has purposely de-emphasized Islamic elements while highlighting the "universal, eternal truth which underlies all religions."[1] Thus, the Inayati Order's willingness to embrace non-Islamic and non-Sufi ritual practices precludes them from being considered traditionally Sufi in any meaningful way. Although Hermansen steps back somewhat from her original categorizing of Sufi groups as either Hybrid or Perennial in a later paper, she still conditions Sufi practices with a specific standard "if the standard for terming a movement 'Sufi' were to mean the practice of Islamic law, not all of these movements would be included."[2] Thus, even in this later paper, Hermansen defines Sufism in terms that exclude the Inayati Order. Firstly, I disagree with Hermansen's assessment that Sufism requires the practice of Islamic law, largely because of changes in the tradition that have occurred since the time of the prophet. If being a Sufi requires an individual to strictly adhere to the basics of Islamic law, then a number of groups and individuals with long and rich non-legal Sufi traditions are excluded. Second, her claims that the Order has de-emphasized Islamic elements of the tradition is incorrect. Hermansen is misled by her focus on the Order's presentation of itself to the public instead of focusing on its internal presentations of Sufism. In lectures and conferences, the Inayati Order draws upon the complex and highly developed Sufi philosophical tradition, and places distinct emphasis on a number of Sufi and Islamic elements.

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[1] Marcia Hermansen, "In the Garden of American Sufi Movements: Hybrids and Perennials," in *New Trends and Developments in the World of Islam*, ed. Peter B Clarke (London: Luzac, 1997), 155

[2] Hermansen, "Hybrid Identity Formations in Muslim America: The Case of American Sufi Movements," *The Muslim World 90*, no. 1-2 (March 2000), 158. I discuss these articles more closely later in this paper but pages 158-161 provide a pretty good overview of the various academic attempts to categorize Sufi Movements in the West that had been attempted up until the time of the articles writing.

In my study of both traditional and contemporary Inayati texts, as well as my own ethnographic observations, I have found that Westernization and Universalism—which indicate to Hermansen an abandonment or deviation from core Sufi philosophical tenants—are rather a contemporary, Western iteration or counterpart of the Chishti Sufism in which Hazrat Inayat Khan (HIK), the founder of the Order, was trained Traditional Sufi philosophical principles are apparent in the lectures given by Hazrat Inayat Khan in the last year of his life (1925-1926), and HIK has converted these philosophical principles into a language better suited to his students (*mureeds*) in the West. HIK particularly used the language of Blavatskian Theosophy because many of his western followers were familiar with it, and HIK was able to reinterpret its concepts for his own purposes. We see occasional usage of specifically Sufi language throughout but, by and large, Khan manages to portray numerous traditional concepts in language that is both easily understandable for new converts and true to its original meaning. The Sufi language most apparent in HIK's teachings are *nur Muhammad* or the divine light from which all things were created; *al-Insan al-Kamil*, or the Perfect Man; and the *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh*, the triadic grouping that represents the individuals ego self, heart, and soul.

Inayatian Sufism has also been criticized for is its eclectic embrace of ritual practices. This criticism often accompanies claims that the Order is Universalized and therefore not philosophically Sufi. Zia Inayat Khan and other lecturers have responded to such arguments by stressing the internal logic behind their liberal acceptance of external rituals. In addition to their philosophically-centered explanations for ritual inclusion, I view this liberal approach as an extension and acceleration of the inherent accretions that occur when traditions are introduced into new cultural settings, in some ways mirroring

the cultural mixation that occurred when Islam and Sufism were brought to the Indian subcontinent and began interacting with and borrowing from the cultures that were already prevalent there. The rapidity of these accretions—as staggering as they are in the case of the Inayati Order—can be attributed in part to the rapid technological advancements of the twentieth century, the impressive knowledge of HIK's successor, Vilayat Inayat Khan, and a desire to maintain and grow the Order in the West by creating connections with elements of practical religion already familiar to potential initiates. The final major piece of supporting evidence, also pulled from the writings and lectures of Zia Inayat Khan, the Order's current *Pir*, is the active reintroduction of Sufi philosophical language, content and teachers into the Order's modern message. In his writings and lectures, Zia portrays the Inayati Order as a Sufism that is wholly compatible with its counterparts in the larger Islamic world. Zia willingly breaks from his predecessors by reintroducing Islam and its Five Pillars into the Order's vocabulary This reintroduction is noteworthy in the context of the Inayati Order, since it has previously deemphasized non-Western or Islamic concepts. It is these underlying themes, their continued presence over the last one hundred years, and the evolving nature of traditions that lend credibility to my argument that the Inayati Order is a Westernized Sufism that is compatible with, and an extension of, its Chishti predecessors.

This reinterpretation of the Inayati Order and its legacy is important because it helps fill in a number of scholarly gaps both in regards to the Inayati Order's beliefs and its significance during the fin-de-siècle period, and for early forms of Western Islam more generally. HIK's introduction of Chishti Sufi philosophy in the United States dates to 1907, placing it at the earliest stages of documentable examples of Islamic influence

on American religious culture, an area that is critically important to understand as Islam becomes more prevalent and influential in the United States.[3] Furthermore, this paper provides an in-depth textual analysis of the writings of Hazrat Inayat Khan, a project that hasn't been undertaken on any meaningful scale by anyone outside of the Inayati Order or the Khan family. Philosophy, language, and text are critically important when it comes to understanding any tradition and it is my hope that this thesis will provide insight into the meaning and messaging of the Order and its *Pirs* in a new and significant way.

Because my goal is to reexamine how the Order's philosophy and ritual traditions are understood in academic contexts I take both a historical-textual and ethnographic approach that allows me to focus on the roots of the Order and its evolution and development into the modern, complex philosophical tradition it has become. The emergence and development of the Order can be broken down into three periods that loosely correlate with its most well-known *pirs*, they are as follows: "The Early Period" associated with HIK, "The Middle Period" associated with Vilayat Khan, and "The Modern Period" under the leadership of Zia Khan.[4] HIK defines The Early Period (1910-1927), an era which begins with his presentation and teaching of a philosophy that strongly resembles traditional Chishti Sufism. As time passes however, this philosophy is actively manipulated by both founder and *mureeds* alike in an attempt to make it more accessible to Westerners and to allow elements of Blavatskian Theosophy particularly Universalism and, to a lesser extent, a desire for a coming messiah whom many *mureeds* believed was Khan himself. This combination of Chishti philosophy and acceptance of

[3] There are clear and present signs of Islamic elements on American soil that date back to Africa and the earliest slave ships to the colonies but this area has been criminally understudied and doesn't lend itself to an in-depth discussion here.

[4] This periodization is my own creation for the sake of this paper and, is frankly imperfect.

Western cultural influences laid the groundwork for The Middle Period (1927-2004), after HIKs death. This period was marked by instability, infighting, and eclecticism, and is best represented by Vilayat Khan, who led the order between1968 and 2004, became a steadying presence after a number of schisms and changes in leadership. Vilayat is most representative of this period because of his steady presence as well as ritual eclecticism that furthered the continuance of Western cultural infusion begun by his father while maintaining the Orders Chishti roots. Vilayat represents the continued process of Westernization and Universalization that resulted in a deemphasis of Sufi and Islamic philosophical elements and continued the evolutionary process into The Modern Period (2004-2020) where this ritual eclecticism has been fully integrated into a newly reemphasized Sufi framework by the current *pir* and HIK's grandson, Zia Khan. Zia's philosophy is a culmination of his father and grandfathers work; he has fully integrated Vilayat's multidisciplinary ritual and performative practices into the Sufi philosophical message developed and articulated for Westerners by Hazrat Inayat Khan. Furthermore, he has begun the difficult work of reintroducing explicitly Islamic language and ideas back into the tradition in a way that possibly marks a return to his grandfather's earliest teachings. I chose this dual historical/ethnographic approach in order to highlight the internal shifts and developments that have been ongoing in the Inayati Order for more than a hundred and ten years.

HIK produced a massive amount of literature, although much of this corpus is unavailable to anyone outside of the Sufi Movement or its various offshoots. One of my key primary sources was provided by The Nekbakht Foundation which transcribed a series of public lectures given by HIK throughout the United States in 1925-1926, less

than a year before his early death. This transcription, given in two parts and totaling more than one thousand pages, will serve as the basis of my presentation of HIK's philosophical explications for two reasons: 1) It is readily available as opposed to many other philosophical texts that have not been offered up for public consumption by the Movement or its offshoots, and, 2) it comes near the end of his life, a period in which his philosophical beliefs—and his ability to convey them in English—were at their greatest level of sophistication.[5] The editors of these lectures note, "In scope and emphasis, he deepens the consideration of his early teachings, which had been presented in the Gatha and Githa series as an introduction to his students,"[6] and, "Inayat Khan's remarkable final lecture tour of the United States in 1926… represents the culmination of his public teaching."[7] The public nature of these speeches is critical because it provides further pushback against the narrative that HIK was presenting a Sufism devoid of traditional philosophy. These transcripts are text versions of speeches given to a wide swath of audiences in which the language and terminology used is not traditional but traditional Sufi themes can still be observed; they may not use specific language as such (an issue that I address briefly later in this thesis) but they are clear examples of HIK presenting traditional Sufi philosophy not a solely Universalist philosophy as authors like Hermansen and Sedgwick have argued.

With regards to the contemporary teachings of Pir Zia I take a two-pronged approach, beginning with an ethnographic component. In July 2019 I attended the Inayati

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[5] http://www.nekbakhtfoundation.org The Website provides access to a treasure trove of information regarding the Sufi Movement and Hazrat Inayat Khan from biographical material and photos to transcriptions of most, if not all, of the lecture series HIK presented in the West.
[6] Hazrat Inayat Khan, *Complete Works of Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan Original Texts: Lectures on Sufism 1926 I: December 1925 to March 12 1926*, (New Lebanon, NY: Omega Publishing, 2010), x.
[7] Hazrat Inayat Khan, *Complete Works of Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan Original Texts: Lectures on Sufism 1926 II: March 14 to May 28*, (New Lebanon, NY: Omega Publishing, 2011), ix.

Orders Season of the Rose conference, an annual event held for members from across the United States, in an attempt to better understand the philosophy and practices espoused by the Order's leaders. This ethnographic study is supported with textual-historical analysis. I closely examine *Mingled Waters: Sufism and the Mystical Unity of Religions*, a book published by Omega Publishing in 2017 in which Zia explicates his understanding of Inayatian philosophy for his Inayati mureeds. Further, although it is a major focus of this thesis, Zia's doctoral dissertation *A Hybrid Sufi Order at the Crossroads of Modernity: The Sufi Order and Sufi Movement of Pir-O-Murshid Inayat Khan*, is referenced regularly throughout because it serves as a basis for the history and philosophy of the Order.

In undertaking this project, I want to make two intertwined points very clear. First there are obvious signs of Universalist philosophy throughout the Inayati tradition; it has been a key influence since the late 1910s, which I do not attempt to downplay. Rather, my goal in this thesis is to shine a light on the traditional Sufi elements that have frequently been pushed to the edges in academic treatments of this subject. Second, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the philosophy and teachings being espoused by Order leadership because of this overemphasis of Universalism, and the Universalist, Western cultural, and contemporary elements also at play here. the Sufi philosophy presented by the leaders of the Inayati Order makes up the core of this tradition. Historian Mark Sedgwick confirms this theory in part writing, "The practice of Inayat's followers was less Sufi-based than Inayat's teaching… presumably because standard Sufi practice involved to much Islam, and if Sufism was not a religion and was above and beyond all

religions, there was no need to abandon one's previous religion."[8] Without the understanding and elucidation of Sufi philosophy provided by these leaders Sufism in the West would not exist in its current form. That is why their philosophy is so important.

Before we can begin to analyze HIKs lectures several topics need to be addressed. It would be impossible to differentiate my stance in relationship with other academics without critiquing their assertions, this will be my first undertaking in the section entitled "Prior Scholarship." After that critique I have provided a section entitled "Key Terms" that provides most of the key terms and philosophical concepts I find relevant to this project; terms which serve as a base of understanding I can relate or equate to ideas as expressed in 'Inayatian' language. Then, in a section entitled "Hazrat Inayat Khan: His Biography & Legacy," I focus on Hazrat Inayat Khan himself, quickly exploring his biography, legacy and significance for Islam in the Euro-American world. After focusing on these antecedent concepts, I turn to Inayat Khan's lecture series and the traditional elements he espouses in a section entitled "Traditional Chishti Elements in the Lectures of Inayat Khan" before moving into the contemporary period, first focusing on the presentation of Sufism given at the Season of the Rose conference in a section entitled "Ethnographic Observations of an Inayati Conference." After discussing these ethnographic observations I articulate the ways Zia reorganizes and reemphasizes Sufism in his book *Mingled Waters* in a section entitled "Sufi Universalism in Mingled Waters."

Prior Scholarship

[8] Mark Sedgwick, *Western Sufism: From the Abbasids to the New Age*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2017),169.

Marcia Hermansen has written two seminal articles on the various Sufi *tariqas* in the West. They are "In the Garden of American Sufi Movements: Hybrids and Perennials" and "Hybrid Identity Formations in Muslim America: The Case of American Sufi Movements." In "Garden," Hermansen presents two categories of American Sufi movements: hybrids and perennials, among which all American *tariqas* can be divided. In the United States, hybrid Sufi groups are "founded and led by persons who were born and raised in Muslim societies."[9] This categorization is set apart from the perennials which are "movements in which the specifically Islamic identification and content of the movement has been deemphasized in favor of a "perennialist outlook."[10] Hermansen uses 'perennialist' in the broadest sense here applying it to organizations that "deliberately espouse the perennialist title," particularly the Guenonian-Schuonian school or those organizations that "have an orientation that spiritual practices from various religious traditions may be combined since they all emerge from the same true source which is in fact, primarily gnostic rather than religious."[11] The designation of these *tariqas* as either hybrid or perennial is problematic because it essentializes the two. Hybrid orders are those with connections to the Muslim world and 'traditional' Islam; perennial orders are Universalist and un-Islamic in comparison. By compartmentalizing the orders as such, you eliminate elements that are critical to Sufism globally, elements like culture, creative interpretation, and historical context, this essentialization becomes more obvious as one examines these articles. Throughout "Garden," Hermansen notes the exceptions and blurred lines; Vilayat Khan's "knowledge of Sufi thought and practice is based on his

[9] Marcia Hermansen, *Garden of American Sufi Movements*, 155.
[10] Ibid, 155.
[11] Ibid, 155.

work with masters in India but also on the interpretation of Western scholars of Sufism in the Jungian tradition."[12] She further notes, "In many cases members (of perennialist *tariqas*) do not have to become formal Muslims, practice Islamic ritual, or follow any specific dress code"[13] before almost immediately noting "Among the (hybrid) movements, there is a variation in the Islamic style, one may say in the level of "strictness" or observance of Islamic norms"[14] and, "The hybrid orders have practiced more relaxed versions of social gender segregation while maintaining some degree of its ritual prescriptions."[15] Clearly, there are shared traits and experiences of members in tariqas on both sides of the divide; tying hybrid *tariqas* more closely to traditional, 'pure' Islam does a clear disservice to those perennialist *tariqas* whose teachers and lineages can be traced back to similar cultural and philosophic roots. The criticisms noted here are not meant to discredit Hermansen's work. They are meant to show the overlap between the two groupings and the difficulty in categorizing these multigenerational, multicultural, and, at times, multi-religious organizations into neat and compatible groups.

In "Hybrid Identity Formations" Hermansen maintains the split between hybrid and perennial movements while attempting to further refine her system because "the category of the 'perennial' was more often contested… since it engaged a complex history."[16] In an attempt to further clarify her system, she introduces the concept of 'hybridization,'[17] a term she applies to the various interactions that occur in movements

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[12] Ibid., 161.
[13] Ibid., 156.
[14] Ibid., 158.
[15] Ibid., 163-164.
[16] Hermansen, "Hybrid Identity Formations,"159.
[17] Hybridization differs from the previously defined 'hybrid' movements, adding flexibility to Hermansen's categorizing system but muddying the terminology. Adding a third intermediate category seems like it

as diverse and disparate as Western Sufi *tariqas*. Hybridization for Hermansen "is not limited to the middle ground of a mixture of Islamic and American elements."[18] It goes much further because the interplay between these groups can be observed in a number of ways, whether it be Western Sufi movements of both distinctions, serving "as a conduit for Islamization" or "transplanted or 'ethnic' Sufi groups (who) also attract a number of Westerners."[19] Hybridization becomes Hermansen's catch-all term for any potential culture exchanges that may occur, allowing for flexibility and the intermingling of myriad beliefs, practices, and customs that make up the American religious milieu and rapidly modernizing world. The introduction of this fluidity is helpful but Hermansen still seems hesitant to acknowledge the Sufi Orders traditional Sufi elements, placing heavy emphasis on the eclecticism of Vilayat Khan to the detriment of Hazrat Inayat Khan's philosophy and teachings. If Hermansen had taken a more critical view, she would have observed an organization that perfectly exemplifies this hybridization, a *tariqa* made up almost entirely of Western adherents whose founder is a Muslim Indian immigrant: an organization that presents traditional Chishti philosophy in English terminology, a group that embraces Sufi *dhikr* and *sema'*, Buddhist meditative practices, and Universalist religious belief all while regularly working and interacting with spiritual leaders from the 'East'.[20] Hermansen's ethnographic observations, particularly regarding the "personal practices such as the *dhikr* and *wazifas,*"[21] are accurate for the period, However, the

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would be more functional but would definitely affect her garden metaphor. Perhaps this middle ground could be labeled as annuals?

[18] Ibid., 187.

[19] Ibid., 187-188.

[20] Vilayat and Zia both received formal training from Eastern practitioners of Sufism and Buddhism. Zia studied under His Holiness the Dalai Lama, hosted Shaykha Nur Artiran, a representative of the Turkish Mevlevis in Richmond in 2019 for the celebration of Rumi's *urs* and also has a close relationship with Cheikh Sufi, the first representative of the Murridiya *tariqa* in the West.

[21] Ibid., 162.

Order has changed since the publication of her book in 2000, due to the teachings and practices of Pir Zia, as I describe in my ethnographic analysis.

Clearly, the Inayati Order does not fit into the perennialist category that Hermansen ascribes to it by even the organization showed deep connections with traditional Chishti-oriented philosophy and practices and had strong connections with Eastern teachers and traditions at the time of her article's publication.

Having taken a critical look at Hermansen's two texts and showing the need for a more flexible approach to understanding the different Western *tariqas*, I would like to turn my attention to Gisela Webb's "Sufism in America" in Timothy Miller's edited collection *America's Alternative Religions*. Webb raises two critical points when referencing the Sufi Order (Inayati) that need to be examined. In her introduction, she writes, "The group that bears the name the Sufi Order, founded by Hazrat Inayat Khan, incorporates a wide variety of holistic and spiritual systems under the umbrella of Sufism with little intention of linking their activities and goals to 'exoteric' Islam."[22] This is accurate, that the Inayati Order actively embraces holistic and spiritual systems, and leadership has been hesitant to use Islamic or Sufi language in their teachings. However, these practices could be interpreted as acceptable if you take a liberal approach to Islam, interpreting it as the totality of scriptures and prophetic teachings, as stated in the Qur'an, or a continuation of the Muhammadan light from which everything derives. An approach I believe the Inayati *Pirs* take which I discuss in my presentation of *Mingled Waters*. Webb goes too far in her assessment of the Order, relegating the Sufism espoused by HIK to a secondary status behind universalist philosophy and the New Age embrace of

[22] Webb, "Sufism in America," in *America's Alternative Religions*, ed. Timothy Miller (Albany, NY: SUNY PRESS, 1995), 249.

multiple sources/traditions. The *shariah* and the centrality of the mosque certainly are not of major concern for the Order but emphasis is placed on Sufi practices like *dhikr*, *sema'*, and *wazifas*, and traditional Suhrawardian Illuminationism, the Perfect or Perfected Man and the tripartite *nafs*, *qalb*, *ruh* relationship, all elements whose roots are squarely in the Islamic world. Focusing on the Inayati's position in relation to "exoteric," shariah-based Islam does a disservice to a *tariqa* trying to thrive in a Western society with different cultural norms; it downplays the traditional influences that are clear to close observers.

Webb's second critical point, and part of the inspiration for this thesis, are her comments on Inayat Khan's philosophical teachings, "One sees in Hazrat Khan's writing the imprint of traditional teachings and imagery of the classic Sufis, such as Ibn Arabi and Rumi."[23] There have been occasional acknowledgments of these underlying Sufi themes by different academics but no one has examined texts or teachings of the Order and then explicated the ways these concepts are presented to Western audiences. The lack of critical studies surrounding the language used by Inayat Khan to introduce Western listeners to Indo-Islamic concepts is important because it is impossible to understand how the Inayati *Pirs* have been able to incorporate philosophy's and meditative practices from disparate sources into a cohesive teaching system without looking at this language and how it reflects or mirrors Indo-Islamic concepts that have been established as a part of Sufism more generally. I hope this thesis can help start to close some of those gaps. Webb does a phenomenal job of drawing attention to these traditional elements but does not go far enough in noting how foundational they are for the Order.

[23] Ibid, 253.

The work of Mark Sedgwick and William Rory Dickson. represents the contemporary wave of scholarship by emphasizing the broad range of philosophical influences that impact Western Sufism and avoiding attempts to categorize these orders. In *Western Sufism: From the Abbasids to the New Age* Sedgwick traces both Western Sufism's philosophical roots and important interactions between Westerners and Eastern teachings and *tariqas*. Sedgwick undertakes a massive project here, starting with the Neoplatonic tradition of Plotinus, and tracing various philosophies and intellectual schools into the contemporary period. He does so in a surprisingly successful manner, the only major issue of note being the occasional instances where details are pushed to the side in order to better support the overarching narrative. In his explication of the Sufi Movements numerous and varied influences, Sedgwick does an incredible job, writing,

> The perennialist, anti-exoteric, Deistic, and universalist understanding of Sufism, which had passed through Emerson, the Missouri Platonists, and the Theosophical Society, was incorporated into the texts and practices of the first Western Sufi group, the Sufi Movement of Inayat Khan, with the help of Carl-Henrik Bjerregaard, the Theosophist and associate of the Missouri Platonists whom Inayat met in New York in 1912. The subsequent growth of the Sufi Movement in Europe was assisted by other former Theosophists, and its texts and practice thus also reflected Theosophy, with its anti-dogmatism, its belief in hidden masters, and its expectation of a World Teacher. They also reflected Islam and emanationism, however.[24]

Unfortunately, however, like many others, he places Islam in a secondary role behind the various non-Islamic influences and ignores the traces of Islam that are visible in the Order's early teachings and practice. This masterful gathering of the numerous disparate philosophical elements that informed the creation of the Sufi Movement and its subsequent shifts over the past one hundred years is brilliant but is both too broad and too reductive of Islam's role in the Movement to suit my purposes. Sedgwick places too

[24] Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, 257.

heavy an emphasis on the Movement's Theosophical elements, particularly their belief in hidden masters or a 'World Teacher', elements that were abandoned by this branch of the Movement almost immediately after the death of HIK.[25] *Western Sufism* was of great help in understanding a number of philosophical characteristics within the Order but it pales in importance to William Rory Dickson's work.

William Rory Dickson's *Living Sufism in North America: Between Tradition and Transformation* is arguably the single most important book on Western Sufism in recent scholarship. Dickson renders all previous attempts at categorization irrelevant, showing the ways that contemporary Sufi movements challenge or transcend the designations assigned to them by scholars like Hermansen, Webb, and Alan Godlas. In his interviews with ten Western Sufi *shaykhs*/*shaykhas*, Dickson takes a leadership-centric approach with his questions, attempting to understand the decision-making processes these *shaykhs* undertake that determine "which elements of the tradition to maintain and which to adapt in a new context."[26] This focus on leadership helps separate the actual messages leaders wish to teach and convey from the message as it is understood by *mureeds* or scholars of the tradition. Dickson notes that none of these organizations fits comfortably into any preconceived categorical framework and, furthermore, that some Eastern orders would be viewed as "quasi-Islamic" or untraditional in these academically designated systems.[27] Dickson's approach is particularly helpful for a number of reasons. Not only does it do

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[25] Zia discusses these Theosophical influences throughout his dissertation but focuses specifically on the belief that HIK was a 'World Teacher' or Prophet on pages 150-165. He relates HIK's unwillingness to deny his status as a prophet to the Chishti tradition with the conceptions of *fana fi 'l-shaykh* and *fana fi 'l-rasul* as attested to by Gisu Daraz; noting the tentativeness Khan showed when answering questions from *Mureed* who believed he may the reincarnated Christ or Theosophical World Teacher (pgs. 161-162)

[26] Dickson, *Living Sufism in North America: Between Tradition and Transformation* (Albany, NY: SUNY PRESS, 2015), 3.

[27] Dickson notes these contradictions on pages 190-191, the Mevlevi Order's acceptance of non-Muslims since its founding is particularly noteworthy.

away with the categorizing and essentializing nature of previous scholarship, but it shows the importance of focusing on the message of organizational leaders because their teachings may be misinterpreted due to instances of poor academic interpretation, misunderstanding on the part of mureeds, or changes in the way their philosophy is understood posthumously. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Dickson shows the nuance and complexity that Order leaders have undertaken in their work in attempting to integrate elements as disparate as *shariah*-based Islam, Medieval Sufi philosophy, Western post-Enlightenment intellectual trends, and modern Western culture and technology into comprehensive systems designed for spiritual gain. Dickson concludes,

> The perspectives offered by North American Sufi leaders illustrate a complex range of views on Islam and Sufism, the nuances of which are not always captured by categories such as "universal," "Quasi-Islamic," or "Islamic." Simple dichotomies between what is Islamic and what is not fail to draw out the subtlety of Sufi perspectives on Islamic practice.[28]

This subtlety allows varied influences to shine through and work together and, ultimately, shows the importance of the leadership-centric approach I would like to take, as opposed to the more general focus taken by much of the earlier scholarship.

Looking to the scholarship of Hermansen, Webb, Sedgwick, and Dickson, we see a shift toward a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the myriad influences impacting Western Sufism and its teachers, a positive step in understanding these dynamic traditions going forward. Hermansen's introductory ethnographic survey and Webb's recognition of traditional Sufi elements like the teachings of Ibn Arabi and Rumi in HIK's writings and lectures, combined with Sedgwick's broad approach to the identification of philosophical influences on Western Sufism and Dickson's

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[28] Ibid., 202.

understanding of the complex relationship between teachers and these elements in their attempts to formulate and articulate their teachings all inform and contribute to my understanding of the Inayati philosophical tradition as expressed in this thesis. These texts show the importance of and need to take a leadership heavy approach, focusing on personal observation, texts and teachings to push back against traditional frameworks that have informed academic scholarship and Western conceptions of Sufism for decades. Having identified these texts and briefly discussed their importance, both to the scholarly field and for my own purposes, I would like to turn to the 'Key Terms' section of this essay for a perfunctory look at a number of terms and philosophical elements that are critical to this paper.

Key Terms

This thesis references many different elements: Sufi, Universalist, and Islamic, Indian and Euro-American, textual and ethnographic. Therefore, it is critically important to provide working definitions for a number of key terms and philosophical concepts that are prevalent in the texts being discussed and important to the understanding of the individuals being written about.

On the macro-scale, two principle philosophies are being used to categorize everything that is being discussed: Universalism and Sufism. Universalism is generally understood as the belief in one universal religious truth that makes up the secret core of all religious traditions.[29] The traditions themselves are 'exoteric,' serving as an outer,

[29] "Universalism," Merriam-Webster (Merriam-Webster), accessed October 18, 2020, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/universalism.

observable cover, which draws their adherents closer to God. The Universalist philosophy is the "esoteric" or hidden core that unites all traditions in the ancient past and allows for a deeper and more intimate personal connection with God through various guarded practices and teachings.[30]

Due to the unique cultural context of Sufism in the United States at the start of the twentieth century, it is important to find a definition that incorporates both Sufism's connection with the Eastern world and the time of Muhammad, as well as the flexibility and creativity that inevitably occurs when introducing concepts into a new cultural context or foreign society. Carl Ernst provides exactly that in his book, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*. Ernst states: "I use the term Sufism in the broadest descriptive sense, to include not only those people who describe themselves or are described by others as Sufis but also the whole range of historical traditions, texts, cultural artifacts and practices connected with Sufis."[31] This flexibility is important because it allows for the historical shifts that have occurred in Sufism since the time of the Prophet, the enveloping of new philosophical concepts that were introduced as Sufism spread outside the Arabian peninsula, and accommodates changes in the physical practices of various orders. The key to a successful understanding of Sufism is to take an approach that accommodates religious accretions or shifts that occur when Sufism is introduced to new cultural or historical settings.[32]

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[30] Sedgwick's *Western Sufism: From the Abbasids to the New Age* focuses heavily on the connections between Universalism and esotericism throughout but in particular on pp. 76 and pp. 85-86.
[31] Carl Ernst, *Shambhala Guide to Sufism* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1997), xvii.
[32] It would be ignorant to ignore the ongoing debate regarding Sufism's relationship with Islam more generally but this thesis is not the place for that conversation. I must take an open and accepting approach to Sufism because it has shown an overwhelming ability to consistently adapt to new geographical settings and philosophical injections, which in and of itself is a key characteristic of the tradition.

Sufism is practiced under the guidance of a *Shaykh, Pir*, or *Murshid*, or, in the case of many larger orders, one of his chief disciples, a *khalifā*: "The precise role of a *khalifā*, like his title, varies from order to order, but in general he acts as a minor or junior *shaykh*. He usually holds *dhikr* sessions, teaches, accepts new Sufis into the order, and deals with the day-to-day problems of the community he heads."[33] New adepts or disciples are called *mureeds*. To be inducted into an order, one undergoes *bay'a*, or initiation where one 'takes hand' (literally taking the hand of the *Pir* and, depending on the order, kissing it) with a *Pir* or *Khalifā*. This exchange is usually furthered by the presentation of a cloak, hat, or other article of clothing which signifies the acceptance of an adept into an order.[34] In taking *bay'a* with a *shaykh*, the *mureed* becomes a member of his *tariqa* (path or way), which derives its legitimacy through a chain (*silsila*) of *shaykhs* who can trace their legacy all the way back to the Prophet Muhammad. Sufism is understood as Islam's esoteric tradition because it goes above and beyond the traditional five pillars of Islam, placing heavy importance on a direct relationship with the divine by dampening or lessening the Self and cultivating this relationship through physical practices like supererogatory prayer, *dhikr* (recitation) or *sama'* (listening). *Dhikr* means active devotion, and its practice involves the recitation of specific spiritual formulas like the Ninety-Nine names of God, blessings of the prophets or specific Qur'anic verses or sayings of the prophet (*hadith qudsi*) that are meant to help the *mureed* better focus on

[33] Mark Sedgwick, *Sufism: The Essentials* (New York, NY: The American University in Cairo Press, 2003) 58.
[34] Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction*, 141.

God's spiritual essence.[35] These formulas have been perfected and often individualized over hundreds of years in many *tariqas*.

In understanding that the ultimate goal of joining a *tariqa* is to achieve the realization of God's divine love and to undertake practices that have been designed to enhance that connection, I would like to focus on several key philosophical elements that provide a foundation for the creative Sufi teachings of the Khans. The tripartite relationship of *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh* is critical to understanding Sufism's foundations. *Nafs* is understood to be the "soul"—the lower self, the base instincts, what we might render in the biblical sense as "the flesh" … The main duty of the adept is to act exactly contrary to the *nafs's* appetites and wishes… It is incumbent upon every traveler on the Path to purge the *nafs* of its evil attributes in order to replace these by the opposite, praise-worthy qualities."[36] The *qalb* or 'fleshy heart' is "the seat of faith (*īman*)," which serves as both the seat of the *ruh* and the object of actions undertaken to purify the *nafs*.[37] Essentially, the *nafs's* purification allows the cultivation of positive characteristics of the *qalb*, which, in turn, allows the *ruh* to strengthen its connection with its divine lover. The *ruh* "is the spirit which God has breathed into the human frame; this relatively immortal part of the inner self is the link to the world of eternity."[38]

On this journey towards the purification of the *ruh* to achieve realization of God's divine love, the Sufi progresses through a number of psychological states and stages: "The states (*hal*, pl. *ahwal*) were generally defined as gifts from God that overtake the

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[35] *Hadith qudsi* are sacred or divine sayings that are in effect extra Qur'anic revelations. (Ernst, *Shambhala Guide,* 51.)
[36] Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 112.
[37] Ibid., 192.
[38] Ernst, *Shambhala Guide*, 45.

wayfarer involuntarily; they were essentially beyond the control of the individual. The stations (*maqam*, pl. *maqamat*) … form a series of discrete psychological and ethical qualities that the individual must attain and progress through."[39] The end goal of this journey through the *ahwals* and *maqamats* is "mystical annihilation (*fana'*) of the ego and God's becoming present (*baqa'*)."[40]

The Prophet Muhammad also plays a central role in Sufi philosophy. Two key elements are intertwined here that need to be addressed, *nur Muhammad*, and *al-insan al-kamil*. Taken directly from ibn al-Arabi's system of philosophy, the Perfect Man (*insan kamil*) is "Muhammad… the total theophany of the divine names, the whole of the universe in its oneness as seen by the divine essence… necessary to God as the medium through which He is known and manifested."[41] *Al-Insan al-Kamil* is God's consciousness manifested in the Prophet, but more than that, he is "the spirit in which all things have their origin… the medium through which God becomes conscious of Himself in creation."[42] The Prophet Muhammad then is the light or spirit that illuminates all human souls and allows for the realization of and return to God's love, a Muhammadan light, or *nur Muhammad*.

Having established the key concepts for the body of this thesis, I will now focus on *The Biography of Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan* briefly because it shares several similarities with classical biographies of Eastern *shaykhs*. After *Biography*, the best way to show the presence of traditional Sufi elements in the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan is to explore the transcribed two volume collection of his final American tour that took

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[39] Ibid., 102-103.
[40] Ibid., 60.
[41] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 272.
[42] Ibid., 224.

place in 1925-1926, finishing less than a year before his untimely death. I have selected this particular collection because it is both readily available, and contains evidence that pushes back against claims that HIK's teachings abandoned traditional Sufi philosophy while he was teaching in the West.

Hazrat Inayat Khan: His Biography & Legacy

The Biography of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan is unique, described as "a selective, secretarial compilation of anecdotes and memoirs as eloquent in its omissions as in its contents"[43] and " 'a mystics delight, a psychologists wonder, a historians despair.' … For all that this collection of subjectively handled notes and comments remains a reference work of inevitable value, and fortunately is not without its endearing compensations."[44] *Biography* is an interesting compilation of different authors, sources, and writing styles written in an attempt to provide a historical overview of HIK's life and, to establish his legacy in a similar manner to earlier prophets and Chishti *pirs*.[45] There are certainly doubts about the veracity and reliability of *Biography* and its portrayal of HIK's life and personhood but its content and context is truly something special. The text is a semi-historical account of an Indian holy man who journeys to the Western world to spread his religious ideology in an attempt to "harmonize the East and West with the harmony of

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[43] Mahmood Khan, "Mawlābakhshī Rājkufū A'lākhāndān: The Mawlābakhsh Dynastic Lineage, 1883-1972," in *A Pearl in Wine: Essays on the Life, Music and Sufism of Hazrat Inayat* Khan, Ed. Zia Khan, (New Lebanon, NY: Omega publishing, 2001), 4.
[44] Ibid., 77.
[45] *Biography* is a mess technically; it is an accumulation of different sources, authors and writing styles all thrown together in a way that functions surprisingly well. Nothing is cited or sourced and there are numerous spelling and grammatical errors, probably because its authors had not mastered English. Its inclusion of various *mureeds* and other figures in 'biographical' sections portrays the text more as a pseudo-history of the Movement, not merely a biography of HIK.

thy music (and) spread the wisdom of Sufism"[46] that has been written for Western, English speakers. The religio-philosophical nature of Khan's *Biography*, and the entirety of his literary corpus, is unique because, outside of the Shah brothers' work and small academic circles, little literature was being produced about Eastern mystics/Sufis at the time of publishing (1979). Khan's works are special because they are the first real transmission of Eastern, Islamically-oriented philosophy to Western, English readers.[47]

The semi-historical nature of *Biography* places it firmly within the Chishti literary tradition of *tazkira* or "Sufi biological memoirs."[48] The hagiographic tradition of *tazkira* is "principally concerned with constructing the sanctity of its subject(s), the Sufi Shaykh… by representing the Shaykhs as personifying, to an exemplary degree, paradigms of piety recognized by the readership… While this agenda is common to all tazkira writings, narrative styles vary considerably, ranging from matter-of-fact empirical data to unrestrained appeals to the miraculous."[49] *Biography* provides an abundance of both. The prophetic imagery that came in dreams to Inayat's mother Khatidja Bibi before his birth has precedence not only in the *tazkira* literature but also the prophetic stories of Muhammad and the Buddha.[50] The calls of "Allah ho Akbar! God is Great!"[51] that awoke Inayat from his slumber are another example of similarity with the *tazkira* tradition and mirror similar accounts given from the stories of Zarathustra, Moses and

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[46] Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Biography of Pir-o-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan* (London, UK: East-West Publications, 1979), 111.
[47] Acknowledging, of course the Universalist and Theosophical influences prevalent in HIK's public message, while maintaining my contention that Khan's core beliefs and teachings are derived from Indo-Islamic Sufism.
[48] Carl Ernst & Bruce Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 8.
[49] Zia Inayat Khan, "The "Silsila-I Sufian: From Khwāja Mu'in al-Dīn Chishtī to Sayyid Abū Hashim Madanī," in *A Pearl in Wine*, Ed. Zia Khan, (New Lebanon, NY: Omega publishing, 2001), 270.
[50] A brief gloss of *Biography's* historical record is coming shortly.
[51] Inayat Khan, *Biography*, 73.

Muhammad. Inayat's numerous journeys and pilgrimages, both in search of a *shaykh*, and after the death of his *shaykh*, Abu Hashim Madani, other religious luminaries are quite similar to those of earlier Chishti masters and helps to illustrate the ways in which Sufism spread geographically and shifted philosophically amongst the various *tariqas*.[52]

The obvious similarities between *Biography* and the *tazkira* tradition are intriguing and could cause one to wonder how familiar *Biography's* collaborators were with the literature. However, the more logical explanation, and one which Zia seems to support, is that these attempts at ascribing HIK with prophetic-esque qualities were meant to place him in the mold of Theosophical World Teacher.[53] Either way, this attribution of miraculous qualities places *Biography* in close alignment with the *tazkira* tradition. The miraculousness of *Biography* is clearly meant to evoke a sense of great spiritual knowledge in the personhood of HIK but this is counterbalanced in part by its inclusion of very real human participants, a light-on-dates timeline, with little specific dating, and numerous well documented events. Obviously, the mythic elements of the text raise concerns about its use as a source for scholarly work but because of its similarity to previous literature, the mythical elements of most religious biographies, and the importance that HIK's pseudo-prophetic image had for early *mureeds* and the Movement's survival, I think it is important to include in this thesis. The text provides insight into the beliefs of those willing to follow HIK and his Sufi message; here was a

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[52] Ernst & Lawrence discuss the importance of Chishti shrine culture and pilgrimage practice in chapter Six of *Sufi Martyrs of Love* entitled "The Major Chishti Shrines" (pgs. 85-104). The most relevant pages here are 85-98. Sedgwick, in *Western Sufism* briefly touches on the way tariqas form and spread in a section entitled 'Sufi Organization' (47-49).

[53] In *Hybrid Sufi Order* Zia focuses on the prophetic mythology that began to form around HIK in a section entitled 'The Message and the Messenger' (145-162) noting, "By the fall of 1922, the notion that Inayat Khan might be, or was, the prophet of the age was widely entertained among members of the Sufi Order." (151)

man who served as a prophet, *qutb*, or World Teacher for his closest followers and most fervent supporters. His magnetism cannot be understated:

> A variety of accounts suggested that it was Inayat's magnetic presence, more than the content of his expositions, that impressed his audiences. One mureed described the feeling of being 'caught and carried away to something that made the light dawn within.' Another wrote, 'I was probably only half listening. But I felt taken up in an atmosphere where I felt completely at home.[54]

Clearly, Inayat possessed personal *baraka* and, further, his philosophy has maintained a presence in the Sufi Movement's message for the last one hundred and ten years outlasting that *baraka* and serving as the foundation of a vibrant, eclectic Sufi philosophical tradition. Next, we will take a brief look at *Biography* as it presents Inayat's life:

> Ināyat's mother, before his birth had dreams in which she saw Christ coming and healing her and sometimes Mohammed appeared and blessed her, sometimes she found herself in the midst of the prophets and saints, as though they were taking care of her or receiving her, or were waiting for something coming or preparing for a time which they had foreknown.[55]

These prophetic dreams would be the beginning of an extraordinary life and movement. The *qalb* of the Inayati Order is rooted in its founder Hazrat Inayat Khan; it is his creation, his philosophy, and his life's work. In order to understand the Order in its modern form, we must first seek to understand its *Pir*.

Inayat Khan, the eldest child of Rahmat Khan and Khatidja Bibi, was born into a Sunni Muslim family on July 5, 1882 in the city of Baroda, Gujerat Presidency, India. Inayat was said to be a curious, intelligent, and playful boy:

> Once Inayat's father visited his school, enquiring the reason of his being backwards in his studies the teacher said: In no way does he lack intelligence, yet he is playful and neglects his studies." … Inayat would not give his thoughts to the studies he did not care for and only gave thought to the subjects which

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[54] Zia Khan, *Hybrid Sufi Order*, 171.
[55] Inayat Khan, *Biography*, 33.

> interested him… Inayat awakened to sympathy, ready to be friends with anybody, willing to take interest in everything that attracted his curiosity… (and) was open to all influences.[56]

These traits of intelligence, inquisitiveness, kindness, and concern, identified very early in his life, would flourish as he aged.

The two most influential people in Inayat's early life were his father Rahmat, and his grandfather Maula Bakhsh. Maula was a highly respected singer throughout India and often spent his mornings practicing singing and teaching Inayat music.[57] This time with his grandfather was critical to Inayat's future because these musical skills would become the catalyst for his earliest Western tour which began as a tour focused on traditional Indian music before HIK began speaking about Sufi philosophy. While Maula provided HIK's musical education, Rahmat contributed a great deal to his interest in philosophy, "what Inayat learned from his father in philosophy became the foundation of his whole life. Inayat received it gratefully."[58] This shared interest in philosophy drove Inayat to seek out esoteric knowledge and contributed to his multi-religious, blended approach to Sufism. Rahmat impressed both esoteric and philosophical knowledge upon Inayat. He "believed in the influence of the presence of Majzub's[59], Yogis and Sages and used to take him (Inayat) to them for their blessings."[60] By exposing Inayat to a number of different religious/spiritual traditions at an early age, Rahmat instilled in him the freedom to borrow and modify ideas from a number of sources while developing the philosophy and practices of the Sufi Movement. With his natural curiosity and his father's

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[56] Ibid., 40.
[57] Ibid., 43.
[58] Ibid., 31.
[59] Ernst, in *Shambhala Guide* explains that a *Majdhub* is someone who has "been attracted (*majdhub*) to God with such force that their intellects have been overpowered." (115)
[60] Ibid., 42.

knowledge of philosophy and esotericism, it is no wonder Inayat developed an eagerness for deeper knowledge, "Inayat talked with his father very often about woman's rights and on religion in spite of his father's always trying to avoid discussion on delicate subjects such as these, Inayat always dragged them from him by his great eagerness in these questions."[61] This enthusiasm would drive Inayat to seek out religious and philosophical knowledge in all its forms, and, eventually, to dedicate his life to Sufism. Inayat's journey toward deeper esoteric knowledge was brought about by frustration and uncertainty in his faith,

> One day Inayat was praying on the roof of the house… and he thought to himself that there had not been an answer yet to all the prayers he had offered to God… and he could not reconcile himself to going on praying to the God whom he knew not. He went fearlessly to his father and said 'I do not think I will continue my prayers any longer… I do not know how I can pray to a God I do not know'.[62]

This declaration shocked Rahmat but also showed him that "the lad really hungered after the Truth and was ready to learn now what many could not in their whole life"[63] and led him to impart the knowledge of *wujud* to his son: "God is in you and you are in God… The prophet has said God is closer to you than the jugular vein… if this be rightly interpreted it means that God is the very depth of your being. This moment to Inayat was his very great initiation."[64] This 'initiation' propelled Inayat for the rest of his life.

Sometime after his spiritual realization (Inayat's biography is incredibly free-flowing and rarely mentions specific dates) Inayat left Baroda to settle in Hyderabad. In Hyderabad, Inayat began to refine his personality. He dedicated his free time to

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[61] Ibid., 51.
[62] Ibid., 53.
[63] Ibid., 53.
[64] Ibid., 53. Schimmel, in *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, defines *wujud* as "the 'existence' of God or, rather, the 'finding' of God. For the word wujud, which is usually translated as 'existence,' means, originally, the 'being found'—and that is what the mystic experiences." (142)

contemplation and often heard voices in his sleep, saying, " 'Allah ho Akbar! Allah ho Akbar! God is Great! God is Great!' Which awoke him from his sleep."[65] These dreams confused Inayat and led him to confide in a friend who said, "when He calls His Servants, He calls them aloud and those who hear, the ears of whose hearts are open. There is no soul to whom the voice within does not speak but the pity is that not every soul hears."[66] Inayat is one of those select few who hears God's call and responds with an insatiable desire for knowledge of Him. Inayat's friend offered further guidance, "I can only advise that the best thing would be to waken when the call comes… it is the duty of the obedient servant to answer the call of the master."[67] Inayat, finally aware of his task, had reached the "point where you should look for a murshid."[68]

Inayat began his search for a *murshid* journeying from Hyderabad to Secunderabad and back again, encountering four potential *murshids* before finally meeting his guide, al-Masha'ikh Sayyid Abu Hashim Madani.[69] Inayat, was then initiated into "the four main Sufi lineages in India, though his primary connection was with the Chishti Order."[70] This relationship began in 1904 and continued "for four years, until his Murshids death in 1908" the whole of which "Inayat Khan remained in Hyderabad as his enraptured disciple."[71] It was during this period Inayat learned everything he needed to know about the Chishti Sufism of his *murshid*, teachings that would later serve as the foundation of the Sufi Movement's complex and multi-faceted formulation of Sufism.

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[65] Ibid., 73.
[66] Ibid., 73.
[67] Ibid., 73.
[68] Ibid., 73.
[69] The *Biography* stresses that these rejections were not due to any flaws on the part of Inayat; it just happened that these *murshids* were not the correct fit. Recognizing this, they refused to take Inayat under their wing because of the incredible importance of the *murshid-mureed* relationship.
[70] http://twoseasjoin.org/light/?page_id=457
[71] https://inayatiorder.org/hazrat-inayat-khan/

After the death of Abu Hashim Madani, Inayat began a period of pilgrimage, visiting a number of India's holy sites of various religious backgrounds.[72] He visited the tomb of Bandanawaz at Golbarga and the temple of Manek Prabhu; he journeyed to the place of pilgrimage of Mīrān Datar and visited the tomb of Khwāja Muīnuddīn Chishtī. At one point he met Pir Jemat Ali Shah and the two "became most drawn to each other."[73] This pilgrimage exposed Inayat to further influence from non-Chishti sources and also helped solidify HIK's universalistic philosophical views. [74] In speaking with the son of Manek Prabhu, Inayat states: "Muslim or Hindu are only outward distractions, the Truth is one, God is one, Life is one, to me there is no such thing as two. Two is only one plus one."[75] This declaration infuses Inayat's teachings with a Universalist essence; specific religious traditions are merely outer, exoteric distinctions that ultimately make up a universal, divine Truth. There is a universalism inherent in this quote but it may also hint at the *nur Muhammad* ideal; the indivisibility of Truth, God and Life appears similar to the belief that everything comes from one God through the Prophet Muhammad.

After spending time wandering the Indian subcontinent, Inayat reached *sāmadhi*[76] in Decca, which normally "come(s) after many years of meditation, came to Inayat while

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[72] HIK's pilgrimage throughout the Indian subcontinent is addressed specifically in the "Youth" section of *Biography*, in particular from pages 81-99 but the specific names and pilgrimage sites mentioned here were all pulled from pages 81-92.
[73] Inayat Khan, *Biography*, 92.
[74] Manik Prabhu was a Hindu saint whose philosophy focused on Advaita Vedanta. Jamaat Ali Shah was a *Pir* of the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa*, "The place of pilgrimage of Mīrān Datar" refers to the Saiyed Ali Mir Datar shrine at Unava, Gujarat, India, whose lineage appears to be Islamic but who seems to be one of the many Indian saints whose been embraced by multiple religious traditions; It is impossible to capture the broad spectrum of philosophies and encounters HIK had on his travels throughout India and Southeast Asia.
[75] Inayat Khan, *Biography*, 82-83.
[76] *Sāmadhi* here is replacing the traditional Sufi term *baqā'* to signify that HIK has reached absorption in the divine. It is impossible to state with real confidence why the Buddhist term is being used as a replacement but it does align with a concerted effort that HIK makes to distance the tradition from distinctly Sufic language.

so young… No sooner did he begin his music than he would rise above the spheres… After finishing his music Inayat was drowned in an ecstasy and they all seemed as if lost in a mist."[77] It was also in Decca that HIK became determined to carry out "his Murshid's injunction: 'Fare forth into the World, my child and harmonize the East and West with the harmony of thy music. Spread the wisdom of Sufism abroad, for to this end art thou gifted by Allah, the most merciful and Compassionate.' "[78] On September 13, 1910, Hazrat Inayat Khan, along with his brother Maheboob, and cousin Ali Khan journeyed to the West, sailing to the United States for the first time.

The next sixteen years of Inayat's life were spent in a constant state of travel interrupted only by the outbreak of World War I. From 1910 to 1926, Inayat toured throughout Europe and the United States, sharing his music and espousing the Sufi knowledge he had attained during the first twenty-eight years of his life. Inayat's message was particularly well received in Holland, France, and London, England. In March 1913, having settled in London during the war, Inayat married Ora Ray Baker (Ameena Begum) and had four children: Noor-un-Nisa[79] born in January of 1914; Vilayat Inayat Khan in June of 1916 (future *Pir* of the Sufi Order, and father of its current head *Pir* Zia); Hidayat Inayat Khan in August, 1917 (former *Pir* of the Sufi Movement's tariqa in Europe); and Khair-un-Nissa (Claire) in 1919. The family remained in London until 1920 when they moved to Suresnes, a western suburb of Paris. In a move seemingly meant to coincide with the League of Nations' move from London to Geneva, The Sufi

[77] Inayat Khan, *Biography*, 111.
[78] Ibid., 111.
[79] Noor-un-Nisa's story is equally as incredible as the story of her father and brothers but it would be impossible to fully address it here. She served as an English spy, working with the French resistance during WWII, was captured and tortured by the Nazis, escaped twice only to be murdered at Dachau eleven months later.

Movement's constitution was drawn up, establishing Geneva as the group's official headquarters in 1923.[80]

While most of Inayat's sixteen years in the West were spent in Europe, he did take two later trips to the United States in an effort to continue cultivating the Sufi Movement that Rabia Martin had been overseeing in California and to spread the Movement to new audiences. His earliest tour (1910-1912), which had been propelled by his music, was followed up eleven years later by a three-month American tour in 1923. Seven of those weeks were spent in San Francisco as a "response to frequently repeated request from Rabia Martin."[81] There were also brief stops in numerous cities throughout the country.[82] Inayat made one last tour of the United States between December 1925 and June 1926, again visiting major cities like New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, but also attempting to spread the Movement's message in smaller cities like Wichita and Denver along the way. The main purpose of this tour was to address problems with Martin's followers in the Bay Area and go to "Detroit 'to straighten affairs' before returning to New York for a final series of public lectures and private classes."[83] Inayat then returned to Suresnes for what would be his final Summer School before returning to India on September, 28, 1926. [84]

> On 28 September Inayat departed from Italy accompanied by his secretary Kismet Stam. Disembarking at Karachi, he traveled overland to Lahore, and then on to

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[80] Zia in a section of his doctoral dissertation entitled *Geneva* (pg. 118-125) believes that the determination of Geneva to serve as the headquarters of the Movement, coincided closely with the creation of the League of Nation's headquarters. (pg. 123)
[81] Zia Khan, *A Hybrid Sufi Order at the Crossroads of Modernity: The Sufi Order and Sufi Movement of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan* (Doctoral diss., Duke University, 2006), 163.
[82] Boston, New York, Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles were among them. (Ibid., 164)
[83] Ibid., 186. Zia discusses his grandfather's last tour in *Hybrid Sufi Order* on pages 181-188 stressing his weakening health and the disarray that affected the US organization as well as his desire to return to India.
[84] The Summer School was held yearly from 1920-1926. *Mureeds* from throughout Europe gathered at Suresnes for teaching and *dhikr*/*sema'*. Similar to the *Season of the Rose Conference* that takes place in the modern period.

> Delhi, where he rented Tilak Lodge, a house on the banks of the Jumna. After sixteen years in 'occidental exile,' Inayat's return to India was infused with nostalgic anticipation[85]

After attending the *urs'* of Khwāja Muīnuddīn Chishtī in early January 1927, Inayat died on the morning of February 5, 1927 at the age of forty-four. "The news of his death sent shockwaves through the Sufi Movement: most mureeds weren't even aware he had gone to India. The charismatic phase of the Movement was over, and the future was far from certain."[86] Inayat's death marked the beginning of a transitional period for the fledgling Movement, a period pockmarked by arguments over succession and legitimacy, and organizational fractures; these issues engulfed both the Sufi Movement and its Esoteric School.[87]

Hazrat Inayat Khan's legacy in the West is difficult to assess for a number of reasons. It is clear that his teachings are still studied and practiced today, but due to internal disputes, organizational splits, and the transient nature of groups that fall under the "New Age" umbrella, it is impossible to get any current or historical membership numbers from the various organizations that trace their roots back to HIK. In Hermansen's "Hybrids and Perennials" she estimates "at most a total of 25,000 persons have been involved in all Sufi movements combined over the part(sic) two decades. Perhaps 10,000 at most, are still involved."[88] I believe that number has likely declined, in part due to the realities of the United States post-September 11, 2001, and also a decline in membership that can be attributed to deeper scrutiny of various New Age/mindfulness

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[85] Ibid., 190.
[86] Ibid., 192.
[87] The Esoteric School is the more Sufi-oriented section of the Sufi Movement/Inayati Order; it is concerned with the esoteric side of the Order, particularly Sufi teachings and *dhikr* practices as well as the relationship between *mureed* and *Pir*. Its connection to traditional Islamic and Sufi philosophy/practice is more defined than the Movement as a whole.
[88] Hermansen, *Hybrids and Perennials*, 169.

movements by outsiders. However, this presumption can't be confirmed with hard data. Currently, there are at least three other Western organizations (not including the Inayati Order) whose *silsila's* include HIK: Sufi Ruhaniat International (SRI); Sufism Reoriented;[89] and the International Sufi Movement (these *silsilas* can be traced to Samuel Lewis, Ivy O. Duce, and Maheboob Khan, respectively). Unfortunately, these organizations do not have readily available mailing lists or membership numbers making it difficult to measure their influence. A number of individuals associated with Lewis' SRI attended the Season of the Rose Conference, a powerful indication there are still strong connections between the groups dating back to their brief reunification under Vilayat's leadership; this presence confirms that Lewis' legacy remains strong, even apart from his Dances of Universal Peace.[90]

Inayat Khan's historical legacy is interesting for two specific reasons. The first is his connection with *Murshid* Samuel Lewis. The connections between Lewis and the Khan family run deep; Lewis was Rabia Martin's closest disciple before being passed over for the title of *Shaykh* in favor of Ivy O. Duce, who devoted the group to Meher Baba and renamed it Sufism Reoriented; Lewis also met with Inayat Khan six times for a series of interviews.[91] Further, he had a deeply personal connection with Vilayat Khan who "acknowledged him as a murshid and as the senior functioning mureed of Hazrat

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[89] Sufism Reoriented and Ivy O. Duce's relationship with the Inayatian legacy is an interesting one because of the philosophical shift that occurred after Rabia Martin's death; Samuel Lewis was passed over for leadership by Duce causing the split that would eventually result in SRI; Duce after meeting Meher Baba determined he was the World Teacher or avatar of the age and officially "reoriented" the Movement to his message in 1952. Reoriented acknowledges HIK's impact but has distanced itself from his teachings.
[90] Zia speaks about the various attempts at reconnection between the splinter groups that draw their legacy from HIK's teachings, attempts which date back to the early 1970s, in *Hybrid Sufi Order*, pages 263-275.
[91] Zia Khan, *Hybrid Sufi Order*, 183.

Inayat Khan in America."[92] This connection was so close that Lewis' *mureeds* joined with Vilayat's Sufi Order International for six years after Lewis' death, He also believed that "this seminal meeting with Pir Vilayat Khan… was the starting point for the Dances of Universal Peace."[93] Philosophically, Lewis' influence has had a minor impact outside of his own organization but his Dances of Universal Peace have become something of a global phenomenon.

> Since the late 1960's, the Dances have spread throughout the world, touching more than half a million people in North and South America, eastern and western Europe, Russia… India, the Middle East, Africa, Pakistan, Australia, and New Zealand… Further networking and citizen diplomacy through the Dances have occurred in South Africa, Bosnia and the Middle East. New grassroots circles are continually springing up around the globe, with over two hundred dance circles meeting weekly or monthly in the United States alone.[94]

While not a direct result of HIK's teachings, the Dances do have clear connections to HIK's legacy, and their popularity and pervasiveness attest to that. Without the influence of Inayat Khan, Rabia Martin and Nyogen Senzaki, and that fateful meeting with Vilayat, it is difficult to imagine that the creation of these Dances would have occurred.

The second interesting aspect of Inayat's historical legacy is his position in regard to his contemporary, René Guénon: the two are generally recognized as Western Sufism's leading figures in the early- to mid-twentieth century, although their lives and philosophies could not be more different. Inayat was born an Indian Muslim, Guénon was born to a Roman Catholic family in Blois, France. Khan learned his Sufism in the Indian/Chishti context and brought it eastward, shifting toward a more universalist and

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[92] Wali Ali Meyer, "A Sunrise in the West: Hazrat Inayat Khan's Legacy in California," in *A Pearl in Wine*, Ed. Zia Khan, (New Lebanon, NY: Omega publishing, 2001), 428.
[93] Ibid., 429.
[94] https://www.dancesofuniversalpeace.org/about.shtm

Theosophically inspired Sufism, while attempting to achieve spiritual harmony between East and West; Guénon traveled to Egypt to become more familiar with Sufism after his initiation into the Shadhili Order by Ivan Aguéli, eventually converting to Islam, and joining the Hamdiyya Shadhiliyya *tariqa*.[95] The most significant difference between these two leading explicators of Western Sufism, however, was their approach to spreading Sufi knowledge. Guénon's movement was an extremely seclusive and intellectual *tariqa* (as observed in his connections with Frithjof Schuon, and, by extension, Huston Smith, Martin Lings, and Seyyed Hosein Nasr); Inayat Khan's message was presented in a far more public setting, created to be a popular movement and bring the Sufi Movement's message to the masses. These two teachers represent the first period of Western Sufism (1910-1965) leading up to the passage of the historic Immigration Act of 1965. Up to this point, the Sufi *tariqas* that traced their *silsilas* to Inayat Khan were the most consistently visible representation of Sufism in America, with little to no competition. Sufism's popularity and variation grew with an influx of immigrants and teachers from traditionally Muslim locales after the Immigration Act's passage but, for almost sixty years, Inayatian Sufism was the dominant movement for this subset of Americans. The organizational strength and individual willpower of these tariqas and their members is nothing short of incredible, especially when considering questions of succession, organizational splits, competition within the 'spiritual marketplace' from different Eastern traditions (Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim) post-1965, and societal shifts away from the transcendental/metaphysical influences of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is a testament to Inayat Khan's legacy and the

[95] Sedgwick discusses Guénon and the Traditionalists on page 173-176 in *Western Sufism*.

strength of his teachings that the Sufi Movement's philosophy is still being taught and practiced 110 years later. With that, I would like to focus on Khan's teachings as they were delivered to Americans on his final lecture tour in 1925-1926.

Traditional Chishti Elements in the Lectures of Inayat Khan

Acknowledging the similarities between Inayat Khan's *Biography* and the Chishti literary tradition of *tazkira* as well as attempts to equate HIK with earlier Prophets/*Pirs* using a number of religious tropes I'd like to shift focus to a series of lectures presented to American audiences between December 1925 and May 1926. This series of lectures was chosen for several reasons: (1) Khan's literary contributions are massive and would be impossible to cover in a thesis this size, (2) These are the last public lectures he gives to North American audiences meaning they are probably the most solidified and concrete presentations of his philosophy that can be accessed, and, (3) they are varied enough in their content as to provide insights into Khan's views on a number of philosophical and performative points. Before beginning this analysis, I must note a particular editorial decision the Nekbakht Foundation made during the transcription process. In an attempt to stay as true to the original speeches as possible they've made the decision to use footnotes as corrective instruments instead of editing the text directly. This decision causes numerous run-on sentences, many passages that don't make clear sense, and what amounts to thousands of footnotes. This editorial decision leads to instances where quotes I deem relevant may appear confusing or difficult to understand; when these situations do occur I've made two decisions, (1) when a quote can be understood by replacing it with its original footnote I have done so, (2) when that is n0t possible I've lightly edited the

text myself to stay as true to the original as possible while making it easier to comprehend.

To best understand the ways that traditional Sufi elements have been incorporated in HIKs philosophy I need to identify the concepts I deem most critical to both Chishti philosophy, using my Key Terms section as a dictionary of sorts, and its Inayatian offshoot. For HIK three philosophical elements are key: the triadic *nafs*, *qalb*, *ruh* relationship, *nur Muhammad*, and *al-Insan al-Kamil*. I'll also briefly touch on several performative components of Inayatian Sufism and the strong alignment that exists between the traditional and modern.

HIK compares the triadic relationship of *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh* with that of the body, heart, and soul, doing a great job of presenting his interpretation of these concepts while simultaneously aligning them with more traditional understandings. In a lecture on February 20th, 1926 he explains them effectively to a new audience stating, "Therefore, the heart is the factor through which spirit and spirituality is to be attained. Man's being can be divided into three aspects: the body, the heart, and the soul. The heart is a globe on the soul, and the body is a cover over the heart."[96] The *ruh* (soul) is encapsulated by the *qalb* (heart) which is further sheltered by the *nafs* (body). Here HIK presents a concise understanding of the intertwined nature of the three, without any one element the human being can't achieve its full potential.

In explicating the relationship of these elements, I want to take an atypical approach because of the importance that divine love (*ishq'*) has in HIK's explications of Inayatian Sufism. Generally, when discussing the triad, one starts from the exterior (*nafs*)

[96] Inayat Khan, *Complete Works Part I*, 382.

and works their way inward (*qalb* & *ruh*) but because of the importance HIK places on love and the heart I've decided to take the opposite approach. Speaking to an audience in Detroit, MI, Khan declares:

> in man there is a spark somewhere written in his heart which alone can be called a source of free will… What does a mystic do? He blows this spark in order to bring this spark to a flame, till it comes to a blaze… It is this spark which may be called the divine heritage of man, in which he sees the divine power of God, the soul of man.[97]

HIK encapsulates the relationship between *qalb* and *ruh* well without specifically naming them, *ruh* is the spark or spirit that is derived directly from God, it is the 'divine heritage of man' that creates a direct connection from God's divinity to the heart of man. In HIK's analogy, *ruh* is the soul that is covered by the globe of the heart (*qalb*). This spark or spirit is written or imprinted on the *qalb*, the seat of faith (*īman*) or fleshy heart of all men.[98] HIK further confirms this connection between individual and divine at a lecture in New York stating, "In other words, man is linked with God, or more fully said man is an expression of God. In man there is a being of God, and that being can specially (*specifically*) be distinguished and defined as the creator. God is the creator and man is the creator at the same time."[99] Not only is the 'fleshy heart' (*qalb*) the 'seat of individual faith' but it is the resting place of the divine in each individual man. A further piece of critical information is revealed here, the mystic blows 'this spark in order to bring this spark to a flame'. Here, HIK implies it is possible to strengthen one's connection with the divine by cultivating the *ruh*. Implying one can cultivate the perfect humanity within

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[97] Inayat Khan, *Part I*, 314.
[98] Citing Schimmel's understanding of *qalb* as provided in *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pg. 192.
[99] Inayat Khan, *Part I*, 40. Either word fits as a replacement here but I prefer specifically.

themselves raises several questions, how does one go about cultivating this spark? And, what is the purpose of cultivating one's inner potential?

HIK answers these questions at a later date:

> Therefore, the perseverance of a mystic in the spiritual path is to wipe it as much as he can, by meditation, by concentration, by prayer, by study, by everything he does. His one aim is to wipe it as much as he can, that one day reality may manifest, which always keeps buried under the false ego. And by calling the name of God, by repeating the name of God everywhere, in the form of prayer, or in zikar, or in any other form… So it is with the divine spark in man. By concentration, by meditation, it breaks out and manifests. Where it manifests it washes away the stains of the false ego.[100]

The reason a member of the Sufi Movement should cultivate this spark is to 'wash away the stains of the false ego', removing any non-divine impressions that have impacted or impressed upon an individual's soul (essentially, the *nafs*), this clearing allows for the complete manifestation of God's spark in the spiritual practitioner.[101] A Sufi supports and propels this cleansing of the *nafs* in any number of ways: through meditation or concentration, prayer or study, *dhikr* or *sema'*; any activity which helps bring an individual closer to the divine should be undertaken. By participating in these activities, the Sufi is taking purposeful action to strengthen his connection with God in hopes to improve his spiritual station in life, not from a desire for heaven or to avoid hell, but due to pure love of the divine and a desire for a direct connection with, and absorption in him. Having established how and why one should cultivate their *ruh* the next questions to be answered are, what are these 'stains of the false ego' which affect the soul and must be controlled by Sufis? And, how do they develop?

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[100] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 221.

[101] HIK establishes this soul-as-mirror metaphor on pg. 184 of *Part II* stating: "The condition of the soul is likened to a mirror. It mirrors so as it reflects the object which is standing before it. And yet that object is not engraved in the mirror. It occupies it in the moment, it veils it. So the soul is covered by experiences."

HIK states, "The soul is the soul. It is beyond any attributes… The soul is the real life. Reflection is a mere suggestion of the soul, we call that life, living being… the soul is not seen; therefore life is not seen."[102] At its most authentic the *ruh* exists unhindered and beyond any attributes. It is pure. So where do these attributes come from and how do they impact the triadic *nafs*, *qalb*, *ruh* relationship? For HIK these impressions on the *ruh* come from any number of sources, "The soul, which is captive not only in conditions and situations of life, but also in the mind and body, has never a chance to free itself, being caught in the web of life. The way to the souls freedom is for the soul to realize itself first; the soul realizes itself when it has detached itself not only from conditions and situations but also from mind and body."[103] These impressions that can affect the individuals *ruh* can come from any number of different influences both exterior, the 'conditions and situations of life' that affect us daily and are often out of our control; and interior, the 'mind and body'; our thought processes, self-esteem, and negative beliefs we allow ourselves to internalize, along with any physical issues that may impact us. These influences are the *nafs* or 'base instincts' that have a direct impact on an individual's *ruh* and create the stains that appear on the 'lower self' resulting in psychological barriers between the individual and the divine.

Unique in the discussion of the triad HIK uses the term *nafs* in several lectures, one possible example of an attempt to introduce traditional language into his teachings. An attempt that results in a perfect summation of his understanding of *nafs*, and Sufism's purpose more generally.

> In Sufi terms it is called *nafs*, in other words the false ego… And the whole process of spiritual attainment is to subdue and surrender this false ego in man.

[102] Inayat Khan, *Part I*, 220.
[103] Ibid., 9.

> When this false ego is properly surrendered the real ego conquers. And it is in that battle that spiritual attainment is experienced.[104]

Through the identification of HIK's understanding of *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh* as expressed in Inayatian philosophy it is clear the metaphor presented earlier in this section, 'the heart as a globe on the soul, with the body serving as the cover of the heart' sums up their relationship perfectly. *Ruh* is the spark or soul of man, a reflection of the divine, pure in its original form, constantly trying to overcome impressions from exterior forces and interior uncertainty, it resides in the *qalb*. The *qalb* is the 'seat of faith in man' but more than that it is the object being acted upon when undertaking actions to purify oneself. *Nafs* exists as the external cover of these interior elements simultaneously shielding *qalb* and *ruh* while serving as a canvas for interior and exterior impressions that could delay advancement on the spiritual path. In order for the Sufi to fully cultivate the *ruh* he must remove these impressions that have been left on the *nafs* and affected the *qalb*. The best way to do so is by participating in prescribed meditation, concentration, and *dhikr*/*sema'* practices bringing oneself closer to the divine's love. Ultimately, for HIK, "man has never been separated from God… He is linked with God by the current of breath"[105] it is *ruh* under the protection of the *nafs* rooted in the *qalb* that secures that link.

Having established the interconnectedness of these triadic elements and their relationship with the divine it makes sense to more closely examine the metaphysical origins of *ruh*. Similar to traditional Sufi philosophy, HIK believes there is a key linkage between the divine spark that has been created in man and God. Here we turn to Khan's innovative understanding of that source, the *nur Muhammad*.

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[104] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 506.
[105] Ibid., 353.

HIK's understanding of the original source of all human souls is traditional with a critically important innovation. Embracing an ibn al-Arabī like understanding of a singular divine source for the human spirit, Khan regularly relies on the traditional descriptive trope of the sun and its rays.

> It is exactly the picture of the origin of the creation that the all pervading light of intelligence centralized itself first, thus making itself the spirit of the whole universe… As there are many rays of the spirit of intelligence, in other words of God, the real self. And each of these rays is a soul. The ray, therefore, is the manifestation of the sun; man, therefore is the manifestation of God.[106]

God is the source of all souls, without God there is no 'spirit of intelligence'; our personalities and selves are manifest expressions of a singular divine. Human souls are the rays projected by the divine Sun. Further solidifying this intertwined-ness and connecting it with the triadic *nafs*/*qalb*/*ruh* HIK states, "Our souls are rays of that sun… we in our inner being are source and goal itself. It is only our ignorance of it that keeps us ignorant of our own being. And the idea is that every atom of the universe, having come from the sun, in other words, from the divine sun, makes every effort to return to it."[107] For HIK, the relationship between sun and rays is a reflection of that between divine and man; humans (rays) are a smaller, obscured but coequal reflection of the larger, perfected whole (sun) that have been veiled by any number of outside influences or interior imperfections (*nafs*). This connection between divine source and individual so helps show the cohesion of Khan's philosophy and its similarity to earlier Chishti teachings.

Khan's innovative tendencies become clear when trying to understand who or what the sun ('spirit of intelligence') represents. Traditionally, the concept is referred to as *nur Muhammad* (The Muhammadan Light), the belief being that the original soul,

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[106] Ibid.,172-174.
[107] Inayat Khan, *Part I*, 284.

made manifest by God before all others is that of Muhammad, all other souls are projections or manifestations of this original source that have been affected by the *nafs*. Khan interprets this concept in a new way, resulting in two interpretive accretions. HIK distances the Sufi Movement and his understandings of the *nur Muhammad* from the prophet Muhammad and turns slightly West, to Palestine and the Christian prophet Jesus.

> The belief of Christ is in the Church, the book of Christ with the clergyman, the spirit of Christ is in the illuminated soul… "I am Christ" means "I am first, I am now, and I will be till end." In this the master (Christ) identifies himself with that light of which you read in the Vedanta of the Hindus, which existed thousands of years before Christ, as the word Chaitannya… and in the Qur'an it is mentioned where it is said, "We have made your light, and your light we have made"… each soul is connected with the other and there is not one soul which has not the influence, consciously or unconsciously, of the whole cosmos.[108]

For HIK, at least in his public presentation of Sufism to largely Western, Christian audiences, Christ plays the role of divine source. Because of this emphasis shift I've decided to create the term *nur Christos* to maintain the link with earlier philosophy while also providing an example of HIK presenting traditional concepts in language tailored to Western audiences. Replacing Muhammad with Jesus is clearly a seismic shift away from traditional Chishti philosophy however this decision strikes me as being made consciously by Khan to garner support and grow the Movement in the West, not as an abandonment of Islam's prophet and hundreds of years of tradition. By replacing Muhammad with Jesus, he can present traditional philosophies using language and figures familiar to Western audiences. This is not a singular instance, Khan regularly 'Westernizes' concepts to make them more easily understood and accepted by his *mureeds*.

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[108] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 152-156.

To better understand the ways that Christ has replaced or serves as a foil for Muhammad requires us to engage with the lecture transcriptions more deeply. On January, 22 1926, HIK states "As my position to give Sufi ideas in West either in sanctified form or with support with sayings from (the) Bible"[109] possibly implying a difference in merit between the two sources. Traditional Islamic/Chishti philosophy and texts have been sanctioned for the use of spreading the Sufi Movement in the West; 'sayings from Bible' are still acceptable to use but in a secondary or support capacity. Further, practically every mention of Jesus in relation to the Sufi Movement's philosophy has him standing in as a direct replacement of Muhammad. Not only does Jesus stand in as *nur Christos* but whenever biblical scripture is employed it aligns closely with traditional Chishti thought. "Be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect"[110] is presented as a reference to *al-Insan al-Kamil*, or, "Where there are three or four united in my name, I am there"[111] can be viewed as stressing the importance of establishing a community of likeminded believers with strong leadership (a *tariqa*). Christ consistently stands in for Muhammad and his story is used to provide a Western, Christian context to the philosophy being introduced in order to familiarize *mureeds* and potential members with these traditional concepts.

Publicly, HIK was using familiar language and historical figures to present his philosophy in a way that audiences who were unfamiliar with its traditional roots could understand. A challenge arises when trying to confirm my hunch that there is a more Westernized adaptation presented publicly in contrast to a more traditional private

[109] Inayat Khan, *Part I*, 195.
[110] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 70.
[111] Inayat Khan, *Part I*, 92.

philosophy however. Due to the secretive nature of the early Sufi Movement and the modern Inayati Order regarding teachings most would consider more metaphysical and complex it is challenging to access materials that would shed light on these early, private teachings.[112] Considering this secretiveness, the glimpses of traditional Chishti philosophy seen so far, and the inherent biases of an audience with little knowledge and skewed opinions of both Islam and Indians it makes sense to use Christ and biblical themes to serve as a sort of Western stand-in for Eastern themes.[113] In attempting to communicate themes with his audiences it makes sense to observe these substitutions as Khan striving to present traditional philosophy in a way that could be understood more than as an attempt to cause dramatic shifts in the tradition. This shift towards inclusion or assimilation of elements from other traditions has historical precedence in the larger Chishti *tariqa* as noted in Ernst and Lawrence's *Sufi Martyrs of Love*.[114]

This shift from *nur Muhammad* to *nur Christos* had another unique outcome that allowed further blending of source materials from various traditions, a second unique innovation, although, in my opinion, a logical one. In a lecture given on December 20th, 1925, HIK states

> In general so many different religions, Hindu, Muslim, Zoroastrian, but in reality is the different prophets who have brought one and same truth… Their master is only, book is only book… if we learned to understand and know better we would

[112] Zia discusses the "Esoteric Papers" in his doctoral dissertation (pgs. 71-83, 172-177) and explains their similarities to traditional Chishti philosophy. Most interesting is the "Book of Instructions" which he speaks about in detail on pages 77-79.
[113] Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010). GhaneaBassiri discusses the prejudices faced by Indians and Muslim in 20th century America, in a subsection entitled *Inayat Khan and the Sufi Order of the West* (127-132) he gives a concise overview of Khan's understanding of how his own Muslimness and skin color affected his reception from Westerners. Further he discusses the racism that Indian immigrants faced more generally between pgs. 181 and 183.
[114] Ernst/Lawrence's chapter "Modern Day Chishti's" (pgs.129-146) focuses most heavily on these shifts and changes that set precedent for and were further continued by *Pirs* of the Inayatian lineage. Notably, "There was some precedent for this, in that certain earlier Chishti masters (notably Kalim Allah) did not require Hindus to convert to Islam as a condition of Sufi initiation. But the concept of a non-Muslim Sufi was the exception rather than the rule." (142)

> know that behind all the different creeds and beliefs there is only one religion. **Behind all the different books is only one truth**, behind all the different means and lives or(?) teacher is only one teacher, call whatever may, Jesus, call Moses, Christ, call Christ, is one and the same. Man not make any difference higher stage, **understand that there is one teacher**, one truth, one religion and there is one God.[115]

HIK brings together all religious and faith traditions here; not only are all souls derivative of the one original source (*nur Christos*) but the innumerable textual traditions and philosophies are also connected with the spirit of intelligence. Not only does every prophetic soul draw their inspiration and being from one original source, but their messages, philosophies, and subsequent texts also derive from that divine source whether it be the soul of Christ, Muhammad, or God himself. This shift is likely inspired by Western universalist tendencies in part, but there are also earlier examples of Chishti *tariqas* meshing non-Islamic materials into their own theological systems, although never to this extent.[116] This innovation allows for a number of outcomes, it further tacitly embraces Christianity, allowing Western *mureeds* to practice a form of Sufism tailored to Western living: free from communal living, strenuous meditative practices, and adjusted to Western social norms.[117] This expansion of acceptable source material allows for the coalescence of numerous elements and philosophies that informed and influenced HIK during his early years, provided the groundwork for the inclusion of numerous ritual elements that occurred when the Order was led by Vilayat, and could be used as a justification for philosophical shifts that were undertaken in attempts to spread Khan's

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[115] Khan, *Part I*, 46. Emphasis is my own.
[116] Lawrence/Ernst note this religious intermixing in *Sufi Martyrs of Love*. Notable passages include: pgs. 67, 97-98, 107-108. See also Footnote 133.
[117] The Westernization of Sufi cultural practices to fit Euro-American societies is briefly discussed on pages 181-182 of Carl Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). See also, Carl Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). pgs. 200, 226-228.

philosophy in Western settings. This embrace of a multitude of religions and philosophies is the starting point from which many critics who take issue with Khan's Universalism and multi-traditionalism begin. If we understand these innovations as a logical extension of centuries of Chishti flexibility and cultural appropriation then one possible continuance of earlier established patterns is the embrace of exterior elements provided by a wholly new religious and cultural context, pushing back against claims of simple Universalism. This precedence exists in the acceptance and homogenization of exterior elements as the Chishti *tariqa* spread in the East. It is certainly possible, and likely, that Khan was embracing Universalist tendencies of the early twentieth century West but, in doing so, he is also continuing the Chishti tradition of integration of non-Islamic but culturally important elements. Khan understood he needed to present his philosophy in a modern, Western setting and an embrace of elements of the fin-de-siècle philosophical milieu provided the best opportunity to present the traditional, philosophical core in an innovative and modern way to engage his new audiences. Far from being an abandonment of traditional Chishti philosophy in the name of Universalism, this was a conscious attempt to maintain the Movement's historical tradition by embracing the philosophy and Western beliefs that best aligned with its teachings in order to spread the divine message to new *mureeds*. If we acknowledge that HIK emphasizes traditional beliefs with small shifts or evolutions (a continuing of tradition in-and-of itself), the core elements of traditional Chishti Sufism are clearly observable. In analyzing HIK's unique perspective on the source of the soul a number of questions arise about the soul's ultimate destination and how it makes it there, concepts intertwined with *nur Christos* in a unique way.

When examining HIK's lectures the term *al-Insan al-Kamil* is never specifically referenced, however, humanities capability to achieve perfection is alluded to on a number of occasions. Here, it is important to understand how HIK explains the goal of the mystic and how one can achieve *fanā'* and *baqā'* or spiritual union with and absorption in the divine, the end goals of the Sufis journey. Khan's lectures are clear in establishing the source of perfection, the divine as manifest in a person's innermost being: "Therefore, the man remains imperfect, but the God part in man seeks for perfection… Man is here on earth for this one purpose, that he may bring that spirit of God in him to discover his own perfection."[118] The way to achieve perfection is to amplify the godliness in oneself and remove human imperfections. In contrast to his heavy use of Christ in places normally reserved for Muhammad, Khan avoids attributing the *ruh* to a specific prophet in sections pertaining to the journey towards ultimate truth (*haqiqah*).[119] The exclusion of Christ in particular here is intriguing because it differs so greatly from his normally pronounced role in Khan's lectures. Why would Khan acknowledge Christ as a divine source, but reference only God when he discusses man's potential for perfection, especially when he acknowledges Muhammad as both source and goal in traditional Chishti Sufism and Christ as Muhammad's replacement in these lectures? Outside of purposeful attempts at ambiguity there seems to be no reason not to use Christ in this role as well. Therefore, I believe that this ambiguity should be attributed to previously mentioned factors underlying much of Khan's teachings namely, attempts

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[118] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 310.

[119] In *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Annemarie Schimmel introduces the concept *haqiqa muhammadiyya*, the archetypal Muhammad who "becomes the working principle in the world." This understanding of *haqiqah* shows how Muhammad serves as goal in traditional Chishti Sufism and provides a great counterpoint to HIK's concerted effort to strip Muhammad from this particular element of the tradition. (pgs. 223-224)

to introduce Eastern concepts to Western practitioners and a desire to build flexibility into the tradition to overcome religious and cultural barriers.

Having established HIKs reluctance to ascribe *al-Insan al-Kamil* to a particular prophet or tradition it makes sense to shift toward comprehending the journey one undertakes to arrive at ultimate truth (*haqiqah*). HIK, remaining ever consistent, seems to take another step towards Universalism here with his unique openness to religious traditions. In a lecture given on February 6, 1926 he declares "And the process of going from limitation to perfection is the process which is called mysticism. Repeating it again, I will say that mysticism means developing from limitation to perfection."[120] Mysticism is the vehicle for one's spiritual journey, Sufism isn't the only path. A practitioner must find a mysticism that works best for themselves and Khan's version is one of many. An additional critical element is a defined set of practices and a cohesive philosophical teaching system. The combination of mystical tradition, coherent philosophy, and performative elements allows one to determine what tradition will be most beneficial to themselves; innovations can, at times, prove critically important because they allow the transference of themes and ideas into new settings, but tradition and its proven practices are critical to the *mureeds* advancement. Khan is highly critical of practitioners who fly in the face of tradition, "In order to make a new fashion he mars that method which was the royal road made by all the wise and thoughtful of all the ages, which will surely take the person to perfection. Safety on the path, success in that path, in that path he is sure."[121] Spiritual perfection can be achieved by fully developing the godliness in oneself through a consistent and defined system of philosophy and meditative practices that Khan

[120] Inayat Khan, *Part I*, 468.
[121] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 302.

considers mysticism more generally, his Chishti Sufism is one option. So, what are the steps one must follow to arrive at *fana'* as presented in the early Inayati tradition?

HIK's most detailed explanation of the steps taken to reach *fana'* comes from a lecture entitled "From Limitation to Perfection," however, it serves more as an outline of the journey than a detailed account of the various *maqamat* and *ahwal* one encounters along the way. Four distinct steps, as well as a potential fifth, precursory step, given titles that align with specific actions or practices a Sufi must undertake are given: Concentration, Contemplation, Meditation, and Realization. Before turning to these steps I'd like to comment quickly on the precursory step, one Khan talks about regularly but never officially establishes, I term it Belief.[122]

HIK regularly stresses the importance of belief in the divine throughout his lecture series emphasizing the importance of God in the lives of all humans. In keeping with his philosophical openness, he embraces an individualistic approach to the divine:

> the wise of old have always said that as many men, so many Gods. Means only one God, but every man his own conception of God. Besides, every man is attached to that God which is conceived in own mind. In a different way one is attached to God as servant or as friend, or as lover, or as worshipper. And therefore, the relation of each person with God is different and no one can understand it except the one who is related with him.[123]

Without belief in the divine and an image of that figure in one's mind, it is impossible to begin journeying down the spiritual path (*tariqa*) because there is nothing to concentrate on or strive for. Without an image to focus upon it is impossible to internalize specific traits or characteristics critical to beginning the spiritual journey. HIKs willingness to accept followers who have embraced and internalized any number of conceptualizations

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[122] The reason he does not spend time discussing it here is relatively obvious, without belief in the divine there is no point in embarking on the path toward unification with the divine.
[123] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 425.

of the divine aligns with his flexibility toward religious backgrounds as long as *mureeds* have both belief and a willingness to embark on the journey to *fanā'*/*baqā'* in conjunction with Inayatian principles. This individualistic and flexible approach to the divine isn't an embrace of Universalistic tendencies, so much as it is a pragmatic and understanding realization that it is impossible for any two individuals to have identical conceptions of the divine. The only way to embrace this individuality is to understand and accept the uniqueness that has been cultivated by an individual's upbringing, cultural background, and religious predilections. Inayatian Sufism is accepting of any number of cultural or religious backgrounds because its members hail from those cultures and backgrounds, not because of any obligation to Universalist principles. It embraces these practices and teachings into its traditional framework because religion and the human experience are uniquely personal and individualistic. Ultimately, HIK shows it is possible to expand and stretch the tradition to include new elements from a wide array of disparate backgrounds because they are compatible with his understanding of mysticism and have precedence in the geographical and philosophical shifts that have occurred in the Chishti tradition and still maintain the core elements of Chishti Sufism. These philosophical shifts lend themselves to criticism as un-Islamic or non-Sufi because, in the West, the resultant accretions are more divergent in Western cultural contexts than in the East where similar accretions occur regularly but don't appear as drastic because of hundreds of years of religious interplay and cultural mixation that have occurred in these Eastern cultures.

Having established Belief as the un-named, albeit wholly necessary first step on HIK's path to *fanā'*, let's turn to the four explicit steps: Concentration, Contemplation, Meditation, and Realization. Concentration, or control of the mind is achieved "by all

manners of exercises, practices which the wise have given to those they have initiated in spiritual, esoteric work."[124] The Inayati path has the same foundations of esoteric practice and *mureed-murshid* relationship that traditional Chishti *tariqas* espouse and both traditions set out the development of concentration of mind as foundational to making progress. Contemplation is developing the ability to solidify an idea or concept in one's mind and focus so keenly on it that it becomes solidified or concrete. Inayat notes in his lectures, and Zia comments in his teachings, how difficult this second stage can be to master, often taking years of practice to perfect. Along with Concentration, these two stages are the most critical, without them there is no foundation upon which to build, "if one has not accomplished concentration in life, one is not able to do contemplation. Therefore, going further is a great mistake unless one has taken the first step in the beginning. In this accomplishment one must not hurry. The impatient one will go further and then come back."[125] The Sufi Movements spiritual path is not a quick fix or guarantee of achieving *fana'*, it is long and arduous, requiring immense amounts of mental preparation, countless hours of performative exercises, and an unquenching thirst for the soul's unification with God.

Once a *mureed* has mastered Contemplation the next *maqam* is Meditation, described as "the raising of the consciousness to a higher plane of existence."[126] Meditation is the further refinement of the mind and the application of its powers of concentration to come closer to the divine. Unfortunately, Khan doesn't expand on this stage more specifically because its description is so similar to earlier *maqam* and is the

[124] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 428.
[125] Ibid., 429.
[126] Ibid., 429.

final stage before Realization, but given the secretive nature of the Movement and difficulties one may face when trying to explain mystical/philosophic concepts in a non-native tongue, the dearth of details and transparency can be understood. Finally, one reaches the *maqam* of Realization: *fana'* or the ultimate truth (*haqiqah*). HIK describes it as "getting in touch with the self and that part of self which represents God. For self-realization is, in other words, spiritual perfection."[127] This equivalence of human self with God is striking because it communicates the connection between and equality of the two in a way that is rarely addressed in Western society, the divine is almost always set in a superior position with humans relationally, so this declaration, while in line with broader Chishti philosophy is eye opening in the context of the lecture being given. It also fits neatly with HIK's understanding of the human-divine relationship as embodied in the *ruh*. HIK ties these concepts more fully together near the end of his American tour stating:

> Some say that we realize God by self-realization. But it is not true. We realize self by the realization of God… The self to which he has wakened from the time of birth, this self which has made within himself, a conception of himself, is most limited… If there is anything that makes him great, it is only the effacing of himself, and the establishing of God in that place… In order to reach spiritual perfection, the first thing is to destroy that false self.[128]

In order to achieve *fana'* one must fully embrace the *ruh* that has been embedded in all individuals by the spirit of intelligence that is *nur Christos* cultivated by the four *maqam* (and belief) along with a number of meditative practices given by a *murshid* to his *mureeds* to eliminate the culmination of impressions (*nafs*) on the *ruh* and fully achieve self-realization of the individual divine that rests in one's fleshy heart (*qalb*) and is

[127] Ibid., 429.
[128] Ibid., 496-497.

represented by the idea of *al-Insan al-Kamil*, the Perfect Man. Although HIK's references to insan al-kamil and fana' are limited, it is clear that these concepts were central to his philosophy. In the absence of formal definitions, HIK's brief remarks on these concepts allow us to gain an impression of what they meant to him..

A complete and systematic philosophy is critical to a religion's makeup but religion by its nature is performative. To ignore HIK's comments on practice would do a disservice to his teachings because practice is so critical to religion generally and Sufism especially. Carl Ernst and Bruce Lawrence, two of the preeminent scholars of Chishti Sufism, do an excellent job of stressing the importance of performative religion and identifying specifically Chishti ritual elements.:

> What is Chishti Sufism? It is both an experience and a memory. It is the experience of remembering God so intensely that the soul is destroyed and resurrected. It is also the memory of those who remembered God, those who were devoted to discipline and prayer, but above all, to remembrance, whether they recited the divine name (*dhikr*) or evoked his presence through song (*sama'*).[129]

In the opinion of Ernst and Lawrence, remembrance of the divine is the single most important element in Chishti Sufism, the ways one engages in and supports the act of remembrance are recitation of the divine names (*dhikr*) and deep emotional longing brought about by music (*sama'*). How does HIK articulate these performative elements of the Inayatian Chishti's?

Throughout the lecture series HIK focuses on *dhikr* far more than he does *sama'* for what, I believe, are purely practical reasons. It is far easier to explain the practical aspects of meditative recitation and the elements involved in this process than it is to explain the evocative emotional responses drawn out of an individual during *sama'* or the

[129] Ernst & Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, 2.

beautiful and quite technical body and head movements, not to mention the underlying psychology. In reading through these transcripts there is one notable mention of practices that could be considered *sama'*: "The Sufis in the East in their meditation have music played that stirs up the emotions to such a degree that the poem they hear becomes a reality. Then comes the reaction, which is relaxation. All that was blocked up, every congestion is broken, and inspiration, power, and a feeling of joy and exaltation come to a person."[130] While hardly a complete overview of *sema'* and its psychological response HIK explains the desired impact of the music and the emotional response that is cultivated, every congestion has been removed and the positive qualities of inspiration, power, joy, and exaltation wash over the Sufi, bringing them ever closer to the inner divine. Although *sama'* is not frequently referenced in these lectures it comes to play a central role in the Inayati Orders modern practices.[131]

What then does HIK say about that other critical performative element of the Chishti, the *dhikr? Dhikr* is far more prevalent in HIK's lectures and far greater detail is provided regarding its technical aspect and the logic behind those practices. HIK compares *dhikr* to science, establishing it as a formula one must follow to progress along the spiritual path, "Sufis called it zikr, as science which has been considered of the greatest importance, to make use of words toward spiritual progress. Prayer is a meditation, a concentration, and a contemplation, which is the first step toward the spiritual goal."[132] These 'words toward spiritual progress' are exactly what one expects,

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[130] Khan, *Part II*, 524.
[131] *Sama'* in the modern Inayati Order is touched on briefly in my ethnographic section. Further argument could be made that Samuel Lewis' Dances of Universal Peace either resemble *sema'* or are a Westernized version of the practice that would help draw another connection between the tradition and its Western offshoots but the limited nature of Lewis and Khan's relationship, and minimal relationship between the Inayati Order and SIRS makes me hesitant to raise that argument.
[132] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 128.

"the sacred names of God" of which "there are perhaps hundred such names… that the mystics use."[133] Khan and Sufi tradition are aligned, both using the ninety-nine names of God in *dhikr*; Khan goes as far as naming them in one of his later lectures: "That is why the teachers gave different prayers, the prayers of God, calling him the judge, the forgiver, most compassionate, most faithful, most beautiful, most loving."[134] This is about as traditional as one can be in presenting *dhikr* to Western audiences, and, while there is clear evidence of shifts that occurred due to Sufism's introduction into a new culture, as well as historical accretions designed to accommodate Western *mureeds*, at its core we see yet another element of Inayatian Sufism that appears remarkably similar to its Eastern roots. Ultimately for HIK, "by repeating the names of God everywhere in the form of prayer, or in zikar… what the mystic does is to waken the spirit of the real idea."[135] *Dhikr*, along with the development of concentration, are the critical elements of performative worship in HIK's presentation of Sufism in its Western context in a way that very much correlates to traditional explications of *dhikr* practice and serves as the ultimate tool for advancement toward *fanā'*.

Two further ritual elements that appear in HIK's lectures merit discussion because they align with traditional understandings of Sufism, they are *baya'* and *baraka*. *Baya'* is critically important because it connects *tariqas* historically and geographically; it is the ritual practice that binds an initiate to a *tariqa* regardless of physical location and to his predecessors in spite of time period, linking him to Muhammad through a recorded *silsila*. Khan notes, "It is that giving hand of which is called initiation."[136] HIK's

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[133] Inayat Khan, *Part I*, 412-413.
[134] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 310.
[135] Ibid., 221.
[136] Inayat Khan, *Part I*, 191.

presentation of *baya'* shows the ritual ties he maintained with his predecessors in the East, and the importance he places on traditional Chishti practices as well as a determined effort to link his Sufism and *mureeds* with their Eastern predecessors. Observation leads me to believe *baya'* or a similar practice is still observed in the modern Order because Pir Zia sat aside time on the final day of Season of the Rose to accept new *mureeds*, but I can't confirm or describe the ritual nature of these initiations because they were undertaken in private. This cohesion between Khan's lectures in relation to the ritualistic elements of the Sufi Movement and the practice of the modern day Inayatis provides a great example of HIK's continuing legacy and the regard Zia has for that legacy, consistently incorporating these practices in the contemporary, providing a rich ritual tradition for his *mureeds*, and still maintaining links to traditional ritual practices.[137]

Khan also acknowledges the legitimacy of *baraka* and tomb cult practices that arose throughout the Indian subcontinent providing further evidence that his Sufism is unique in its ability to simultaneously maintain strong traditional roots and create room for the inclusion of more modern elements that many academics and modern Muslims view as accretions; accretions rooted in both Eastern and Western contexts that have frequently been used by academics an attempts to separate Khan's teachings from its traditional roots. In discussing *baraka* and the growing popularity of tomb worship HIK states,

> Neither Hindu is Muslim nor Muslim is Hindu, is different from one another, feel at home in presence of Sufi. There is brotherhood of religion. Is Sufi dead? Then on the grave they come. They come with flowers as token of that brotherhood in

[137] The performance of *sama',* and, to a lesser extent, *zikr,* at Season of the Rose is one of the main focuses of my ethnographic section. I will try and provide some insight into the various traditions that have been coopted for use by the Inayatis.

> life. Perhaps healing, he gave power, influence he had on particular village, influence of spiritual guidance. But that is apart.[138]

In some Indian settings both Sufi Muslims and non-Muslims celebrate the spiritual presence and power of Sufi masters. While not an active embrace of extra-Islamic practices by Eastern Sufis it does provide an example of the ways that multiple traditions have intermingled under the guise of Sufism historically, as well as the willingness Sufis have shown toward the embrace of members of other religious sects.[139] It is certainly a stretch to say the next logical step after communal saint worship is the embrace of extra-Islamic rituals for use in Sufi practice, but this does show the existence of historical precedence for religious intermingling and the embrace of non-Muslim practitioners. Further still, it is impossible to ignore the cultural context in which HIK was raised and the eclectic religious milieu that influenced nineteenth century India, for more than six hundred years Islam and Hinduism developed side-by-side on the Indian subcontinent resulting in countless conversions and a steady, back-and-forth exchange of ideas.[140] The weight of this history, Khan's diverse religious upbringing, and a new cultural setting helps to show how the embrace of traditionally Western beliefs could become a next logical step in Khan's Inayati philosophy, a philosophy targeted toward predominantly Western, Christian audiences. Chishti Sufism's inherent flexibility and willingness to embrace larger socio-cultural movements helps further support my understanding of

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[138] Khan, *Part I*, 196.

[139] The obvious example here is the Mevlevi's, however, Ernst/Lawrence also talk about the Chishti's trans-creedal influence (2-4) as well as Sayyid Muhammad Zauqi Shah's focus on conversion of non-Muslims (123-127). Also, see, Albera, Dionigi. "'Why Are You Mixing What Cannot Be Mixed?' Shared Devotions in the Monotheisms." History & Anthropology 19, no. 1 (March 2008): 37–59. Who mentions the Mevlevi and Bektashi *tariqas* when discussing syncretism in the Mediterranean region.

[140] J. J. Roy Burman. "Hindu-Muslim Syncretism in India." *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 20 (1996): 1211-215. Accessed June 1, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/4404148. This article does a fantastic job providing an overview of Muslim-Hindu syncretism throughout the subcontinent taking time to briefly discuss the ways that syncretism can be seen in different regions.

Khan's philosophy as an extension of Sufism that has embraced its new Western cultural setting while maintaining close connections with traditional beliefs and practice.[141]

In examining the lectures given by HIK and providing some commentary upon them it is clear to me that, far from being non-Sufi or untrue to the Chishti tradition, HIK's lectures present a philosophical doctrine and performative system that embraces much of the traditional Chishti teachings in which he was trained. The inclusion of Western beliefs and acceptance of non-traditional religious materials is the result of the new cultural setting and appears similar to earlier examples that occurred on the Indian subcontinent, accretions were inevitable when trying to introduce Eastern, Indo-Islamic themes into Western societies where little was known about traditional Islam or Sufism. The obvious references to Universalist ideals, and Khan's promotion of a singular esoteric source for all religions are likely inspired by Blavatskian Theosophy, but also reflect the ways the tradition has spread in new settings, embracing local ritual practices and incorporating philosophical elements best suited to spread the tradition.[142] The introduction of seemingly foreign or incompatible elements into HIK's Sufism is a result of expansion into a new region, yet, he is still able to embrace the foundational philosophy of Chishti Sufism which places an emphasis on the *murshid-mureed* relationship, the interplay of the *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh*, the perfected soul that serves as both source and goal, and the performative elements of *dhikr* and *sama'*. There are certainly

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[141] Ernst & Lawrence lend support to this interpretation writing "The Chishti experience is not limited to Sufis, or Muslims, or South Asians, other audiences have participated in Chishti experience of the divine," while speaking about a number of "outlier" groups among which the Inayati's were not included. (Sufi Martyrs, 2.) general discussion of outlier groups runs between pages 2-5.

[142] Sedgwick notes the connections between HIK and the Theosophical Society in *Western Sufism* on pgs. 162-165. Zia in his dissertation delves deeper into that connection in a subsection entitled *England* (81-118), also writing, "As Inayat Khan moved through the Theosophical Society circuit, his charismatic and visionary qualities attracted considerable attention, and inevitably, many came to see him as the anticipated messiah." (153-154)

shifts that have occurred because of Universalist or Theosophical influences and the language has shifted (Christ as a stand in for Muhammad, 'the spirit' as *ruh*) but the core elements of Chishti philosophy and its major performative practices are clearly visible and mirror their predecessors.

Having shown the ways Inayat Khan presents a Sufism that, at its core, remains true to traditional Chishti performative and philosophical tenants it is time to move forward almost a century to examine the writings and teachings of his grandson *Pir* Zia Inayat Khan. This shift from a study of historical textual content to a contemporary focus on the writings and lectures of Zia is important because the tradition is a living one that has shifted and evolved over the last century as it has been shaped by the Western cultural milieu that surrounds it, a shift I commented upon earlier in this essay that can essentially be condensed into my argument that the Inayati Order is a living tradition that is being acted upon elements that can be attributed to its external Western location as well as its own multifaceted ritualism which is simply another example of countless instances where a tradition integrates elements from the surrounding culture organically allowing it to survive and develop over time.

The shift to ethnography was necessary for several reasons. On a personal level, I wished to challenge myself by undertaking a project with an ethnographic component, which I had not previously attempted. It is impossible for scholars to fully engage with a living tradition and its material without immersing themselves in its environment. Thus, it would have been an oversight on my part to not take the opportunity to engage with the Order's *mureeds* and to try to get a sense of what draws them to the tradition and their sense of the purpose of the Order. Ethnographic observation also serves as a

counterbalance of the earlier studies done by Hermansen, helping provide me with insights that counteract some of her stated claims, which I would not have discovered otherwise. In short, ethnography provides the best opportunity for a researcher to observe and draw conclusions from the philosophy being espoused and the rituals being practiced.

I also wanted to take an ethnographic approach because it is a rarely used tool in studies of Western Sufism. To my knowledge there are two in-depth ethnographic studies in the field: Pnina Werbner's *Pilgrims of Love* (2003), and Merin Shobhana Xavier's *Sacred Spaces and Transnational Networks in American Sufism: Bawa Muhaiyaddeen and Contemporary Shrine Cultures* (2018). Xavier's recent work is largely seen in academia as on the cutting edge, one of the first full length works that engages the philosophical teachings of a Sufi master, the acceptance and adaption of those teachings by followers in different locales, and the ways in which social pressures and community elements impact a movements development.[143] This is a new and (hopefully) growing field of study that offers a lot of room to present more nuanced understandings of traditions that have been understudied for decades. Taking an ethnographic approach was, for me, a combination of a desire to challenge myself and a belief that the best approach was one that engaged the material at its deepest level both textually and in its lived form. I saw this as a new approach, one that best integrates lived experience, historical context, and the external cultural influences that shape religious traditions whether through an active embrace of "non-traditional" elements or the slow, inevitable

[143] Hussien Rashid provides a wonderful summation of the book in the June 2019 addition of the Religious Studies Review.

intermixing that occurs when traditions exists and interact with each other over extended periods of time.[144]

This blend of ethnography and textual study allowed me to draw connections between the material in a way that would not otherwise have been possible. It helps show the similarities in messaging and philosophy that can be seen in the lectures of HIK and Zia, both of whom espouse messages that are packed with Sufi philosophical references even though they do not always identify them as such., It would not have been possible to find these similarities without taking an ethnographic approach, since Zia has written very little on these finer philosophical points. I wanted to see how HIKs original philosophy had changed and been reinterpreted over the years and in order to do so I had to hear Zia speak. While this thesis does not spend significant time discussing Vilayat's contributions to the movement, it is important to recognize that his leadership played a role in connecting the philosophy and teachings of the early period, as represented by HIK, to those of the contemporary period, represented by Zia. His eclecticism and ritual diversity maintained the popularity of the Order with the general public, as well as the importance of the Order in academic discourse. It is doubtful that the Inayati Order would exist today with the contributions of Vilayat. Vilayat's eclecticism and popularity reenergized the movement after years of turmoil following his father's death and allowed the links between his father and Zia to thrive and develop, he seemed to be far more engaged in developing a practice that worked for each individual built upon his father's philosophy than he was in trying to shift the underlying philosophy significantly.[145]

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[144] In writing this I acknowledge I am ignoring William Rory Dickson here but *Living Sufism in North America* takes a leadership heavy approach focusing on philosophy and formal interviews mostly eschewing lived observation and demographics.

[145] With that being said Vilayat is incredibly educated philosophically in his own right.

Perhaps the strongest connection between HIKs early teachings and Zia's philosophy is one that I didn't know existed originally. HIK prescribed a number of traditional practices to his earliest followers and, about the mid 1910s, they seem to disappear from public acknowledgement, I began researching this thesis in part because of references to those papers and their disappearance. I was shocked to find that the existence of these papers had been largely ignored by academics writing about the Order and I wanted to know what happened to them. Zia discusses these papers in his doctoral dissertation, providing an early connection between the Order and its Islamic roots as well as helping connect the two sections of this paper by providing another link between the Order's earliest teachings and the connections I draw from Zia's reintroduction of Sufi language and Islamic concepts. The material in these two sections are connected by their familial ties, philosophical similarities, religious underpinnings, and a vibrant eclecticism that helped the Order survive. The Order's Sufi-ness becomes apparent in spite of its Westernized and Universalized presentation when ethnographic questions and historical-textual analysis are used together to analyze it's philosophy beyond a surface level, cursory approach.

Ethnographic Observations from an Inayati Gathering

In order to understand how Hazrat Inayat Khan's message is being transmitted to *mureeds* in the modern period, I spent time with the Order's *mureeds* and teachers, in order to observe what philosophies and performative practices are being used in contemporary Inayati instruction. During the week of June 26 to July 1, 2019 approximately one hundred individuals affiliated with the Inayati Order met in Portland,

Oregon for one of the Order's annual conferences, the Season of the Rose.[146] The following observations and analysis were collected over this six-day period, and, while limited in scope, provide some key insights. My main focus throughout this section will be the presentation of Inayatian philosophy throughout the week, but I will also briefly discuss the organization's physical makeup, several observations that push back against the academy's view of the Order, and the Sufi ritual and philosophical elements that the Inayati embrace in order to further their spiritual journeys. In acknowledging the complexity of the observers role in ethnographic studies I wanted to establish my approach to the following section: In attending this conference I tried to maintain a delicate balance between participant and observer. I communicated with the conferences organizers before attending to make sure they were ok with my attendance and knew my purpose for being there which they approved of. While at the conference I participated in or sat in on all possible lectures and activities. I was open with participants about my purpose as a researcher and had a number of pleasant conversations with attendees about my research and the experiences and knowledge they have acquired during their time spent practicing the Inayatian Sufism presented at the Conference Due to the financial costs of the trip, which I discuss in more detail on the next page, I took advantage of a scholarship offered by the Order that allowed me to subsidize the cost so I could be in attendance. The scholarship was available to anyone who fit in the Order's "young adult" category, roughly anyone under the age of forty, and was meant to make it easier for

[146] In 2015 The Inayati's "Summer Camp" was renamed the Season of the Rose based on the summer school model initiated by Hazrat Inayat Khan in Suresnes, France in the 1920s. See page 12 of the following linked pdf: https://inayatiorder.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/InayatiOrder_AnnualRpt_2015_FINAL_LOW.pdf. I haven't been able to dig up any more information surrounding the events origins or history but I expect these "Summer Camps" date back to at least the start of the twenty first century, if not before that.

those who couldn't readily afford the cost outright to attend by covering about half of the attendance/room and board fees. I know of at least three other attendees who took advantage of the scholarship opportunity. Applying for it was incredibly simple, I corresponded with Jennifer Alia Wittman, the Order's Executive Director, who had been my contact in previous communications with the Order and was fully aware of the academic reason for my attendance. I can state with full confidence that this scholarship has not influenced my research. My textual research predates the conference and any notes that I have ascertained from this conference, aside from anecdotes which I indicate using throughout, can be heard via audio recordings that are accessible on the Orders website.

The following ethnographic observations, specifically in regards to demographic claims are, unfortunately, not extremely scientific. The above claims are based solely on my observations because the Order does not maintain a record of their membership and its demographics and, because this was the first time I was interacting with many of these individuals because, I wasn't comfortable asking questions as personal as necessary to get an entirely concrete understanding of their socio-economic status, age, or race. These are my best estimates based upon personal observations. The Inayati Order under Zia's leadership tends to be comprised of older, middle- or upper middle-class, and white practitioners. By my count, there was one Black attendee and four or five others of non-white descent (Middle Eastern/Persian and Latino). The participants were largely above the age of fifty. I counted, at most, fifteen people under the age of forty-five who spent some time at the conference throughout the week, a number that can be halved when accounting for those who attended and participated in the majority of the week's lectures

and activities.[147] Socioeconomically, it was apparent that this group trends middle- to upper middle-class; outside of the young adults, to whom scholarships were readily available, everyone was well dressed, and many had travelled quite some distance. I met people who had traveled from New Mexico, California, Vancouver, Virginia, and Washington state to attend. Furthermore, event prices were costly; without a scholarship, tickets ranged from $408 for three-day commuters up to $975 for a private room for five days. While tickets included meals, it is hard to envision someone who is not financially secure spending costs of this kind to attend. The attendees I met seemed to be primarily a financially stable, older group of white men and women from a variety of communities throughout the United States, although most in attendance were local to the Pacific North West, particularly Seattle, Washington, and Eugene and Portland, Oregon.

Before focusing on Inayati philosophy and performative elements as they were presented at Season of the Rose, I would like to briefly discuss two observations that both surprised me personally and brought into question several claims that have been made by academics. Members were both extremely knowledgeable of Sufi philosophy and literature beyond the Order itself and maintained a lengthy affiliation with the Order. I recognize that the people who chose to attend this conference were more likely to represent these attributes than others who may be more loosely affiliated with the Order. I was genuinely impressed with both attendees' overall level of knowledge regarding traditional philosophy and its teachers, and the dedication and commitment undertaken to attend. Contrary to assertions made by Marcia Hermansen and others regarding the

[147] There was a local contingent who only attend from Friday night through midday Sunday which is where the additional six or seven young adults came from. This specific info was gathered by attending "young adult" events, held every day in which the age limit was forty-five.

transient nature of many new age movements, at least three *mureeds* with whom I spoke had been associated with the Order since the 1970s; several more expressed an admiration for and connection with Pir Vilayat, a brilliant spiritual guide, who passed away in June of 2004.[148] This observation surprised me because of Hermansen's claims regarding the transience and 'baraka-surfing' attitude she associated with many practitioners of new age movements and their Gurus, Shaykhs, and Swamis.[149] There were obvious examples of this 'baraka-surfing' stereotype; several attendees were affiliated with Sufi Ruhaniat International,[150] and one individual spent his time with the group as a quick stop between a Sun Dance ceremony in Nashville and an ayahuasca ceremony somewhere on the West coast.[151] In general, there was reverence and respect for the teachings of Zia, Vilayat, and their ancestors that can be seen in the depth of the commitments given by *mureeds* who put their faith in the message.

A second observation that helps further correct the academic discourse in regards to Western *mureeds* being uninformed or uninterested in Sufi philosophy is seen in the *mureeds* familiarity with the tradition, these *mureeds* were deeply knowledgeable of traditional Sufi texts, language, and historical figures. One female *mureed* mentioned that al-Ghazali's writings were the texts that led her to Sufism. Another male *mureed* had a

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[148] Hermansen focuses on the differing characteristics in Sufi groups in the "Membership and Relationship to Islam" section of In the Garden of American Sufi Movements: Hybrids and Perennials, pgs. 156-158.
[149] Hermansen describes individuals who baraka-surf as people "looking for the most powerful wave of charismatic spiritual leadership and community available at a given time." (Hermansen, *In the Garden,* 158).
[150] Formerly known as Sufi Islamia Ruhaniat Society (S.I.R.S.), founded and led by Murshid Samuel Lewis.
[151] I use the term 'baraka-chasing' here to identify individuals who are more concerned with the feelings imparted to them by a specific master than they are in finding a school or system that helps them achieve their goals. It is a comment on the transient characteristic that has been assigned too many 'New Age' or 'Hippy' practitioners whose greatest concern was chasing a spiritual high and were unwilling to put in the hard work to stick with a particular spiritual system.

copy of ibn al-Arabi's *The Meccan Illuminations* he had begun to read.[152] This desire to become knowledgeable of masters like al-Ghazali and ibn al-Arabi, and their works, shows the time and energy *mureeds* are willing to invest to understand dense philosophical texts and treatises in an attempt to gain deeper philosophical knowledge and loftier spiritual heights, a sharp contrast from 'baraka-surfing' or fast track approaches to divine gnosis. Less concrete, but still informative, is the familiarity *mureeds* showed to masters like al-Farghani, Jalal al-Din Rumi, and, of course, Hazrat Inayat Khan, and their works. This familiarity helps reorient academic discourse and also sheds some light on the transcultural, transhistorical approach of the Inayattiya, reaching across the Muslim world and drawing from different historical periods to gather as much material as possible to help facilitate their spiritual journey. These are not simply *mureeds* desiring the teachings of the Inayati *Pirs*; their longing for gnosis is deep, varied, and active, propelled by a desire to become more knowledgeable of Sufism and attain finer stages of gnosis.

While a desire for, and familiarity with, Sufi philosophy can be observed in the actions of various Inayati members, it is not limited to traditional Islamic sources alone, as Zia shows in the interpretations he makes in *Mingled Waters*, purposefully linking different religious traditions to the Inayati Order and Sufi beliefs. This expansive inclusion was regularly discussed throughout the conference, and two quotes in particular do the best job of explaining this embrace of non-Islamic sources to support and enhance Sufi spiritual goals. In a morning lecture on June 29, Zia states, "different religions have different forms, languages, and each possesses a knowledge that is special, and one

[152] I am almost certain it was the Chittick/Morris/Chadkiewicz version published in 2014 as a set but I did not get a clear look at the cover.

cannot be reduced to another, they are not the same… and yet they are all part of the one enterprise which is the communication of the experience of divinity."[153] Zia believes there is a universal element that makes up the very core of every religion, that connects them despite their external conflicts and differences, an element also seen in his grandfather's explications of Inayati philosophy. This Universalism however, rests on a solid foundation Sufi philosophy and knowledge as shown in my "Traditional Chishti Elements" section, and later in this section as well.

Amida Cary, a conference lecturer, in discussing the inclusion of practices from a variety of traditions, does a great job explaining why non-Islamic sources have been so readily embraced by the Inayati generally, and Pir Vilayat in particular:

> When he (Vilayat) was teaching… he would create these huge charts that linked practices from the different traditions… I don't think he could keep the wealth of all these other traditions away from our experience, so he would bring them in. He would bring in Tibetan Buddhist practices, he would bring in things from the ancient Sufis, he would bring in Christian practices.[154]

The inclusion of non-Islamic teachings and practices was meant specifically to enhance the Sufi experience, not to remove or replace its traditional underpinnings. This cooptation has historical precedence that dates to Sufism's earliest years, a process that usually occurred because of culture mixation or active embrace of elements that would serve spiritual purposes, as discussed earlier in this thesis and in Ernst and Lawrence's *Sufi Martyrs of Love*.[155] This rapid introduction of disparate elements stands in contrast with earlier, similar patterns, although that can be attributed to, in part, the sheer amount

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[153] Zia Inayat Khan, "Community *Suhbat*-The Ten Sufi Thoughts: Number Four," June 29, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 23:35-24:20, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.
[154] Amida Cary, "Breakout Group," June 28, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 35:10-36:40, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.
[155] See Footnote 107 for details from Ernst and Lawrence.

of information that is now available in the modern, globalized world. These enhancements, in combination with HIK's use of Western, Christian language and terminology, have led many in the Academy to deemphasize or ignore entirely the traditional elements upon which Inayatian philosophy is built and have contributed to the commonly held belief that Inayatian Sufism is simply a Universalist tradition. This conclusion ignores the Sufi philosophy espoused by HIK, Vilayat Khan, and the lecturers of Season of the Rose. It is to this philosophy that we now turn.

Lecturers throughout the week did an excellent job of centering their talks squarely upon the tradition of Sufism, using language that would be recognizable in a college lecture hall. In two separate lectures given on June 27, Tasnim Fernandez identifies *fitra* as "the divine original condition, your original nature, which had no label,"[156] identifying the source and goal of the Sufi. She also mentions that the *Insan al-Kamil*, the purpose of Sufism is, "This *insan*, this person, having cleared their associations and identifications… cleans the mirror of the heart, with that first sweep of negation, *la illaha*, 'there is not any idol'… now there's space for *illa allah*, the declaration of the affirmation. Only God."[157] Here Tasnim is presenting a concise explanation of the process a *mureed* undergoes to achieve direct connection with the divine, while simultaneously drawing upon the traditional 'soul as mirror' trope, which can be found in literature across the Islamic world. Cheikh Sufi gives a nuanced and thoughtful explanation of *ahwals* and *maqams*, probably the clearest I have ever heard,

> A *maqam* is a permanent station and a hal is a flash of light, the master said in between *Maqam* I… and *Maqam* II, there's a place here called a hal. When you

[156] Tasnim Fernandez, "Breakout Group," June 27, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 15:00-15:26, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.
[157] Tasnim Fernandez, "*Sama* and *Suhbat*," June 27, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 9:40-12:25, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.

> get in between stations a flood of light will come from the station you are going to and it's too much for your nervous system… imagine your heart is full of gasoline… One of God's names or a spark will come… hit the heart and then *whoosh*, the gas will turn into flames and erupt, this is what we call the hal.[158]

These excerpts show there is a clear and accurate understanding of Sufism being presented to *mureeds* on a day-to-day basis, one that aligns with both the academic interpretation of Sufism, and its understanding in traditionally Islamic contexts. The most informative examples of this comprehensive and historically accurate presentation of Sufism can be found in two lectures given by Pir Zia himself. These lectures manage to connect traditional Sufi philosophical thought directly with the language used by HIK in his 1925-1926 lecture series in a tangible way.

In an afternoon lecture on June 29, Zia discusses the intricacies of initiation into the Inayati Order by stating, "In Sufism there are… two major kinds of initiation… one is called *bayati tabaruk*, initiation of blessing, and this may be undertaken if one feels a sincere… friendship and companionship with the community of those who travel a certain path together."[159] Zia and the Inayatis distinguish between *mureeds* and affiliates in a way that is very similar to localized Sufism in the Muslim world. Many local community members are closely associated with various tariqas and receive the blessings of that relationship but are not *mureeds* of the Order and do not participate directly in spiritual study.[160] Similarities in initiatory practices extend further in regard to participation in spiritual study, which requires a second, deeper initiation: "*bayati haqiqat*

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[158] Zia Inayat Khan and Cheikh Sufi, "*Sama* and *Suhbat*," June 29, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 19:12-21:50, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.
[159] Zia Inayat Khan, "Afternoon Session," June 29, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 3:40-5:50, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.
[160] Schimmel discusses these different levels of affiliation in Sufi Orders in *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pages 239-241.

(allows one to) enter the esoteric school and become a *mureed*."[161] This second, more intimate initiation, is for "those who wish to undergo focused spiritual study with a mentor through daily practice… pursuing that internal curriculum of concentration, contemplation, meditation, and realization that constitutes the *inner journey*, if the definite resolution is there… then initiation means the opening of a door."[162] Zia presents a nuanced understanding of initiation that aligns with traditional Sufi practice, allows for affiliation with and membership in the Order, and uses Arabic terms, resulting in an accurate and comprehensive explanation of the Inayati Order that fits both its nontraditional setting and its non-Western roots.

Zia further concretizes the philosophical connections between the Inayati Order and its Indian, Chishti roots in a lecture on June 30, where he discusses the 'inner journey.' The inner journey is the "process of suspending the manifestations of the ego, making oneself transparent, and… witnessing the I in every other."[163] This journey is made up of four great stages, the *shariat*, *tariqat*, *haqiqat*, and *marifat*, "which designate four great stages on the path… (and) also correspond to concentration, contemplation, meditation, and realization."[164] This lecture connects modern Inayati teaching to the traditional Sufi practice of *riyada* (training the soul to accept Sufism/its principles) [165] through the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan and is best explicated in his lecture "From Limitation to Perfection," a focal point of my earlier section "Traditional Chishti

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[161] Zia Inayat Khan, "Afternoon Session," June 29, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 11:57-12:35, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/. Words added for clarity.
[162] Ibid. 9:13-11:40. Emphasis is my own.
[163] Zia Inayat Khan, "Morning Session," June 30, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 14:40-15:10, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.
[164] Ibid., 18:34-19:30. Word added for clarity.
[165] Chittick provides a simple and accurate explanation of *riyada* on page 181 of *Faith and Practice in Islam*.

Elements in the Lectures of Hazrat Inayat Khan".[166] In introducing *shariat*, or concentration, Zia states "*shariat* means the broad way… observing the law of that balance, punctiliously… (finding) a way of life that is balanced, that is reciprocal… In the way of *riazat* it begins with concentration. Concentration means no more madly acting on impulses… to have the capacity to be in silence… without having to grasp at something to fill the void."[167] *Shariat*/concentration is both the 'broad way' upon which we all travel, and "a purification… from the lower qualities and the turpitude of the soul."[168] It is the minimum, prescribed guidelines that an individual is required to follow in order to meet the basic rules and requirements of their chosen religious sect and serves as the starting point for one's heart and mind to begin traveling the path to *marifat*.

Tariqat, or contemplation, is the second great stage on the path. Zia explains its purpose and historical connections thusly, "tariqat means the way, the path… tariqat means that when one reaches a certain aspiration and intention, one pursues it through allegiance to the current of guidance that has come down through the ages… in a silsila or chain of links in which one seeks out and finds guidance on the path… and undergoes the path of discipleship."[169] *Tariqat*, or contemplation, is the pursuance of a deeper, more intimate connection with the divine by joining oneself to an order and path of discipleship; for these *mureeds*, that order is the Inayati. It is that historical linkage that brings Zia, Vilayat, HIK, and their *mureeds* together and joins them with their Indian forefathers the Chishtiyya. Further still, contemplation/*tariqat* is

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[166] Inayat Khan, *Part II*, 419-430.
[167] Zia Inayat Khan, "Morning Session," June 30, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 20:45-23:59, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/. Found was changed to finding.
[168] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 16.
[169] Zia Inayat Khan, "Morning Session," June 30, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 27:38-30:10, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.

> one's life… reoriented away from the fear and appetites of the ego toward the soul… not only does one focus on a point or image, but with stillness one is able to hold in the mind, hold in the heart… a quality, an attribute of the divine nature and one discovers that one's mind is constituted by one's state and one learns to access a state… to reside in it… and then arise to a further state.[170]

Contemplation/*tariqat* is the refinement of an individual's psyche and development of one's connection with the divine, through study and practice under the guidance of a *Murshid* or *Pir*. The *dhikr* and *sama'* practices of a *tariqa* are the performative ritual elements that help *mureeds* visualize and internalize the attributes of the divine through numerous *maqam* to finer stages on the path before achieving complete love for the divine and the realization that everything is the divine.

At the completion of this journey towards realization of the divine the *mureed* reaches *haqiqat*, "the reality," or "God Himself."[171] Traditionally, *haqiqat* is described as the realization that the divine is the only reality, everything is God's pure essence.[172] Zia describes *haqiqat* thusly

> haqiqat… is found in meditation beyond contemplation. In contemplation, one is moving through ideas, through qualities, but the essence of all qualities is pure essence… and in meditation… one's consciousness is resorbed into… the pure intelligence which is the source of all forms, and there is, in the culmination of that, unity. There is no(t) even knowledge anymore just pure witnessing in which the witness and witnessed are effaced.[173]

For Zia here, *haqiqat*, or meditation beyond contemplation, is the realization of union with the divine. It is the complete removal of any human traits or egoic qualities. When the Sufi has achieved *haqiqat* he has managed to become completely enveloped by the

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[170] Ibid., 30:25-31:37.
[171] Chittick, *Faith and Practice of Islam*, 181.
[172] Schimmel in *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* writes: " 'The shari'a are my words [*aqwali*], the tariqa are my actions [*a'mali*], and the *haqiqa* is my interior states [*ahwali*].' *Shari'a, tariqa,* and *haqiqa* are mutually interdependent." (99)
[173] Zia Inayat Khan, "Morning Session," June 30, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 33:49-36:02 https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.

pure essence of the divine, nothing separates himself from the divine or any other things, all are one. This understanding of *haqiqat* is an interesting one because it groups together two traditional philosophical principles under one concept, a move we see occur with Zia's presentation of *marifat* as well. I think it is clear that *haqiqat* is being described here but I also believe the description encapsulates the concept of *fanā' al-fana*, "passing away from all states and subsisting through divine subsistence."[174] For Zia, *haqiqat* is not simply the realization of God himself, it is the complete annihilation of all human qualities and complete loss of anything other than the divine; it is both the realization of the wholeness of divine reality, and an inability to process anything but the divine. I believe Zia groups these two concepts together because *haqiqat* serves well as an overarching idea that can include union with divine and the totalized annihilation in the divine that is *fanā' al-fana*. Zia's description of *marifat* shows a similarly aggregational approach.

> Zia describes *marifat*, the last of the four great stages as
>
> > the renewal of name and form after its effacement… (where) consciousness fluctuates between unity and multiplicity… one is lifted up again into… the abundance of the divine manifestation, which is the expression of ishq-allahi, the longing for manifestation and the intimacy of love in manifestation… and so one is brought to that station which is called marifat, and which we call… realization after meditation… In meditation, one's state is that of formlessness… in realization form and no form at once.[175]

[174] Alireza Ebrahim, and M.I. Waley. 'Fanāʾ and Baqāʾ'. In *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, edited by Wilferd Madelung and Farhad Daftary. Accessed August 31, 2020. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-9831_isla_COM_036097.

[175] Zia Inayat Khan, "Morning Session," June 30, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 37:14-39:50, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.

Again, Zia appears to be combining two concepts under the overarching theme of 'realization' or *marifat* in a manner similar to his explanation of *haqiqat*. Realization, as described here, is remarkably similar to Chittick's explanation of *marifat*,

> *marifa*… literally means 'knowledge' or 'recognition,' however the term connotes a special, deeper knowledge of things that can only be achieved by personal transformation… it is already present in the heart, but it is hidden deep beneath the dross of ignorance, forgetfulness, outwardly oriented activity, and rational articulation. Access to this knowledge comes only by following the path that leads to human perfection.[176]

Marifat, or realization, is the knowledge of the divine achieved through personal transformation using the techniques and teachings of a particular *tariqa*; it is the complete realization of a *mureed's* relationship with the divine wherein one realizes that everything is both wholly unified in, and a multiplicity of, the divine. It is the understanding that while everything has its individual form, these forms are nothing more than individual expressions of the divine whole. The second element represented by the Inayati presentation of *marifat* is *baqā*. Schimmel, relying on Toshihiko Izutsu, best describes *baqā* as " 'persistence' or 'subsistence' in God… 'Man is resuscitated out of the nothingness, completely transformed into an absolute Self. The multiplicity becomes visible again-but in a changed form, namely as determinations of the one Reality.' In this state, the mystic acts completely through God."[177] Zia also focuses on this process of self-renewal in a realized state where the *mureed* has eliminated all impressions on the soul and achieved unity with the divine. It is in this stage or state of realization that man has completed the transformation of his soul so thoroughly that he has attained *marifat*, gnosis, complete knowledge of the divine; he has become subsistent in God, acting

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[176] Chittick, *Sufism: A Beginner's Guide*, 50-51.
[177] Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 143-144.

completely through him, achieving *baqā*. Realization represents both complete realization of the divine and the *mureed's* renewal in the divine.

The semi-hybrid nature of the Inayati Order can be observed in its ritual and performative practices much the same as seen in its philosophy. The number of different cultural influences in relation to nightly *sama's* and the presence of traditional *dhikr* in many of the lectures was informative in that regard. During an evening session on June 28, several *mureeds* led or performed *sama's*, that varied tremendously. A female, Iranian *mureed* led a Persian *sama'* which was contrasted by an older American man who performed an original song accompanied by blues guitar, a Middle Eastern or Turkish *mureed* led what he referred to as a 'darwish *zhikr*' that was later followed up by an operatic performance of an original piece by Hazrat's brother, Maheboob Khan. This contrast between performances with roots in the Islamic world and presentations that are clearly rooted in Western culture speaks to the wide variety of disparate influences and the accepting nature of the Order and its members. On June 30, there was a "youth-led" *dhikr*/*sama'* with a mixture of English-language poems and songs that were chanted or sung, and more traditional Islamic *dhikrs/sama's*, that were accompanied by drums. On June 27, the *sama'* was much more traditional; invocations, including some of the ninety-nine names and the Shahadah were chanted as two exterior groups formed up and swayed in time; inside the circle, a *mureed* performed a traditional Mevlevi turning. These *sama's*, held nightly, are a great indication of the complexity of the Order's cultural influences. Zia is delicately attempting to allow the inclusion of any number of disparate elements into this philosophical worldview, hoping to support the achievement of his *mureeds*. The underlying theme of Western individualism is clear in these practices,

simply by their sheer diversity. Whatever will help an individual proceed further along the path is acceptable as long as it does not abandon the traditions philosophical principles, break any ethical standards or government laws.

While *sama'* practices were far more individualized and culturally variable, *dhikr* was much more traditional and occurred with similar frequency. Of the five major lecturers at the conference, four of them led *dhikr* in their individual lectures, three of those on multiple occasions. *Dhikr* was always performed as it would be in the Muslim world: chanted, in Arabic, reciting one of the ninety-nine names, the Shahadah, or another traditional formula, in sets of eleven or multiples of eleven, and with circumambulating head movements. Inayatian *dhikr* is as close to its non-Western counterparts in substance, language, and action as possible with the one possible exception being the moments in which a female leader led a group composed of both female and male *mureeds*. The rigidity and traditional approach that members of the Inayati Order take when practicing *dhikr* show how important they find it, and how fundamental it is to their faith practices. This familiarity and desire for a strict, traditional approach to the single most important performative ritual in Sufism across the globe further confirms my belief and claims that traditional Sufi principles are foundational to the philosophy and ritual practice of the Order.[178]

One final ritual bears discussion because of its uniqueness and position of importance in the Order, Universal Worship. In her session on June 30, Tasnim Fernandez described the material elements of the ritual by stating, "At our universal

[178] Specific examples of *sema'* and *dhikr* practices can be found in the following lectures: Breakout Group with Cheikh Sufi, June 27, 2019; Breakout Group with Devi Tide, June 27, 2019; Sama & Suhbat with Devi Tide, June 27, 2019; and all of the Morning Session's led by Pir Zia except July 1.

worship altar we have a table… likewise tangible scriptures on the altar and candles of wax, and we see the objects, and there's a ritual, and the ritual is enacted and repeated."[179] Universal Worship is striking in its contrast with the Order's other ritual practices because of how closely it mirrors traditional Christian worship.[180] There is an altar covered in a white table cloth, ritually lit candles, the reading of scriptural passages, prayers to God in the name of religion, and the Inayati equivalent of a sermon delivered by Pir Zia. This outward appearance makes sense given the service's creation by HIK in the early twentieth century; it allowed Khan to introduce non-Christian themes and teachings in a setting that would feel familiar to the majority of his *mureeds*.

The movement away from these traditional Christian objects occurs when you look beyond the elements on display and examine the content being explicated during worship; it is then that a key Universalistic element is revealed. The Worship itself is broken up into three main parts: a candle lighting ceremony accompanied by a prayer honoring the Hindu, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions; scriptural recitation from each of these traditions, the content specifically focusing on religious founders and prophetic messengers; and, what I refer to as a sermon, given by Zia. This sermon focuses specifically on the faith leaders mentioned in the scriptural readings much in the same way sermons build off scriptural readings in a Christian worship service.[181] The content of this sermon and scriptural readings are key because

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[179] Tasnim Fernandez, "Breakout Group," June 30, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 32:59-33:26, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.
[180] Zia in *Hybrid Sufi Movement*, (pgs. 130-134), traces the Universal Worships Christian-esque elements to the Liberal Catholic Church a small sect of the Independent Catholic Movement that draws much of its practice from the Catholic Church and was philosophically informed by the Theosophical Society; one of its founders, J.I. Wedgewood, was an Anglican priest before he left the church, he later became a high-ranking member of the Theosophical Society.
[181] Zia Inayat Khan, "Universal Worship," June 30, 2019, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, Online recording, 23:40-40:11, https://inayatiorder.org/course/season-rose-2019-audio/.

there are two layers of meaning, aside from the exterior, Christian material elements. In looking back to HIK's lectures, I noted the importance he places on the *Insan al-Kamil* as the core element that connects all religious leaders and their prophetic messages; it is this divine spark or *al-Insan al-Kamil* that serves as the Universalist core element of the religions referenced during the service. The key philosophical element of Inayatian Sufism and the divine inspiration for Sufism globally is identified as the Universalist element that unifies these non-Islamic traditions together in the Inayati Order and the Universal Worship.

Universal Worship, for me, is the single most illuminating example of the three major components that have influenced the Inayatiyya and its *Pirs*: Sufism, Universalism, and Western Culture. HIK embraces Western Christian imagery and structure, relying on familiar items like candles, a white table cloth, and an altar. He organizes the service in a way that mirrors a Catholic mass where candles are lit in conjunction with prayers and the scriptural passages read serve as a foundation for the delivered sermon. The presence of Universalism is best observed in the Order's embrace of religious figures and scriptures that vary as significantly as Zoroastrianism and Christianity, a group of philosophies and prophetic traditions that are incredibly diverse but that can be conjoined by one underlying core element or source, the *insan al-kamil*.

While not explicitly named during Universal Worship, *Insan al-Kamil* is a key Sufi philosophical tenant; it is both the inspiration of all messages and messengers, and the source of all of humanity's divine spark. It is the driving force, and ultimate goal, for many Islamic Sufi *tariqas*. The Inayatis have expanded the role of *Insan al-Kamil* to encompass a variety of new, non-Islamic traditions in a broader and more accelerated

process than seen before but one with historical precedent. This historical expansion can be seen in the active and passive embrace of non-Islamic elements by *tariqas* throughout the Muslim world as orders expanded regionally, interacted with other religious traditions, and embraced beliefs or practices they felt would further their journey in search of unity with the divine. This expansion has been influenced, in part, by the Order's Universalist tendencies, but advancements in technology have allowed for the rapid dissemination of knowledge globally, and the Order's willing embrace of Western individualism has also had a hand in this rapid envelopment of disparate and unique material.[182]

The observations I made during the Season of the Rose conference help further connect the Inayati with their traditional Indian, Chishti roots and help challenge some widely held academic assumptions. Far from the transient, 'baraka-surfing' individuals Hermansen describes as *mureeds* of Perennial Sufi Orders, these *mureeds* are knowledgeable of Sufi masters and their teachings, and have maintained long-term affiliations with the Order, many that extend twenty years or more.[183] Zia, and other leaders, present a complex philosophy that combines a Universalist tendency to embrace a variety of religious traditions with a tacit acceptance of individualism in the hopes that every *mureed* can achieve *marifat*, all of which is built on a strong foundation of Sufi philosophy and practice. The modern iteration of this philosophy shares a direct link from Zia to the teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan through the language used and philosophy presented, which in turn correlates with traditional Chishti understandings of many of

[182] These observations are taken from my personal notes, and a re-listening to the Universal Worship recording from June 30, 2019.

those same concepts. These lectures, and my observations, show the shared philosophical and performative elements that the Inayati Order has been built upon, and they are *dhikr*, *bayat*, the *Insan al-Kamil*, and the grouping of *shariat*, *tariqat*, *haqiqat*, and *marifat*.

While Hermansen labels the Inayati Order a Perennial Sufi movement because of its Universalist tendencies and deemphasis of traditionally Sufi and Islamic content, the observations I made at the Season of the Rose conference lead me to abandon her organizational system entirely. My observations show the clear and present influence of traditional Sufi and Islamic philosophy Hermansen attributes to groups she categorizes as Hybrid as well as obvious elements of Universalism and an embrace of non-Islamic ritual practices she ascribes to Perennial Sufi Orders. In understanding how or where the Inayati Order fits in the Western Islamic milieu of the twentieth and twenty first centuries it is important to acknowledge the lack of pure traditions that can be typified in any manageable way., I find it necessary to abandon Hermansen's Hybrid/Perennial categorization and instead accept Dickson's approach, in which each tradition exists on a spectrum that ranges from very traditional to very contemporary or Universalist, but still draws on elements from both ends of that spectrum.[184] It is impossible to typologize a particular religious tradition or sect because they are constantly shifting and evolving in an attempt to embrace external cultural elements and new settings, a necessity if the tradition wants to survive. Ultimately my observations lead me to believe that Zia has built upon the teachings and philosophy of his predecessors, developing a tradition and philosophy that embraces both ends of Dickson's spectrum, he presents a traditional

[184] Dickson provides a great overview of this spectrum of Sufism in the introductory section of *Living Sufism in North America*, pages 1-11 are particularly critical to understanding his presentation of Sufism's diversity and tradition more generally, and his research approach.

Chishti understanding of Sufi philosophy in a highly modernized, Western way, embracing a Universalist linguistic framework because it is familiar to the Order's followers and provides a level of comfort and familiarity to Western practitioners that wouldn't otherwise be available.

Sufi Universalism in Mingled Waters

Zia's primary goal in writing *Mingled Waters* is to connect the religious traditions celebrated in the Universal Worship with traditional understandings of Sufism under the broader auspices of the Inayati Order. He approaches this task by drawing connections between similar philosophical beliefs and focusing on shared histories and religious figures. This approach is centered on a Universalistic framework, which Zia notes on the first page of his introduction, "Exoteric distinctions tend to obscure the esoteric reality that the source and goal of all religions is the same."[185] For Zia, that core universal element is Sufism itself and the quest for reconciliation and reconnection with God through Sufism, not any Western or Christian doctrine because "The Sufi's religion is God."[186] If 'God' is simultaneously the religion of the Sufis and the source and goal of all religions, then every religious tradition contains Sufism or elements of Sufism because every religion contains some iteration of the divine or a final desired goal. While never explicitly stated, the language Zia uses is remarkably similar to explications of the *Nur Muhammad* as both source and goal. Zia has simply taken a liberal approach to this interpretation writing "All revelations descend from the One and reveal the presence of

[185] Zia Inayat Khan, *Mingled Waters*, xi.
[186] Ibid., xii.

the One. Understanding this, the Sufi makes no distinction between God's messages, which are in reality one Message."[187] Zia has taken the *Nur Muhammad* and 'People of the Book' concepts to include all the world's religious traditions and, in doing so, connected them to his Sufi philosophy. The following pages are a brief examination of the connections Zia posits between these six traditions and Sufism that I hope provides further insight into his understanding and presentation of what I call Sufi Universalism; *Mingled Waters* also brings Islam into the conversation in a way that previous source material has not allowed for.

Zia begins the process of centralizing Sufism by focusing on a number of Sufi masters, including Baba Farid, Khvaja Mu'in ad-Din, and Dara Shikuh, and their embrace of Hindu elements like Nath Panthi yoga, the creation of a 'Hindavi invocation,' and the study and translation of a variety of Hindu texts.[188] He notes that these interreligious exchanges occur more frequently as we move closer to the contemporary period drawing particular attention to Shah Muhammad Taqi Niyazi (d. 1968), "whose teachings contained allusions to the Upanishads and to various yogic disciples, (who) glossed yoga as *suluk*, or 'travel,' "[189] and Khvaja Hasan Nizami (d.1955), "who wrote a biography of Krishna and an introduction to Hinduism, (and) defined yoga as 'the science of Sufism and dervishhood.' "[190] A heavy focus is placed on historical connections because of these exchanges. These religio-cultural exchanges are important because traditions, by the very nature of their longevity and physical geography, are in a constant state of reinvention, being influenced and affected by the cultural, historical, and creative

[187] Ibid., xii.
[188] Ibid., 4-9 focuses of the numerous and varied connections between Chishti *Shaykhs* and Hinduism.
[189] Ibid., 8.
[190] Ibid., 8.

elements that surround them. In the Chishti context, this has been occurring since Islam's earliest interactions with Hinduism in the thirteenth century, "From the outset Indian Sufism developed in dialogue with Hindu traditions."[191] This regular exchange of dialogue led to the creation and embrace of new philosophical and performative elements in both traditions into the modern period and serves as one of the two main elements Zia highlights in his efforts to bring Hinduism into the fold of Sufi Universalism.

In trying to provide further evidence of deep connections between Hinduism and Sufism, Zia points to a number of similarities between the two traditions philosophically. In examining the work of Dara Shikuh, Zia notes the connection Shikuh makes between the *jiv-atman* and the Muhammadan Reality, "From love the Great Soul appeared, which is to say the *jiv-atman*… This alludes to the universal soul of the Chief of the Prophets, upon whom be peace and blessings."[192] He also invokes the *nafs*, *qalb*, *ruh*, and *tariqa*,

> The self that lives in God, the atman, is to the body as a rider is to a chariot. The intellect, buddhi, is the charioteer, and the mind, *manas*, makes up the reins. The organs of sensation are the horses that pull the chariot… As unruly stallions have their way with an inexperienced driver, the senses run wild when intellect lacks discernment… When the chariot ascends the straight path, it traverses itself.[193]

Zia connects the chariots horses, atman, buddhi, and *manas*, with the *nafs*, *qalb*, and *ruh*, and notes that the only way to tame the stallions is by following a straight and dedicated path until one completely controls the forces pulling them in all different directions, the *tariqa*. Clearly Zia is taking a unique approach to religious interpretation but his presentation of these traditional Hindu philosophies as extensions of, or equivalent to, Sufi principles serves the desired purpose, tying the traditions together by placing Sufism

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[191] Ibid., 4.
[192] Ibid., 19.
[193] Ibid., 38-39.

at Hinduism's core. While not discussed explicitly, this connection is further strengthened by the historical relationships and interreligious exchanges that have been occurring for almost eight hundred years on the Indian subcontinent. In connecting these Hindu philosophies with Sufi beliefs, Zia inserts Sufism into the core of the Hindu tradition placing emphasis on similarities of the divine source and the relationship between the individual soul, outer impressions, and the journey toward perfection.

In attempting to connect Buddhism and Sufism, Zia focuses less on the historical relationships between the two traditions and more on their purpose and goals. He again centers the *nafs*, *qalb*, *ruh* triad by stating,

> At the root of all contingent and ephemeral accidents of being he discerned *avidya*, ignorance. From ignorance sprang up *samskaras*, formations caused by volition… (which) give rise to individual consciousness, and individual consciousness precipitates name-and-form… the self, or *nafs*, is the foundation of the six sensory fields… (that) lead to contact, contact produces feeling, and feeling spawns craving. Craving results in clinging, and this sets in motion the cycle of becoming. Becoming involves birth, and birth inevitably leads to aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection and despair.[194]

Again, taking a creative approach to philosophical interpretation, Zia equates the *nafs* with *avidya* and the *samskaras*, which ignorance to the divine reality produce. Zia presents the *samskaras* as the egoic accretions that practitioners believe individuates themselves from others. In Sufism, the way to conquer these accretions is to refine one's *ruh* through the particular studies and practices of a *tariqa*, Zia sees an equivalent in the Buddha's spiritual journey. "On perceiving the futility of asceticism, Siddhartha abandoned it and restored his body to health. He was intent now to follow the Middle Way between the extremes of sensuality and self-mortification."[195] The Middle Way is a

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[194] Ibid., 58-59.
[195] Ibid., 57.

reflection of the Sufi *tariqa*: asceticism in the lived world, taking a practical approach to the journey for and in the divine while living a normal life, both journeys end in the same way, unconditioned realization.[196] "Throwing off the bonds of ignorance and its offshoots, with clear eyes Siddhartha witnesses the insubstantiality of… everything, including himself… Siddhartha attained realization of the Unconditioned, *as-Samad*, and was awakened. He was known thereafter as *Tathagata*, He Who Has Thus Gone."[197] Zia evokes the stations of *fanā* and *baqā'* in the Buddha's journey to Nirvana using the phrases the 'insubstantiality of all' and 'the realization of the unconditioned' in order to tie the two traditions together philosophically and interject Sufism into the Buddhist tradition and stated goal. The achievement of unity with and absorption in the divine are central to Zia's explication of both traditions, which, while problematic when acknowledging Buddhism's lack of a central Divine being, does allow for some philosophical compatibility between the two.

The best put together and most historically informed expansion of inclusivity is that of Zoroastrianism, which Zia links to Sufism and the Inayatiyya by way of Suhrawardian Illuminationism. Citing Shahab ad-Din Yahya Suhravardi himself, Zia notes "his own science of lights, set forth in *Hikmat al-Ishraq* (*The Wisdom of Illumination*) and other works, represents a philosophical revival of the symbolic teachings of these legendary figures,"[198] figures like Faridun, Kay Khusraw, and the prophet Zoroaster himself. Zia continues developing this connection by noting a number

[196] There are obviously some clear comparative issues here when you consider Sufism's ultimate goal is to achieve unity with the Divine and Buddhism's goal is to achieve Nirvana and escape the cycle of rebirth but Zia presents the goals in a manner that allows 'unconditioned realization' to be loosely interpreted in a way that equates the two.
[197] Ibid., 59.
[198] Ibid., 90.

of elements Suhravardi borrows from Zoroastrianism, "In addition to the symbolism of light and darkness, Suhravardi draws upon a number of Zoroastrian motifs… Chief among these is the angelology of the Zend Avesta, which Suhravardi incorporates in his cosmological system."[199] The complexity of Suhrawardi's cosmological system[200] is too complex to be discussed at length here but it is clearly formative to the cosmologies taught by the Chishti Order and the Inayatiyya.[201] These historical philosophic connections strengthen Zia's argument that a more intimate connection between the two traditions exists and, in order to build on that, Zia turns his focus to the teachings of individuals whose thought can be traced to the school of Azar Kayvan (1529-1609), high priest of Estakhr, and founder of the Zoroastrian Illuminationist school: "After tempering the humors of his body, he adopted an impartial attitude towards all articles of belief, withdrew into silence… fasted, kept vigil, and engaged in the continuous remembrance of God."[202] While not a perfect match with Sufi practices, a number of key elements (tempering the desires of the body, fasting, remembrance of the divine) are clearly present, and Zia uses them to tie these two traditions together.

In continuing to strengthen the bond between the two traditions, Zia evokes *maqamats*, *ahwals* and *sama'*, "sometimes the flashes are soothing; other times they strike with a jolt… Listening to music at a spiritual soiree deepens the pleasure these flashes bring… At a later stage the lights do linger on. The heavy clouds of continuing

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[199] Ibid., 90.
[200] Roxanne Marcotte, "Suhrawardi," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University, March 29, 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/suhrawardi/. Provides a great overview of Suhrawardi's life and an introduction to his various philosophical and ethical explications.
[201] Inayat Khan, *Complete Works Part I*, 341-352, and Inayat Khan, *Complete Works Part II*, 266-278 are two lectures given in San Francisco and Chicago respectively which provide brief looks at HIK's understanding and presentation of Suhrawardian metaphysics. Zia's most notable explication of Suhrawardi's Illuminationist Metaphysics can be seen on pgs. 89-95 of *Mingled Waters*.
[202] Ibid., 93.

illumination are called Sakina… (which) signifies the ascendency in the soul of the victorious rays that rain down from the stars and their spirits."[203] The emotional responses cultivated by practice in both traditions signify progress on the spiritual path, and the language used here is reminiscent of traditional Sufi discourse.[204] Zia's presentation of Zoroastrianism is wholly compatible with Sufism in both its performative elements (fasting, spiritual retreat, continuous remembrance of the divine), and the emotional responses they evoke, connecting the two traditions so closely that even their most basic elements mirror one another. "For Sufis, the primary zhikr is *La ilaha illa'Llah*, which means in Arabic, 'no god but God.' Azar Kayvan taught his disciples to *recite Nist hasti magar Yazdan*, which means in Persian, 'no existence but God.' "[205] Zoroastrianism, as Zia understands it, is Persian Sufism, influenced by the creative innovations of Suhravardi Illuminationism, and the school of Azar Khayvan; ultimately, it shares the same goals, rituals, and emotional responses as its Indian and Western counterparts.

In connecting Judaism and Sufism, Zia again takes a largely historical approach, noting the hierohistorical relationship between the prophets Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, and their familial connection to Adam by way of Abraham. Zia notes Sharaf ad-Din Manayri's assertion that Adam was the first Sufi, joining all three of the Abrahamic faiths together and infusing them with a Sufi origin that predates their creation in a manner similar to that of the *nur Muhammad*.[206] He also notes the

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[203] Ibid., 114-115.
[204] Cheikh Sufi's explanation of the emotional response produce by a *hal* is a fantastic example of the description of these emotional responses.
[205] Ibid., 93.
[206] Ibid., Zia notes the familial relationship between the prophets and ad-Din Manayri's claims on 129-130.

importance and the shared parables and stories of the Abrahamic traditions in Islam and Sufism from an early period acknowledging a further shared history and culture. Zia even invokes the Qur'anic instructions to "proclaim faith in what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob… Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, without distinction."[207] A respect, and reverence for the teachings and messages of the earlier prophets is central to Muhammad's teachings, Islam, and Sufism, a connection that exists from the beginning of the Islamic tradition. Zia, focusing specifically on the most concrete example of a relationship between Judaism and Sufism, turns his attention to Abraham Maimonides' School of *Hasidut*, which scholar Paul Fenton has christened "the Jewish Sufi movement."[208] In discussing the interplay between the two groups, he focuses mainly upon ritual elements, specifically ablutions and ritual prayer. The identified familial connections, shared story telling tradition, and ritual similarities between the Islamic Sufi tradition the *Hasidut* and Kabballah schools are, by and large, the strongest evidence Zia provides to address the connections between Judaism and Sufism.

While Zia relies heavily on shared historical connections, figures and stories, he struggles to connect the two traditions philosophically in any meaningful or overarching way. He notes the Jewish Sufi movement's adoption of "practices (like) ablution, prostration… keeping vigils and fasts… and the recitation of the divine names"[209] and the embrace of similar practices by the tradition of Kabballah but struggles to identify any particular themes or philosophical principles that connect the traditions on a more intimate level. He makes an appeal to a connection between the two faiths'

[207] Ibid., 130
[208] Ibid., 131.
[209] Ibid., 131.

understandings of God's omnipresence but relies on a singular psalm to support that claim. Zia clearly denotes an historical connection between the two traditions and provides several examples of Sufism having influence upon and being assimilated by different Jewish sects but it is hard to pinpoint a particular example that would justify the inclusion of Judaism as a whole under the purview of Sufi Universalism without falling back on the Qur'anic directive to "believe in Allah… and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob… and what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their lord."[210] For Zia, the Sufic core of Judaism is its Abrahamic lineage, God's omnipresence as presented in Psalm 139, and the performative and ritual elements that were co-opted by the *Hasidut* and Kabballah schools of philosophy.[211]

In discussing the relational connection between Christianity and Sufism, Zia notes the familial connections and shared literary and narrative traditions that join the two non-Islamic Abrahamic traditions together with Islam and Sufism. He then expands on these cultural connections by noting the influence Sufism had on the theological and poetic works of Christian authors beginning in the High Middle Ages:

> The Majorcan polymath Ramon Llull (d.1316) patterned his celebrated *Llibre d'amie e amat* (*Book of the Lover and the Beloved*) on literary models derived from the Sufi School of Love… Sufi symbols saturate the writings of the great Spanish mystics Saint John of the Cross (d.1591) and Saint Theresa of Avila (d.1582). And in recent times Pope Francis include a saying of the Sufi 'Ali Khawas in his encyclical letter *Laudato si'*.[212]

These literary influences and exchanges further Zia's attempts to place Sufism at Christianity's core by emphasizing the interplay and borrowing between the two

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[210] "Al-Qur'an Al-Kareem - القرآن الكريم," Surah Ali 'Imran [3:84], accessed October 1, 2020, https://quran.com/3/84.
[211] Zia, *Mingled Waters*, 153. Zia focuses on Psalm 139 and God's omnipresence as well as the unity of all things between 153-156.
[212] Ibid., 167.

traditions, which, as presented here, can be observed as early as the thirteenth century, and almost certainly can be traced to at or near the time of the Prophet Muhammad himself.

A number of similarities between the prayers and practices of Christian (particularly Greek Orthodox) and Muslim mystics prompts Zia to essentially transform the Christian Hesychast (Eastern Orthodox ascetic mystic) into a Muslim Sufi mystic, He allows the practices and goals of the Hesychast to directly reflect the practices and purposes of the Sufi mystic.[213] Zia describes the fight against the egoic *nafs* and other 'demons' as a fight against evil thoughts, "Evagrius Ponticus enumerates eight kinds of evil thoughts. They are: gluttony, impurity, avarice, dejection, anger, despondency, vainglory, and pride."[214] The processes to overcome these thoughts that have been equated to very real human issues like anger, greed, listlessness and pride are generally passive, meant to downplay these evils so they can be overcome. The Hesychast should show a "readiness to accept dishonor (because) a person who is not concerned with other's opinions is immune to the provocation of insults and false accusations."[215] Further, "To subdue the demons… repentance is necessary. To repent is to acknowledge one's sins, seek forgiveness, and steer a new course."[216] The Hesychast's goal is to eliminate egoic impressions and excesses of personality that prevent him from connecting with the divine in hopes to achieve "Contemplation (which) leads at last to the condition of mystical absorption known as perfection."[217] The goals of the Sufi and the Hesychast,

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[213] *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. "hesychast," accessed September 29, 2020, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hesychast.
[214] Zia, *Mingled Waters*, 187.
[215] Ibid., 190.
[216] Ibid., 193.
[217] Ibid., 197.

as Zia presents them, are one and the same, *fanā'* for the Sufi, and 'mystical absorption' for the Hesychast.

Continuing this focus on philosophical connections, Zia imbibes Christ with the *nur Muhammad,* "At the same moment Jesus, the Spirit of God, bowed to Saint John in Our Lady's womb."[218] The 'Spirit of God' is Hazrat Inayat Khan's English translation of *nur Muhammad*, used to describe belief in the existence of a unitary spiritual source that all souls, prophets, and prophetic traditions derive from.[219] In discussing the divine soul of Jesus, he also notes the relationship between the exterior, corporeal body and the inner, divinely inspired soul, "Though the sight of the crucifixion was terrible to witness, in truth the spirit's persecutors were powerless to injure his spirit. The Revelation of Peter narrates that the Spirit said to Saint Peter, 'The one you see smiling and laughing above the cross is the living Jesus. The one into whose hands and feet they are driving nails is his fleshy part.' "[220] This 'Spirit of God' is the *nur Muhammad*, and it is separate from the exterior influences of the fleshy body, an almost perfect example of the relationship between the *nafs* and *ruh*. The extent to which Zia is willing to extend these connections is impressive; not only does he imbibe Jesus with the *nur Muhammad*, and note the *nafs*/*ruh* relationship but he even stresses similarities in language to advance his point. In discussing ritual chanting, Zia writes, "The gnostic now takes delight in chanting the verses of scripture at every opportunity. The holy songs of the Vicar are always on the tip of the Hesychast's tongue."[221] The attempt to connect *dhikr* and vicar is unmistakable. This use of language to connect Eastern Orthodox practice with Sufi practices is brilliant

[218] Ibid., 176.
[219] Zia notes this on page 217 of *Mingled Waters*. I discuss it in greater detail later in this section.
[220] Ibid., 177.
[221] Ibid., 198.

and establishes a performative connection between the two traditions. In the Christianity of the Hesychasts, and perhaps all Christianity, Zia identifies core Sufi philosophical and performative elements: the battle to overcome the exterior form and egoic impressions and the journey toward unity with the divine. These connections are further supplemented by the historical influences of Sufi philosophy and literature, and similarities in performative rites, including recitation of holy chants or sayings, penance, fasting, and retreat, which, while not explicitly noted by Zia, have a long history in the Christian monastic traditions. These myriad connections are what Zia presents when incorporating Christianity into the Inayati tradition and serve as the foundation of his Sufi Universalist approach in regards to Christianity.

Zia's focus on Islam in *Mingled Waters* is incredibly informative and unique. Even though Inayati thinkers recognize Islam as the source of the Sufi tradition, they rarely discuss it in their written work. In focusing on the other traditions of the Universal Worship and their connections with Sufism, Zia emphasizes similarities in philosophical principles, cultural connections, and historical relationships. When discussing Islam, Zia seems to be simultaneously reintroducing its basic tenants to the Inayati tradition and connecting core Sufi principles to these fundamentals. I interpret these moves as an attempt to reintroduce the outer, exoteric elements of Islam back into a tradition that has drawn so much from it, perhaps in an attempt to bring Inayatian Sufism into closer alignment with its historical and theological roots or to undercut the arguments of academics and other Sufis who claim Inayatian Sufism is not Sufism at all. It is even possible that this is the beginning of a shift towards a more traditional approach to Sufism, centering Islam while borrowing from and reinterpreting the practices of other

religious traditions, a move that has been repeated countless times throughout the history of organized religion.

I make these claims because Zia regularly focuses upon and introduces basic Islamic concepts, stories, and religious principles that would be deeply ingrained in the mind of any practicing Muslim. In discussing retreat and almsgiving, he writes,

> The Hanifs called this method of spiritual retreat *tahannuth*. It was in the silence of tahannuth on Mount Hira'… that revelation first came to the Messenger. Prayer is the worship that is due from one's body. *Zakat*, or almsgiving, is the worship that is due from one's wealth. The Law obliges Muslims who enjoy sufficient means to give one-fortieth of what they own to the needy every year.[222]

In this compact statement, we have the introduction and explanation of two basic Islamic principles, *zakat* and *tahannuth*, as well as an introduction to Muhammad's revelation, the Qur'an. This combination of storytelling and introduction of basic Islamic principles happens throughout the section. In discussing pilgrimage, Zia writes:

> With his son Ishmael, Abraham the Friend built the granite cube known as the Ka'ba and consecrated it to the One Alone. In time, its caretakers lapsed into idolatry and the worship of the One was abandoned… such was the state of things in Mecca until the Messenger swept the idols from the House of the Lord and revived the faith of the Friend. A new era of pilgrimage was now proclaimed… The essence of a pilgrimage is its intention.[223]

Here Zia discusses the history of the Ka'ba, its reclamation by Muhammad, and the purpose of Hajj; he also manages to use Islamic language to identify pilgrimage and introduces one of the numerous Islamic parables and Sufi figures, traditional literary tropes that are scattered generously throughout *Mingled Waters*. Zia appears to be taking an approach that highlights key elements of Islam and introduces them to his readers in an easily understandable, relatively basic manner. Five of the chapter's six subsections

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[222] Ibid., 236.
[223] Ibid., 247.

are the English language equivalent of the Five Pillars of Islam: "Bearing Witness" (The Shahadah), "Prayer" (*salat*), "Almsgiving" (*zakat*), "Fasting" (*sawm*), and "Pilgrimage" (Hajj).

The other fascinating and brilliant approach Zia seizes upon in this section is the way he connects these standard principles of Islam to the Sufi philosophy he presents as the head of the Inayatiyya. When discussing fasting, Zia provides the traditional context of Ramadan but then ties it to the cleansing of the *nafs*,

> The uniqueness of fasting as a practice of sacred devotion lies in its emptiness. Fasting is not so much an act as a renunciation of acts… A sage said, "Fasting is absenting oneself from the vision of what is other than God for the sake of the vision of God Most High." To avert one's gaze from nonexistence is to turn toward Pure Being. Negation leads to affirmation; no god leads to *but God*… The fast of the body is to abstain from food and drink. The fast of the Spirit, on the contrary, is to partake of sustenance—but sustenance of a different kind.[224]

Zia explains the exoteric practice of fasting and renunciation of food and water in order to show thanks to the divine and everything the Muslim has been given; but also ties the practice of fasting into the philosophy of Sufism. Fasting is abstinence from food and water in order to develop characteristics or skills that will help bring the Sufi closer to the divine. Fasting may help Sufis to develop patience, compassion, empathy, and concentration, critical skills needed to follow the *tariqa* toward unity with God; by avoiding the human desires of excess hunger and thirst, the Sufi, in theory, develops these skills that can further their experience. By tying Sufi elements that *mureeds* would be familiar with to Islam's Five Pillars, which may not be familiar to new *mureeds* or non-Muslim participants, Zia begins to reintroduce Islamic elements into the Inayati

[224] Ibid., 242-243.

tradition, bringing the Order's language and messaging into better alignment with more traditional Sufi groups.

This pattern of connection and reintroduction continues throughout the Islam section of *Mingled Waters*. Zia ties *sawm*, and the preparatory ablutions before prescribed prayer, to the cleansing of the *ruh*: "Prayer is necessarily preceded by the act of ablution. The outer ablution consists in washing the hands, mouth, nose, and so forth with water. The inner ablution consists in ridding the heart of pernicious thoughts. The inner ablution brings about a separation of the heart and the shadows of the world."[225] Zia ties pilgrimage, or Hajj, directly to the spiritual journey that a Sufi embarks upon, and Zia identifies three different pilgrimages one must undertake "that of the Law, that of the Path, and that of the Truth."[226] The pilgrimage of the Law is the shariah, "it ordains that the pilgrims must travel to Mecca and circumambulate the Ka'ba."[227] The pilgrimage of the Path is both the *tariqa* and the journey within oneself, "In undertaking the Pilgrimage of the Path, the *mureed* discovers their own reality and comes to self-knowledge."[228] The Pilgrimage of the Path is the undertaking of the hard work of the *tariqa*, fasting, *zhikr*, retreat, and study; it is the elimination of exterior impressions and egoic beliefs and attainment of *maqamats* and *ahwals*. The Pilgrimage of Truth is the journey of the Sufi to unity with the divine, it is "to reach the Lord of the House, *if he is able to make his way there*."[229] The Pilgrimage of Truth is the achievement of *fanā'* and *baqā'*; it is the absorption of one's soul in the divine. These examples provide numerous instances of Zia

[225] Ibid., 230-231.
[226] Ibid., 248.
[227] Ibid., 248.
[228] Ibid., 248.
[229] Ibid., 248. Zia italicizes all Qur'anic excerpts throughout the text.

connecting Sufi principles, as taught by the Inayati Order, with basic Islamic principles and language, but more than that, we see a cohesive philosophical articulation that strongly aligns with the presentation of these, and similar concepts at the Season of the Rose conference. The Inayati philosophy and Zia's presentation of it in both *Mingled Water*s and at the Season of the Rose conference are coherent and thoughtfully developed; when presented in a proper manner, they show the concrete underpinnings of not just Sufi principles and practices but the importance of Islam as well.

A final important observation, when examining *Mingled Waters'* "Islam" section is acknowledging the ways in which Zia ties the language his grandfather used in writings and speeches back to its traditional Chishti roots. In explaining the spiritual source of all prophets, Zia writes "Hazrat Inayat Khan refers to the Nur-i Muhammadi as the 'Spirit of Guidance.' Recognizing this light as the inner spirit of all messengers and prophets he maintains that Shiva, Buddha… Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and many others… were in essence 'always one and the same person.' "[230] HIK expanded the purview of Inayatian Sufism by interpreting the *nur Muhammad* in an extremely liberal way, thus allowing for the inclusion of all the traditions of the Universal Worship and any other traditions or elements that could contribute to the Sufi's mystical journey. This liberal approach to the *nur Muhammad* could be understood as a more expansive acceptance of followers of the 'religions of the book' in Islamic societies and allows for the inclusion of elements from religions that are not necessarily given that status historically, especially in combination with Zia's interpretive work, which centers Sufism as the religious core of all traditions. On a more individual level, this expansive approach

[230] Ibid., 217.

provides for the usage of practices and techniques that may be familiar to *mureeds* from past spiritual work and probably provides a level of comfort to new *mureeds* who are not particularly knowledgeable of the intricacies of traditional practices and may struggle early on to find their footing. These similarities, much like the similarities between the Universal Worship and traditional Christian worship services, may help provide some familiarity between the two traditions and provide a smoother transition to a new philosophical outlook. By equating the language his grandfather adopted to teach Sufism in the early twentieth century to the traditional language used in the Indo-Islamic setting, Zia creates another link between his teachings, that depend heavily on his grandfather's philosophical tradition, and the teachings of the Chishti's of the Indian subcontinent. The explicit creation of these linguistic connections does not occur as often as the connections between traditional Islamic principles and Sufi teachings but they do complement each other. When Zia uses Sufi language in his lectures and connects them to traditional Islamic language and practices, he strengthens the connections between his Westernized, expansive Sufi philosophy and its Indio-Islamic Sufi roots.

In modern presentations of Inayati philosophy such as the lectures at Season of the Rose and the text of *Mingled Waters*, we see a Sufi tradition that is expansive, flexible, and willing to borrow freely from other religious traditions while still maintaining key elements of its Indo-Islamic philosophical roots. Inayatian Sufism, as Zia presents it, borrows practices freely from other religious traditions that can help bring *mureeds* closer to the goal of unity with the divine, *fanā'*. Over the last century, the tradition has been Westernized and Universalized in order to ensure a level of familiarity with and comfort to its practitioners, most of whom are white, Euro-Americans, with

little practical knowledge of the Muslim world or experience with Islamic worship and practice. This Westernization and Universalization, however, is not an abandonment of, or deviation from, core Sufi philosophical tenants. Zia goes to great lengths to center Sufism in the very heart of the traditions of the Universal Worship, highlighting similarities with a number of philosophical elements including, but not limited to, the *nur Muhammad*, the esoteric journey in search of unification with the divine (*tariqa*), performative rituals designed to purify the individual soul of exterior and egoic influences (*zhikr*), and divine love (*ishq*). Much of the academic literature written regarding the Inayati asserts that Sufism has been deemphasized in the Inayati tradition and its philosophy, but it is clear that these tenants are being taught in a manner that is compatible with their Eastern predecessors. Further, by exploring the relationship between Inayatian Sufism and Islam, Zia is, at least in part, reintroducing the mystical tradition's religious roots for the first time in nearly a century. This reinstitution may not undercut critics who argue that Sufism cannot exist without abiding by the tenants of Islam, but it does show a leader, Zia, who recognizes the arguments being made and is acting to reintroduce a number of basic Islamic teachings and stories that would allow his largely Western audience to familiarize themselves with, and appreciate, the Inayati's Islamic roots. *Mingled Waters* provides some commentary on Islam for the first time in a century and, in combination with Zia's Sufi Universalism, succeeds in presenting a philosophical tradition that was born out of Islam on the Indian subcontinent and cultivated to suit a largely white, Western audience. The Inayati tradition maintains both an incredible philosophical continuity that dates to its creation 110 years ago, and

significant and meaningful connections to the Chishti Order from which much of its philosophy has been drawn.

Conclusion

In examining the texts and lectures of the leaders and *Pirs* of the Inayati Order a number of observations can be made. In the first several years of the Order's existence, approximately 1910-1917, Hazrat Inayat Khan presented a Sufi philosophical discourse that centered the Indo-Islamic Sufism taught to him by his Chishti master, Muhammed Abu Hashim Madani; it was only later, about 1917-1927, that Khan's language and message began to shift away from these established principles.[231] This shift to a more universalist and eclectic philosophy can be attributed to a number of factors, but the most important are the cultural and religious background of early members, a group that would have been largely unfamiliar with the beliefs and customs of Islam and was frequently comprised of both current and former Theosophists.[232] The religio-cultural background of his *mureeds*, HIK's desire to introduce and expand the Sufi Movement in the West, and his untimely death, all contributed to the group's philosophical shift from its earlier, Indo-Islamically influenced iteration, into an Order that placed greater emphasis on the universality of religion, the mantle of prophecy, and a deeper, hidden message that could only be obtained and understood by a select few. I believe that this shift in focus to a

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[231] Zia provides a look at the early, Islamically-oriented nature of the Order in his dissertation *A Hybrid Sufi Order*, on pages 77-79 and 101-104. Chapters three and four of Zia's dissertation, "The Genesis of the Sufi Order", 1910-1920 (pgs. 63-117), and "From Order to Movement," 1920-1927 (pgs. 118-190) provide the most in-depth examination of the Order's shifting philosophical framing and the internal elements that caused those shifts too occur.

[232] Zia details these Theosophical influences and the ways in which prominent members of the Sufi Order shifted the teachings in a more universalist or occult direction and endowed HIK with a prophetic mantle in *A Hybrid Sufi Order*, pgs. 92-98, 110-115, 150-163.

practice that emphasizes Western cultural and religious themes was inevitable. The easiest, and most effective way HIK could convince Westerners to embrace his teachings was to present them in a way they could be understood. Further, this mixation and cooptation has hundreds of years of historical precedence on the Indian subcontinent and throughout the Muslim world. Pure tradition is a myth because traditions constantly take from and are influenced by external, unorthodox elements; shared geography and similarities of belief guarantee religious and cultural mixation and exchange. As a result of these shifts the order began to place less emphasis on the philosophical Sufism that had been developing in Muslim India for centuries.

While the Order's focus was shifting and was determining the role of these core Universalist principles in the last years of HIK's life, it did not abandon Sufism philosophically. HIK's lectures on his final tour of the United States present a creative ideology that embedded Sufi philosophy into the core of the Movement's ever-expanding collection of traditions and practices. We see clear examples of a variety of Sufi elements throughout HIK's teachings: the *nur Muhammad*, triadic *nafs*/*qalb*/*ruh* relationship, the purification of the soul through ritual and study, amongst many others. The Inayati Order did shed many of its exoteric, Islamic identifiers but still maintained and centered these Sufi philosophical elements. After HIK's untimely death in 1927, the Movement underwent a period of uncertainty, with questions arising about succession, organizational structure, and the Movement's future direction.[233] These uncertainties were further compounded by regular changes in leadership, largely because of the deaths

[233] The chapter, "After Charisma" (191-272) in *A Hybrid Sufi Order* provides a detailed overview of the controversies that arose after Hazrat Inayat Khan's death and provides an incredibly well put together timeline for the revolving door of leadership that occurred.

of many in the first generation of the family; this period lasted from the time of HIK's death until his son Vilayat assumed the title of Pir in 1968.[234] By all accounts, Vilayat was a wonderful teacher whose eclecticism knew no bounds; he borrowed practices freely from a wide variety of traditions because he believed they would help his *mureeds* advance on their journey's toward the divine.[235] While Vilayat borrowed openly from other traditions, the core principles remained the same, and philosophical Sufism and traditional Sufi practices remained foundational.

Zia became the Order's *Pir* after his father Vilayat's death in 2004. In his lectures and writings, we see the coalescence of the teachings of his father, grandfather, and other members of the Khan family, who taught and led the Inayatiyya before him. The core elements of Sufi philosophy introduced by his grandfather and expounded upon by Zia can be best observed in the lectures presented at the Season of the Rose conference; however, these teachings have become more refined and nuanced over the last century. Zia has moved these teachings away from a Western, Christian understanding of Universalism, toward a more fleshed out philosophy that provides a profound and technical presentation of the various practices, emotional responses, and challenges *mureeds* face as they venture along the *tariqa*. On top of this systemization and clarification of philosophy, he has integrated the eclectic practices his father and others appropriated from a variety of traditions, tying these diverse and disparate elements more intimately with Sufism by identifying commonalities of philosophy or history and

[234] Due to a number of schisms in the Order relating to issues of succession Vilayat assumed leadership of an organization he created which was a revival of the earlier Sufi Movement in London. These schisms have all been repaired since the early 90s.

[235] It's truly a shame that Vilayat and this larger 'Middle Period' couldn't be a heavy focus here because it is a period of incredible shifts and transitions.

connecting them to a universal core principle that is philosophical Sufism. Zia has begun to reintroduce many of Islam's basic principles, practices, and stories, at least in his writings, in what I believe to be an attempt at bringing this philosophy into closer alignment with traditional understandings of Sufism, whose roots are planted in Islam. My ethnographic observations help correct the academic understanding that these 'Perennialist' Sufi groups are more concerned with 'baraka-surfing' than achieve unity with the divine, and that members are not highy dedicated and deeply intimate with the traditional Sufi philosophy. I saw the opposite, a group of individuals who were knowledgeable, motivated, and willing to dedicate themselves to the long, arduous journey to *fanā'*. The theosophical belief in a World Teacher, or coming Prophet has been purged from the Inayati tradition and Sufism now serves as the universalizing core element of every religious tradition. Far from being a pseudo-Sufism or a Sufism without a traditional philosophical core, The Inayatiyya is an historical legacy and living philosophy that has interpreted key concepts like the *nur Muhammad* and the 'People of the Book' in an incredibly liberal manner in order to embrace a variety of traditions and their practices to create a philosophically centered Sufism that fits the modern Western world, while still maintaining the integrity of its Indo-Islamic Chishti roots.

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