



A Sufi Message

Vibration of the Elements

Teachings of Hazrat Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Edited and Presented by Gemma Erickson

In Mantra Yoga a person comes in touch with the mysticism of sound when they begin to see and understand; they begin to see that they gain power by sound, that in every vowel, word, composition, a certain effect or element is hidden, because life and the whole of manifestation is the outcome of what may be called vibrations. (*Volume 7, In an Eastern Rose Garden, The Journey to the Goal*)

Sound, Color and Rhythm

(Vol. 2, The Mysticism of Sound and Music, 6. The Mystery of Color and Sound 2)

Both from the point of view of the Sufi and that of all mystics the original state of the whole creation is vibration, and vibration manifests in two forms, or stages. In its original condition vibration is inaudible and invisible, but in its first stage towards manifestation it becomes audible, and in its next step visible.

In its audible stage it is called nada in Vedantic terms - a word which means sound - or Nada Brahma which represents: Sound the Creator, Sound the creative Spirit. The next stage is called jatanada - a word which means light. It is the different degrees of that light and their comparison with one another which give rise to the various colors. Colors are only the different shades of light;

[And] what is sound? The different notes are the various degrees of breath: human breath, or the echo coming from a vessel, an instrument, or a bell, for that also is breath the breath of human beings as well as the breath of objects. From the one breath many sounds manifest; so that takes one back again to the idea of unity. All this variety of colors and forms and sounds proceeds from one single source.

...there is the question of the mysticism of number. This is the idea of rhythm. Every movement must have its rhythm. There cannot be movement without rhythm. By rhythm we imagine the intervals of time, such as hour or minute, or in music crotchet, quaver, semibreve. All these arise from our habit of dividing time into rhythm. We do this because our life itself depends on rhythm. The beating of the pulse, of the heart, in the head - all show life's rhythm.

The science of numbers comes from the science of rhythm. A certain number comes to denote a certain duration of time; every action or movement requires a certain time and has a corresponding effect. Every effect which is produced by color, sound or number depends upon their harmonious or inharmonious effect... it is not the particular number or sound which gives the desirable effect, but the harmony. That is why a knowledge of the effect of sound, color or number is insufficient without a development of a sense of harmony in oneself, so that one can understand the harmonious effect of these things.

The mystics have seen five tatwas, or elements, working behind both the sound and the rhythm, although musicians consider seven notes in a scale. The original scale known to the mystics had five numbers, and there were five kinds of scales among the ancient people, with five different classes of rhythm. They took five colors to represent the five elements.

Practices: From the *Singing Wazifas*, by Murshid Hidayat Inayat-Khan (1917-2016), Pir of the International Sufi Movement and son of Hazrat Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan.

[Click to View Video for the following Practice of the Singing Wazifas](#)

The Elements

(Vol. 2, *The Mysticism of Sound, 1. The Silent Life, The Sound of the Elements*)

The Earth Element: The earth has various aspects of beauty as well as of variety in its sound. Its pitch is on the surface, its form is crescent-like, and its color is yellow. The sound of the earth is dim and dull, and produces a thrill, activity and movement in the body. All instruments of wire and gut, as well as the instruments of percussion - such as the drum, cymbals, etc. - represent the sound of earth.

Practice: Singing Wazifa – *Ya Fatah* (Fat-TAAH), *The One who Opens the way, The One who Enlightens*

The Water Element: The sound of water is deep, its form is serpent-like, its color green, and it is best heard in the roaring of the sea. The sound of running water, of mountain rills, the drizzling and pattering of rain, the sound of water running from a pitcher into a jar, from a pipe into a tub, from a bottle into a glass - all have a smooth and lively effect, and a tendency to produce imagination, whim, dream, affection and emotion.

Practice: Singing Wazifa – *Ya Wahabo* (Wah-HAAB-o), *O Thou the Bestower, The Divine Inspirer*

The Fire Element: The sound of fire is high-pitched, its form is curled, and its color red. It is heard in the falling of the thunderbolt and in a volcanic eruption, in the sound of a fire or the flame when blazing.

Practice: Singing Wazifa – *Ya Karim* (Ka-REEM), *O Thou the Bountiful, The One who is Most Generous*

The Air Element: The sound of air is wavering, its form zigzag, and its color blue. Its voice is heard in storms, when the wind blows, and in the whisper of the morning breeze. Its effect is breaking, sweeping and piercing. The sound of air finds expression in all wind instruments made of wood, brass and bamboo. It has a tendency to kindle the fire of the heart, as Rumi writes in his Mathnavi about the flute. The air sound overpowers all other sounds, for it is living, and in every aspect its influence produces ecstasy.

Practice: Singing Wazifa – *Ya Sabir* (SAA-bir), *Oh Thou, The Most Patient, The One who is Enduring*

The Ether Element: The sound of ether is self-contained, and it holds all forms and colors. It is the base of all sounds, and is the undertone which is ever continuous. Its instrument is the human body, because it can be audible through it. Although it is all pervading, yet it is unheard. It manifests to a person as they purify their body from material properties. The body can become its proper instrument when the space within is opened, when all the tubes and veins in it are free. Then the sound which exists eternally in space becomes manifest inwardly also.

Practice: Singing Wazifa – *Ya Nur* (Noor), *O Light of God*

The Way of Vibrations

(Vol. 2, *The Mysticism of Sound and Music, 7, The Spiritual Significance of Color and Sound*)

When a mystic speaks of self knowledge, it means knowing the other part of one's being, that deeper, subtler aspect of one's being. It is upon the knowledge of that being that the fulfillment of life depends. One might ask: "How can one draw closer to it?" The way that has been found by those who searched after truth, those who sought God, those who wished to analyze themselves, those who wished to sympathize with life, is one way, and that is the way of vibrations. It is the same way as of old; by the help of sound they prepared themselves. They made these physical atoms, which in time had become deadened, live again with the help of sound. They worked with the power of sound. As Zeb-un-Nissa says: "Say continually that sacred name which will make thee sacred." The Hindus have called it mantra yoga; the Sufis have termed it wazifa. It is the power of the word which works upon each atom of the body, making it sonorous, making it a medium of communication between the external life and the inner life.

We offer our gratitude to Murshid Hidayat Inayat-Khan who has created and entrusted us with the practice of the *Singing Wazifas* and to Murshid Jelaluddin Sill who worked closely with Murshid Hidayat Inayat-Khan to provide the musical scores and the online resource for these practices.

[Online Resource-The Singing Wazifas](#)

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