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## Medical Ethnomusicology in the Pamir Mountains: Music and Prayer in Healing

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The present study arises from a broader, ongoing research program within the emerging area of medical ethnomusicology,<sup>1</sup> which endeavors to explore music and healing from a holistic perspective, and which often demands collaborative, integrative methods for field and lab research.<sup>2</sup> In the Pamir Mountain region of Tajikistan, special genres of music and prayer are performed to facilitate healing. Each genre has unique functions in Pamiri culture and specific effects on patients, which can be viewed as preventive and/or curative in nature. The present article explores one such genre, *maddāh* devotional music, and its role in healing among *maddāh* performers and participants in Pamir. By examining the meaning of *maddāh*, conveyed through culturally specific sounds, symbols, metaphors, and beliefs, the article investigates the performance of music and prayer as a medical intervention. Notably, for Pamiris who participate in *maddāh*, the majority of whom are Isma'ili Muslims, music is not forbidden. Rather, music is celebrated and exuberantly expressed as a central aspect of religious life.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, *maddāh* is widely revered in Badakhshan and constitutes the pre-eminent genre of Pamiri devotional music.

The geographic and cultural area in Tajikistan from which *maddāh* arises is known by many names: *Kuhestān* (mountain-land), "the roof of the world," *Badakhshan*, and *Pamir*. It is a vast region that extends across the southeast province of Tajikistan, sharing borders with Afghanistan on the west and south, China on the east, and Kyrgyzstan to the north. People live in villages and towns, as well as isolated mountain or valley dwellings, where the nearest neighbor could be thirty minutes away or more by foot. The rocky and dry terrain allows for little agricultural development, presenting an ongoing problem for sustaining a nutritional diet. In addition, a journey to the capital of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, is at least twenty-four hours by car, or a dangerous

plane ride, which is only occasionally available. This isolation makes attempts to gather foods and supplies from Dushanbe extremely difficult as well. Each district of Badakhshan has a unique dialect or local language. However, Tajik-Persian is commonly spoken throughout the region.<sup>4</sup> In the present study, Badakhshan and Pamir refer to the specific districts where field research was conducted, which include Shugnon, Roshon, Ishkishim, and the capital city of Khorog.

### Soundscape

The music culture of Tajikistan is a mosaic of the ancient and modern. It includes, variously, the wandering dervish chanting prayers in the streets of Dushanbe; youth blasting cassettes of dubbed Tajik pop music through distorted speakers in their little niche of the bazaar; solo street musicians playing the accordion or the *dombra*;<sup>5</sup> Soviet-era constructed “folkloric” ensembles; performers of the Tajik *shashmaqām*,<sup>6</sup> often referred to as *musiqiye asil* (classical music); the Muslim call for prayer (*adbān/azān*) heard from time to time in the streets; Pamiri, East African, and South Asian Isma‘ili devotional music; regional styles of Sufi devotional music; other religious musics; Hindi film songs and Russian pop music; the rare performance of symphonic and chamber music; original music composed and performed by local musicians; and a host of other genres representative of the cultural diversity of Tajikistan. In addition to maddāh, my research included investigating the related genres of *falak* (a lament), the Pamiri folk genres *dargilik*, *dodoik*, *bulbulik*, and *lalaik*, and to a lesser degree, the Pamiri *maqām*, which is distinct from the better known Tajik *shashmaqām*.

### Healthcare Landscape

As a result of the era of Soviet oppression and the subsequent civil war, Tajikistan has remained the poorest of the five former Soviet Republics of Central Asia (also known as one of the CIS states—Commonwealth of Independent States), with Badakhshan being the poorest region of Tajikistan. The consequence to healthcare has been devastating. Basic healthcare is at a minimum or often altogether unavailable (Keshavjee 1998). Hospitals, of which there are few, lack necessary medical equipment, sterile patient facilities, and proper heaters to heat hospital rooms, especially during winter months when the temperatures can drop to negative seventy-five degrees Fahrenheit. The winter months are especially dangerous since snow and ice block off access to the province, and any attempts to enter or leave can be deadly. Basic necessities of life, including clean water, are often scarce in

Badakhshan, presenting continual psychological distress and a host of other difficulties.

In Pamir, traditional and biomedical practices operate side-by-side. Patients often enlist the services of different health practitioners, including Russian-trained biomedical physicians, traditional healers (both professional and lay herbalists and naturopaths), and spiritual/religious healers. A patient's choice depends upon the availability of practitioners and an individual's beliefs in a particular practice or person. There have been instances when one practitioner, a physician for example, will refer a patient to a spiritual healer or herbalist, and vice-versa. While this is not common, several practitioners expressed their interest in collaboration with specialists of other healing modalities.

Local etiology views disease as having its roots in the physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual dimensions of human life. Health and healing are also viewed as coming from these areas. While a remedy is matched to the diagnosed cause—for instance, a physical illness will be treated with a physical medicine, such as an herbal, pharmaceutical, or naturopathic material approach—, all illnesses can potentially be treated through the power of prayer. Prayers that are utilized for healing fall into two broad categories—preventive and curative. For example, the daily Isma'ili ritualized prayer, *du'ā* or *salāt*, forms a regular part of daily worship and constitutes a central aspect of healthy living. Hence, reciting this prayer is regarded as an important preventive practice. A specialized written prayer-amulet (*tumār*), by contrast, is often used to treat a specific disease and therefore is more curative in nature. In the case of *maddāh*, participants often say that both types of healing occur. Hence, a young woman suffering from migraines and distress told me, "Prayer and *maddāh* make me feel better, I just relax and have hope again," and a local religious leader claimed that even miraculous healings/cures occur through a process of *maddāh* performance, saying, "We cannot say how it happens completely . . . because it is mystical, involving the *baraka* (spiritual power) of God, but we might experience it, and I too have seen it myself in my sister, she was healed."

Prayers used for healing fall into the following broad categories: direct/petitionary, intercessory, individual, group, spontaneous, colloquial, vocalized, written, silent, meditative, ritualized, and ceremonial. It must be emphasized that the prayers are employed in both flexible and strict manners, depending on the practitioner and modality of healing. In addition, multiple prayers are often interwoven with each other across categories. They can also be combined with other praxes or interventions, such as movement, dance, or medications. Patients often rely on specialized intercessory prayer performed by local religious leaders or mystics—a *khalīfa* or *mulla*, or a *pīr* (saint) or

dervish respectively. These prayers can stand alone or within a ceremonial context, and can be vocalized or written.

### **Some Considerations Regarding Music, Prayer, and Healing**

Broadly, devotional music and prayer can be viewed as practices by which people draw nearer to or communicate with God, the Divine, a spiritual being or dimension. Many ethnographic and scientific studies have addressed the role of music or prayer in healing (see, for example Gouk 2000; Laderman and Roseman 1996; Friedson 1996; Hinton 1999; Larson et al. 1998; Sicher et al. 1998; Byrd 1988; Harris et al. 1999, Koenig 1998; and Ai et al. 1998). However, the relationships between music *and* prayer in healing have been little explored in both the ethnographic and scientific literature. Many ethnographic studies show music at the center of diverse healing practices where belief in a supernatural or spiritual dimension frames performance (see, for example, Ralls-Macleod and Harvey 2000; Cook 1997; Pinto 1997; Larco 1997; Gouk 2000; Laderman and Roseman 1996; Janzen 1992; Friedson 1996; Hinton 1999; During 1997). Often, prayer is avoided altogether or only briefly mentioned in such studies, without its role to music or healing being critically examined. On the other hand, in biomedical research concerning prayer and healing, the converse is true (see for example Byrd 1988; Larson et al. 1998; Sicher et al. 1998; Harris et al. 1999, Koenig 1998; and Ai et al. 1998). Such research clinically explores the effects of prayer, spirituality, and religiosity on healing without critically considering the role of sound or music in prayer, or the loaded meanings inherent in diverse cultural practices and belief systems. When music is performed for or in the context of healing, it often *is* prayer, functions as prayer, or is intimately interwoven with prayer. Prayer, when employed for healing, can often only be rendered in a certain musical, sung, chanted, intoned, vocalized, or instrumental form for it to be efficacious. Hence, for research concerned with either music or prayer in healing, it is important to consider the other component.

The use of music and prayer in healing can be seen to comprise four broad categories: music alone, prayer alone, combined music and prayer, and unified music-prayer.<sup>7</sup> The last category indicates any genre that exists as a unified whole, and which cannot be broken apart into separate categories of music and prayer. In this category, the music *is* prayer, just as the prayer *is* music. Combined music and prayer simply refers to the combination of recited prayer and music. In this category, the music and prayer can be separated from each other without any qualitative difference resulting in either component. Nevertheless, the combination of the two is unique from the performance of either alone. Generally devotional songs can be viewed as examples of the unified category. A gospel music context provides a good example of how

the combined and unified categories can overlap. For instance, an organ player often plays in the background while a preacher or singer will speak the words of a Bible passage, then after reciting it, will then sing the passage. So, in the first instance during the speaking portion, this would be the combined category, in the sung portion it would be in the unified category.

In Pamiri culture, music, prayer, and poetry are performed in individual, combined, and unified forms to achieve specific cultural, social, and medical goals. Maddāh devotional music is a unique example of how music, prayer, and poetry can be expressed as a unified whole in the context of healing. For the purposes of healing, maddāh participants may seek to attain a specialized, prayerful/meditative state of consciousness where healing can occur. In such a state, the confluence of culturally significant sounds, symbols, metaphors, and beliefs forms a powerful medical intervention, effecting change at several levels of a participant's being.

### Music, Prayer, and Poetry in Pamir

For Pamiris, the Persian term *musiqi* (music) is multivalent. It is used alone and in combination with other words to refer to several types of music. This is also true for Iran and Afghanistan. For example: *musiqiye robāni* (spiritual/devotional music), *musiqiye tasavofi* or *efāni* (mystical music), *musiqiye dīni* (religious music), *musiqiye khalqi* (folk music/music of the people), *musiqiye asil* (classical music), *musiqiye sunnati* (traditional music), *musiqi bā āvāz* (music with voice), and *musiqi bī āvāz* (music without voice). Vocal music is also described without the term "music," as in *khavāndan* (pronounced "khāndan," to sing, recite, chant, or intone). The verb *khavāndan* is used in conjunction with special terms to indicate certain genres of sung, chanted, recited, or intoned vocalizations. For example: *ghazal khavāndan* (referring to the performance of *ghazal* poetry), *she'r khavāndan* (referring to the performance of poetry in general), *monājāt khavāndan* (referring to a special genre of prayer, often supplications), *du'ā khavāndan* (referring to prayer in general, or a special genre of prayer), *namāz* or *salāt khavāndan* (referring to a special category of daily, required prayers), *āvāz* or *āhang khavāndan* (referring to the voice, a song, tune, or melody), and *maddāh khavāndan* (referring to maddāh).<sup>8</sup> In addition, the context in which a term is used determines its meaning. For instance, *monājāt* usually refers to the use of the voice alone; however, in the context of maddāh performance, it refers to a specific section of the vocal and instrumental performance. Moreover, certain terms can encompass other terms and concepts. For instance, the terms for religious, devotional, or mystical music, including maddāh, can encompass the terms *musiqiye shafāi* (healing music) or *musiqiye darmāni* (music medicine/remedy).

## Maddāh

Maddāh is a special term imbued with mystical, historical, and didactic meaning. Literally, maddāh means praise and generally refers to a genre of sung, panegyric poetry found throughout history in Persian-, Arabic-, and Turkic-speaking cultures. Depending upon local language conventions, the term and its variants (*madā*, *maddoh*, *meddah*, *madh*, *maddai*, *madih*) can have different meanings, referring to one or more aspects of performance, including the music, the prayer/poetry, a section of the performance, the genre as a whole, a regular, often weekly ceremony in which maddāh is performed, or the master musician/panegyrist. In Tajikistan, maddāh typically refers to the foremost genre of religious music among the Isma‘ilis of Badakhshan. *Maddābkhāni* (*maddābkhavāni*) specifically refers to the ceremony or devotional gathering where maddāh is performed. “Maddākhān” (*maddābkhavān*) refers to the master singer/performer of maddāh.<sup>9</sup> All the maddākhāns with whom I worked were men—a typical aspect of this genre. However, there is a woman who is a legendary, elder maddākhān, who has lived in the capital city Khorog. Two of my Pamiri friends and field research associates did hear her on one occasion many years ago and stated, “Her maddāh is very good, full of spiritual power (*baraka*).” Unfortunately, they had not seen her for years and did not know her location and if she were still living.

The sung prayer/poetry of maddāh is predominantly from the “classic” period of Persian Sufi poetry, roughly from the tenth to the late fifteenth centuries.<sup>10</sup> Maddāh draws from the works of such poets as Shams-e Tabrizi, Sanai, Khosrow, Sa‘di, Rudaki, Hafez, Jami, Hilali, and others.<sup>11</sup> The vast majority however, is from Jalāl al-Din Rumi (1207–73). Maddāh performance consists of multiple, often overlapping poetic forms, including *ghazal*, *rubāiyāt*, *qasida*, *masnavi*, and *mukhammas*, as well as the prayer forms of *monājāt* and *du‘ā*. Passages from the Qur‘an and hadith are also employed in maddāh performance, as are spontaneous, inspired poems, prayers, and vocalizations of the maddākhān, accompanying musicians, and other community members who attend a maddākhāni. These forms and expressions are interwoven and linked together in flexible ways, allowing for the inspiration of the moment to guide the performance. Maddāh shares some ceremonial and formal musical aspects with *samā‘*, *zeker* (see Koen 2003), *qawwālī*, and other religious/devotional musics in general, which can also be viewed as facilitating healing in varying degrees of intensity and specificity. For instance, throughout the final section of maddāh, there is an increase in volume, intensity, and tempo, as well as a simultaneous rise in vocal range, which is similar to the above-mentioned genres. Maddāh is also unique in its musical, poetic forms, as well as its cultural, religious, and medical functions. For instance, although a subsection of maddāh might include a complete

ghazal of Hafez, which could be found in a South Asian qawwālī or classical Persian *radif* performance, maddāh's rhythm, melody, harmony, and form are unique, nor does it follow the same performance practice as the other genres (see, for example, Qureshi 1995; Manuel 1988/89; Nettl 1992; and Tala'i 2000). Moreover, in addition to the flexible mixing of multiple forms of poetry and prayer, Berg (1997) shows that in the context of maddāh, certain poems (ghazals, for example) are often transformed into the five-lined mukhammas. Furthermore, by comparing scholarly editions of published poems with field recordings, or with the handwritten notebooks (*daftar*) of maddāh performers, which contain local versions of orally transmitted Sufi poetry, a process of textual interpolation becomes evident, which has resulted in local versions of poems maintaining differences unique to Pamir.

Maddāh is regularly performed on Thursday or Friday evenings, and can last up to several hours—at times extending to the dawn of the following day. Maddāh serves several functions in Pamiri culture, being performed for devotion, worship, education, at funerals, memorials, rituals of mourning, on certain religious occasions or commemorations, and as a healing ceremony. These functions are not mutually exclusive. Thus, at any given maddāhkāne, one or more of these functions might be the specific reason an individual chooses to participate.

Maddāh is typically performed in the largest, main room of the Pamiri home. The room is considered sacred and is accorded a special degree of reverence—one sign of this being that shoes are not worn on the main seating area. The main floor is typically raised, providing an underneath section that can be heated with coals or embers during the dangerously cold winter months. During maddāh performance, the room is transformed into the sacred, ceremonial space known as the *maddābkhāne* (khāne=house/home/room). During more than a generation of Soviet oppression, when local beliefs, practices, and expressions of Pamiri/Isma'ili/Islamic culture were forbidden and systematically repressed, the maddāhkāne, which, to the uninitiated, appears to be just a large room, enabled the Pamiri home to secretly function as a family or local mosque. Thus, within the physical structure of the Pamiri home, two central institutions of local belief, the maddāhkāne and the mosque, were quietly kept alive during the era of Soviet control. Due to this dual function, the physical room that comprises the sacred place of the maddāhkāne is perhaps the most important built structure in Badakhshan.

## Healing through Maddāh

As a healing ceremony, maddāh exists within a web of diverse healing praxes, including several forms of music and prayer, as well as traditional, herbal, and biomedical treatments.<sup>12</sup> While there is an underlying aspect of

maddāh performance that relates to overall health and general well being, there is also the potential for a specific healing effect to occur, or to cure a specific illness. With respect to a curative effect, it seems that much depends upon an individual's intention and attention. In discussing healing experiences with participants, my informants always mentioned that they hoped or intended for healing to occur, and that their thoughts were focused on God, a spiritual dimension, or a kind of nothingness, allowing the music and words to penetrate deeply into their beings, which in turn would create a healing effect. Elaborating on this theme, one traditional healer and religious leader, who primarily communicated through his apprentice, and whose specialty was the application of specific prayers to heal specific ailments, explained that maddāh "has a special power to heal the mind and spirit because of the sound power (*qodrat-e sedā*) [both of the voice and instruments],—the sound making the spiritual power greater, but it does not affect everyone the same." In his own practice (which did not include maddāh), he reserved singing in a loud voice (*khavāndan bā sedāye/āvāz-e boland*) (either himself or a patient) for only certain, advanced stages of treatment, saying, "If patients are not ready for the power of the sound, they might be harmed psychologically." He believed that maddāh was an example of sound power that can effect healing. If he thought it beneficial, he might send a patient to a maddāh ceremony, but not as a regular practice. In addition, he believed that patients could help themselves to heal by "learning, memorizing, and wearing the empowered words of certain prayers." Often he would assign a patient to read and memorize a specific prayer and then meditate upon it. The apprentice explained that this also underlies the practice of maddāh, which "itself is for worship, and because it is prayer, meditation, and music, is especially powerful and can heal specific ailments." Maddāh's potential to heal "specific ailments" in large part lies in the cognitive-spiritual domain of intention and attention—intending to heal and attending to words, symbols, metaphors, and dimensions that range from the highly specific to the infinitely expansive and non-specific, facilitating a kind of flexibility of consciousness necessary to bring about a transformation in a patient. Simultaneously, certain rhythmic aspects of the music of maddāh also encourage a similar flexibility of consciousness, which directs a patient's mind toward healing.

### **Baraka and the Self**

For the maddāh participants with whom I worked, two aspects of Pamiri belief and worldview stand out as being central to the potential for healing through maddāh—namely, the view of the self and the belief in a spiritual power known as baraka. The self is viewed as being essentially spiritual, with a soul that is eternal, living beyond the death of the physical body. The

lower self or *nafs*, is the self (or that aspect of self) from which one should detach, and to which one should not give attention. The true or higher self is viewed as a three-part whole known as *aql-tan-ruh/jān*. *Aql* refers to the mind and intellect, *tan* refers to the body and the physical aspect of life, and *ruh/jān* refers to spirit/soul and the spiritual or metaphysical aspect of life. It is important to note that *tan* (body) is intimately linked to the mind and soul in this three-part whole. *Tan* can be viewed as a kind of link between the lower and higher aspects of self, being the primary vehicle of action or “enactment” (Varela et al. 1991) in life and always having the potential to facilitate progression or regression of the self (i.e., to perform acts that imbue an individual with *ruh/jān* or *nafs*).

While the *tan*, or the physical aspect of the self, is not denied, there is a preference for the spiritual/mystical aspect. This local tendency toward the spiritual is perhaps best understood by the concept of *bātin/zāher*, which is current among *maddāh* participants, as well as Pamiri *Isma‘ilis* and *Sufis* in general (see further Schimmel 1975; and Lapidus 1992). *Bātin* refers to that which is inner, mystical, spiritual, and invisible, while *zāher* generally refers to the outer, tangible, physical, visible world. *Bātin* and *zāher* also frame the local *Isma‘ili* approach to religion, which is concerned more with the inner, mystical meaning, rather than outer form and rhetoric.

*Baraka*, a central aspect of local belief, is a spiritual power or energy that can heal, bless, protect, guide, edify, enlighten, and transform people, as well as effect change in the physical and spiritual worlds. *Baraka* emanates from God and is manifest in the world, in people, places, and things. Most often, *baraka* is associated with the founders of major religions; prophets; imams; holy people; saints; religious leaders—mullas and *khalifas*; and mystical figures—*pīrs*, *mīrs*, dervishes, and *maddāhkhāns*. In addition, personal items and places associated with holy figures, as well as other special places in the natural and built environment are believed to possess *baraka*.

In the context of a *maddāh* ceremony, several levels of *baraka* interact, forming overlapping layers of potential healing energy. For instance, the Pamir Mountains, viewed locally as a majestic creation of God and as a region associated with various holy figures—most importantly the *Isma‘ili pīr Naser Khosrow*—are believed to contain and emit *baraka*. Within this mountainous region, the *maddāhkhāne* is believed to contain a special degree of *baraka*. In addition, the *maddāhkhān* is believed to embody *baraka* and have the power to facilitate the flow of *baraka* through the performance of *maddāh*. The poems/prayers of *maddāh* themselves are believed to possess *baraka*, and close association with these empowered words can bring about transformation of the self and healing. This association comes in many forms both during and outside of performance: by meditating upon the words, allowing the different levels of meaning to penetrate one’s being (*aql-tan-ruh/jān*) and

effect a change; by singing along with the maddākhān at certain points of a performance; by reciting or singing in a low voice during performance; and by wearing the tumār prayer-amulets, which are believed to possess even a greater degree (at times disease-specific form) of baraka.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the maddākhān and accompanying musicians, by virtue of their role as performers, maintain a unique association with the words of maddāh. Finally, in varying degrees, participants contain baraka within themselves. Through the process of a maddāh performance, the baraka within an individual joins or intermingles with the external levels of baraka. In this regard, a local khalīfa explained that during a maddāh ceremony, there is an increase and intensification of the flow of baraka between the dimensions of bātin and zāher. Through maddāh, participants seek to enter a purified state of consciousness to transcend the physical world and transform or leave behind the nafs (lower self), more fully incorporating ruh/jān (spirit/soul) into their *beings*, not just their physical bodies. In this sense, a process of “embeingment” rather than embodiment best describes the levels at which maddāh is efficacious—that is, it positively effects change on all levels of the self (aql-tan-ruh/jān), and the nafs.

I was often fortunate to participate in a maddākhāni with a local khalīfa or mulla, whose role it was to explain maddāh’s multiple levels of meaning—specifically its textual, didactic, and mystical meanings. This role is regarded as a sacred duty and honor. On one such occasion, and in the context of an interview, a young khalīfa conveyed his personal experience of the healing effects of maddāh within the broader context of music, prayer, and healing, saying:

There is something special I feel if there is any problem or illness that I have, after hearing or listening [to maddāh], all the problems disappear. The particular problem that I felt, and every problem, they all disappear . . . this is what happens to me . . . in all respects, the soul, mind, body—in whatever way I am ill, from that perspective, be it soul or mind, I get a kind of feeling, a special condition, and to the degree of illness, I listen to maddāh to that degree. The healing is different each time. Depending on the illness and my feeling, the illness feels like it just disappears, or I feel something else, it is not one way, the healing happens in multiple ways. Sometimes its stronger or weaker, the feeling or special atmosphere varies.

Our interview went on for about half an hour, then we paused for a moment, smiling, and it seemed that our interview had concluded for the time being. Then he turned to the maddākhān, then to the rest of those gathered, and said with a smile and joyful tone in his voice, “O.K., now he (the maddākhān) can sing/chant/play a monājāt!” and he did.

Afterward, the khalīfa went on to discuss the preventive aspect of maddāh as it relates to a person’s daily actions. As is often the case in Pamir, he

began with a poem to explain the essence of meaning: *Az to barakat, Az khodā barakat*, “From your action, from God blessings/spiritual power; this couplet [which is often invoked in daily life in Pamir] shows a connection between the individual and baraka. So you see, an individual’s actions form one path through which baraka gives healing.” He described this healing potential as a mystical process or bounty that “is in God’s hands.” Following in this line of thought, he went on to discuss the didactic aspect of maddāh, stating that it gives counsel to individuals as to what is *halāl* and *harām* (allowed and forbidden) in life, what are an individual’s spiritual duties, as well as what constitutes healthy living. That which constitutes healthy living, or that which can bring about illness or healing, might pertain more to one or more aspects of the tripartite whole of aql-tan-ruh/jān, yet will have an impact on the whole. He concluded by saying,

So, I think deeply, meditate on the meaning, on the words of God, and something happens, a change, I become well—in my body, my thoughts, my well-being and spirit . . . it’s mystical, a thing that is spiritual, but effects everything . . . Sometimes people have a serious physical or mental illness and they become healed too—not always, as I said, everything is in the hands of God, but I have witnessed it.

### Baraka and the Poetry of Maddāh

Internalizing baraka through participating in a maddāh is viewed as a preventive practice (if one is healthy), and as a curative practice if one is ill. In the poetry of maddāh, words that imply healing and transformation are often related to God or to the *panjtan* (five holy bodies/people), the holy family of Islam: Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Hosayn. For instance: *āb-e dān* (the water of God/pure knowledge), *shafā* and *darmān* (healing/cure/remedy/medicine), *bakhsb* (forgiveness), *qovat* (power/strength), ruh (spirit), jān (soul), *pāk* (pure), *qaraz* (transformation/purification), and baraka. In the following lines from a maddāh performance by Ostad Akbarshah, many important relationships between belief, symbols, metaphors, and the maddāhkhāne are emphasized. Most importantly, the meanings among these relationships are explicitly directed toward healing. Thus, the excerpt below provides one example where the words of maddāh enter the cognitive-spiritual domain as a participant attends to the words and their multiple levels of meaning, and intends to achieve a healing transformation. Moreover, these are common themes in maddāh, often conveyed in general terms, as specific didactic councils, or in the form of stories (see, e.g., Berg 1997:228–33).

1. Ābe dān ke asl hame kāyenāte in panjand
2. Sotune khāneye in, shesh jihāt in panjand
3. Qabule haje siam, salāte in panjand
4. Shafiye in jomleye ‘Ali nejāte in panjand . . .

5. Va az in fitrat arz o samā, lab o qalam . . .
  6. Bā har chi labe khiālam, nāme panjtan rā did
  7. Qaraze fitrat ze ātesh sharife khod fahmid . . .
  8. Ay najāte bakhs bānui nabinad dargah tafā'ul . . .
  9. Shafā keande Aiyub dāfi' kermān
  10. Darmāne āteshe suzān negahe be khalil
1. The life-giving water of God that is the essence of all things is the panjtan,
  2. The pillars of this house—the panjtan [encompass] all directions,
  3. Acceptance of pilgrimage, fasting, and prayer (salāt), depends on them [the panjtan],
  4. Our intercessor from this group is 'Ali, our helper,
  5. And from this power of God [baraka] comes the earth and heaven, utterance and the revealed word . . .
  6. Whatever I say or think, the names of the panjtan are seen,
  7. Transformation/purification by the fire of God's power reveals the noble self,
  8. O forgiving Lord, protect all from the door of evil . . .
  9. Healing was given to Job by the protector of Kerman,
  10. The burning fire of healing/cure comes from seeing the friend of God.

The above-lines were transcribed from the opening seven minutes of a maddāh performance. I have omitted some lines that were repetitive and included numbers for ease of reference, not to indicate any formal structure. Line 1 sets the stage of belief within which healing can occur—specifically a belief that the panjtan embody the power of creation. Line 2 symbolically and metaphorically links the five pillars of the maddāhkhāne to a kind of immersion in the mystical space that the pillars and the panjtan preserve. Line 3 then mentions three of the five central practices of Islam, indicating that the true performance of these acts is dependent on the acceptance of the panjtan. Moreover, this implies that acceptance of an act is not necessarily dependent of the specific form of a practice; rather, acceptance is dependent on the purity of spirit in which an act is performed. Line 4 emphasizes the special position of 'Ali among the Pamiri Isma'ilis and his role as their intercessor. Line 5 recalls the meaning of Line 1, further emphasizing the creative power in the panjtan and adding that the power is also in the *lab o qalam* (lit., “lip and pen”). *Lab* implies the power of utterance, and *qalam*, the power of writing. Moreover, both of these terms can refer to divine revelation in general, and specifically to Muhammad as a channel for God's revelation through utterance or sayings/traditions (hadith) and writing (Qur'an). Line 6 then connects all of this to the individual, implying that one's words and thoughts should be pure and see the panjtan at all times. Line 7 builds on Line 6, suggesting that through pure words and thoughts (and all that this implies), a transformation of self can occur. Specifically, this line draws upon a common theme in Sufism, which is that through the fire of the love of God, the lower self (*nafs*) can be burned away and replaced by the higher self, which

is closer to God, and which thinks and sees only good (Line 6). Line 8 is an invocation, asking that God protect all people from the “door of evil,” which is the evil of the lower self. This line highlights a common Isma‘ili view that is inclusive, rather than separatist, asking that God protect all people, not just their community. Line 9 gives a historical example of Job’s deliverance from suffering, which is attributed to Shah Nematollah Vali, the fifteenth-century Sufi saint whose tomb lies in the vicinity of Kerman, Iran, and who is known as the “protector of Kerman.” Line 10 again draws on the metaphor of fire as healing (*darmān*). Importantly, healing is linked to an individual’s actions and “seeing the friend of God.” The “friend” here can indicate two levels, the Prophet Muhammad (and by extension the *panjtan*), as well as those that are in the process of “embeingment” toward a more God-like self.

### Meaning and Baraka in Music and Place

*Ma‘ani* (literally “meaning”) is a word that is often found throughout a discussion of the healing power of *maddāh*. The meanings conveyed through performance are believed to be efficacious and relate to different dimensions of life, including the physical, emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual. In addition, participants’ belief in the healing power of *maddāh*’s prayers and ceremonial practices forms an underlying fabric within which meaning is assigned. Through metaphors and symbols, cognitive associations with locally ascribed meaning facilitate the flow, increase, or manifestation of *baraka*, thereby creating the efficacy of *maddāh* as a medical intervention, and by extension, other genres of prayer that might occur during or outside of the ceremony.

As one *khalifa* explained, “Through thoughts and remembrance/mentioning we can better understand the meanings of *maddāh*; through thoughts and remembrance/mentioning we become closer to God . . . and this is healing.” The thoughts and remembering/mentioning that are often indicated in performance relate to mystical and religious subjects, as well as activities of daily life. For instance, in one performance in *Ishkishim*, the *maddāhkhān* advised listeners to “avoid forbidden foods, thoughts, lustful desires and actions,” while explaining the spiritual consequences of not following such guidance, namely that “physical and spiritual illness would ensue and the individual would fall out of God’s favor.” Moreover, certain symbols and metaphors stand out as central vehicles of meaning in *maddāh*. The number five—in addition to its association with the five pillars of Islam (prayer, alms-giving, the pilgrimage, fasting, and the declaration of faith)—represents a significant and power-laden symbol and metaphor of local belief (see further Koen 2003). Five is a symbol intimately linked to *baraka*, giving sacred meaning to and even defining many elements of Pamiri culture, including the architectural design

of the Pamiri home and maddākhāne, the individual, the Isma'ili community, central religious beliefs, the natural and mystical landscape, poetry/prayer forms, and the music of maddāh.<sup>14</sup>

### **Five: The Architectural Embodiment of Meaning<sup>15</sup>**

The maddākhāne within the Pamiri home has a specific architectural design, which embodies central religious beliefs and contributes to its role as a place of healing. Often, various aspects of its built form, which are somewhat flexible in their meaning, are described as originating in Zoroastrianism and other ancient, pre-Islamic beliefs. However, several specific meanings are commonly shared among Pamiri Isma'ilis. These relate to the primary structure of the maddākhāne and the role of baraka in healing. Architecturally, the room is supported in part by five structural pillars, which collectively represent the holy family of Islam (the panjtan). Each pillar represents one of the panjtan and has a specific structural role and symbolic meaning. The pillar that represents Muhammad is centrally located, providing the most structural support and maintaining a pre-eminent symbolic position. The second and third pillars represent 'Ali and Fatima, while the final two pillars represent Hasan and Hosayn. These last two pillars are joined by a decorated crossbeam and form the entranceway to the maddākhāne (Keshavjee 1998:250–55). The panjtan are viewed as the primary channels of God's baraka. Thus, the pillars symbolically create a baraka-laden, sacred place for the mystical experience of maddāh performance.

In addition, one of the pillars of the maddākhāne room represents *salāt*, a specific category of daily, required prayer. Participants often recite other prayers—*du'ā* or *monājāt*—as a preparation for performance. *Monājāt* (prayer/supplication) is also the first formal section of a typical maddāh performance. The second section, *haydari* (referring to the Imam 'Ali, who is represented by one of the pillars) draws on examples from the *sunna*<sup>16</sup> and beyond, often recounting historical or legendary examples where the power of prayer is shown to be efficacious in healing or able to effect a positive change in general. Finally, the *setāyesh* (praise) is yet another kind of prayer and the third and final section of a typical performance.

### **Instrumental Embodiment of Meaning**

Prayer permeates all aspects of a maddāh ceremony, including the instruments and music. The most important instrument of maddāh is the long-necked lute known as the Pamiri *rubāb*. The *tanbur* (also a long-necked lute), at times replaces the *rubāb*, but most often accompanies it during performance. Other accompaniment instruments include the *dāyere* (frame drum), and at times the *ghizbak* or *kamānche* (spike fiddle). There can be

more than one of all the above-mentioned instruments. However, maddāh can also be performed solo by the maddāhkhān, who sings and plays the rubāb, or at times, the tanbur. The typical performance includes one or two rubābs (or one rubāb and one tanbur), and one or two dāyeres.

The rubāb in particular embodies and conveys a complex meaning linked to Pamiri cosmology, mythology, religious belief, and prayer practices—often having prayers carved into the neck or written on the skin that covers the body of the instrument (Koen 2003:80–82). Similarly, prayers are often written and carved into the tanbur and written on the skin portions of the dāyere. The ghizhak can also have prayers written onto or scratched into the metal or wooden resonance chamber, as well as the neck of the instrument.

### **Aspects of Musical Form**

Maddāh is distinct from other genres in the country and region. However, it is closely related to another local genre known as falak (lament). It was often mentioned to me by older maddāhkhāns, folk and sheshmaqām musicians, as well as young pop musicians, that maddāh was “completely different from and unrelated to the sheshmaqām,” having its own unique form, rhythms and melodies (see Daring and Levin 2002; Berg and Belle 1994; and Kasmai 1992 for audio examples of the setāyesh section of maddāh; there are no extant published recordings of a complete maddāh ceremony).

Maddāh consists of three broad sections (monājāt, haydari, setāyesh), which often contain many sub-sections and interludes, and which are guided by a flexibility that is inherent in the genre. Nevertheless, a consistent aspect of each section, as well as of the overall form, is a movement from low to high, which seems to metaphorically reflect the spiritual purpose of maddāh—to move from the lower self to the higher self. From the beginning to the end, various sonic aspects of the music increase, including the amplitude, frequency, and complexity of waveforms. In addition, the rhythmic structure becomes more complex as the performance progresses, and the tempo increases—at times maintaining a faster pace, or continually increasing in tempo throughout.

The ritual performance of maddāh begins in silence, with participants sitting throughout the sacred space, mentally preparing and waiting for the maddāhkhān to begin. The maddāhkhān might recite a prayer in a low voice for his personal preparation to begin what is considered to be a sacred act. He then enters the monājāt section by playing the rubāb, alternating unique and repetitive strumming patterns and melodic lines. After approximately one or two minutes, the voice enters, doubling the melody of the rubāb, as well as alternating with it. During this section, the maddāhkhān might loudly call or cry out a brief invocation or admonition from the poem, only to quickly

return to the overall quiet tone of the introductory *monājāt*. Throughout this vocal and instrumental interaction, there is a constant interchange between a pulse-structured organization and a free-rhythmic organization of music. This format slowly progresses for a duration ranging from a few minutes to approximately twenty minutes.<sup>17</sup> The *dāyere* is added in the next section, or *haydari*, overall providing a strong duple-metered organization. At the end of poetic verses, the *dāyere* changes from the duple-meter organization and doubles the melodic rhythm of the *rubāb* rather than playing a contrasting, supportive rhythmic pattern. The final section, *setāyesh*, is the climax of the performance and the culmination of multiple levels of meaning. It often includes spontaneous vocalizations of the performers and community members. The words of the *maddāhkhān* become increasingly difficult to discern as he and others are progressively imbued with mystical feelings, carrying them into altered states of consciousness, often into a spiritual states of ecstasy. In addition, the meaning of the verses sung in this section often becomes increasingly obfuscated.

The rhythmic organization of the *setāyesh* is unique and can be understood in multiple ways. In addition to the multiple meanings assigned to the number five in Pamiri culture, the *setāyesh* section can be viewed as being in a quintuple musical meter. This conceptualization of quintuple meter is not a local view, but one that I came to through my listening and analysis. Interestingly, the musical symbol of five, found in the quintuple meter, seems to form a connection between music, belief, environment, symbol, and metaphor (see further Koen 2003:82–88). Moreover, the juxtaposition of triple and duple meters in the *setāyesh* (discussed below) encourages, I would suggest, a flexibility of consciousness, which frames and facilitates the experience of healing for participants.

### **Cognitive Flexibility**

By further exploring the rhythmic and metric structure of the *setāyesh*, I wish to posit that the process of *maddāh* performance, with its many symbols and metaphors, encourages a certain cognitive flexibility, engendering an altered, higher state of consciousness, and facilitating healing. Cognitive flexibility refers to “the ability to spontaneously restructure one’s knowledge” by “criss-crossing conceptual landscapes” (Spiro and Jehng 1990:165–69). Most often, cognitive flexibility has been applied to advancing a constructivist approach to learning. However, Hinton (1999) effectively applies cognitive flexibility theory to the musical healing practices of the Isan people of Northern Thailand, where symbol and metaphor are key components of ritual healing (see also Kirmayer 1993). Hinton links cognitive flexibility to a process of mimesis, where Isan healing music mirrors and represents

aspects of the natural environment. Both healer and patient embody the cultural metaphors, shapes, and symbols in the environment and music to accomplish the goal of healing (Hinton 1999). Notably, cognitive flexibility can be seen to undergird the works of Roseman (1991) and Friedson (1996), inasmuch as the theory rests upon the central notion that traversing and integrating conceptual domains is essential to achieve a specific outcome (e.g., healing), or to create a certain effect. Building upon Schutz's "provinces of meaning" (1967:232), Roseman describes a type of cognitive flexibility stating "[p]articipation in one province of meaning replaces participation in another province of meaning, each respectively contributing to a total frame of reference" (Roseman 1991:152). She suggests that "[t]he provinces of meaning . . . need not always be finite: participation in one province might overlay or intersect another, rendering 'nonfinite' provinces of meaning." This interplay between provinces is in part one way to understand healing experiences among the Temiar. Friedson cites a *vimbuza* patient who states, "When I listen to the *vimbuza* drums I begin to lose track of whether they are outside or inside my head." Friedson begins to understand this through a shift in his consciousness and experience of listening where "[t]hrees' were becoming 'twos' and vice versa." He suggests a "mirroring" between the shifting rhythmic structure or "metric doubling" of *vimbuza* drumming and the "consciousness-doubling" of the healer's trance-state (Friedson 1996:158–62). The effect of the music, especially the "shifting" aspect of it, seems to focus and alter consciousness to achieve the goals of trance and, ultimately, healing.

In the case of *maddāh*, cognitive flexibility describes the meditative, flexible mind/body/soul-state of participants—a state that facilitates the restructuring of the self by integrating the *baraka* conveyed through the music, text, symbols, and metaphors of performance. In addition to the above-mentioned form and musical movement from low to high, the two-against-three rhythmic structure of the *setāyesh*, discussed below, encourages cognitive flexibility.

Local musicians most often describe the *setāyesh* as something mystical, spiritual, "for giving thanks," "very unique and wonderful," and full of *baraka*. When asked specifically about the music, the response would generally be essentially the same. When asked about the playing the rhythm of the *setāyesh*, musicians would simply show the rhythm, without the need of any term other than "*setāyesh*." Musicians, the *khalīfa*, and other participants would consistently describe the *setāyesh* section as a "feeling" or "atmosphere"—a time where regular consciousness would change into another consciousness. The *khalīfa* interviewed above, on another occasion said that when listening to *maddāh*, especially the *setāyesh*, "My thought changes . . . and becomes another thought, a mystical/spiritual thought." In discussing the *setāyesh* with multiple performers and participants, the overall meaning was central. The potential to change consciousness was attributed to the confluence of

baraka, which intensifies during this section, and which is conveyed through multiple levels of sound and meaning. Musicians emphasize the change in the *dāyere*'s rhythm during the *setāyesh* as critical for a successful performance. While cognitive flexibility during ritual performance might occur through different means, and is not necessarily dependent on any one element, the rhythmic structure of the *setāyesh* is a key component for creating the spiritual aesthetic of *maddāh*, and thereby is critical for effecting a change of consciousness.

The distinctive rhythmic structure of the *setāyesh*, combined with the underlying, five evenly-spaced pulses, is perhaps best described as an interaction or overlaying of flexible triple and duple meters—or three against two. An excerpt from a performance by *Ostād Nazar* will serve to illustrate. In Example 1, I present a transcription of an excerpt in staff notation to provide some sense of what is typical of the *setāyesh*. The poetic phrase translates as “O star, O guiding light, O light of this gathering! No silence, I shall not be silent.”

The melodic material for a complete *maddāh* performance is much more than is presented in this excerpt. Most often, a chromatic scale spanning one-and-a-half to two octaves provides a kind of sound palette from which modes and melodies are built. Usually, the tritone (from the beginning note of the chromatic scale) is omitted. In the performance whence this excerpt comes, the scale is based on *d* and the range extends to *g1*, with the note *g#* being omitted. There are many melodic and rhythmic subtleties in the music which cannot be exactly represented by staff notation. The trill marks in the voice part indicate a melodic movement more akin to an extended turn, where the voice moves both above and below the written note by an interval of a quarter-tone or less. The dashed lines between notes in the *dāyere* indicate a roll with the left hand. The written notes of the *dāyere* part do not indicate exact pitches. Rather, the lower note indicates a stroke in the middle of the drum, producing the drum's lowest sound, and the upper note indicates a stroke close to the drum's rim, producing a higher sound. Notice that the rhythm of the *dāyere* and *rubāb* are the same and create a pattern of eight accents across five evenly spaced beats, which in the next figure are discussed as the juxtaposition of duple and triple meters. Also note that the beginning of the poetic phrase coincides with beat one of the measure one. While not every poetic phrase begins exactly on beat one, with entrances often being syncopated or delayed, it is clear that poetic phrases and verses correspond to the recurrent rhythmic pattern of eight accents and the  $5/4$  meter.

In Figure 1, I present a graphic of a waveform to visually show this rhythmic structure in the sound itself (hoping to avoid a certain level of interpretation implicit in standard notation). The word “Triple” on the top left of the graph indicates a triple meter (e.g.,  $3/4$ ). The word “Duple” on the

**Example 1. An excerpt of the setāyesh section from a performance by Ostād Sultan Nazar.**

Voice

Rubāb

Dāyere

Ay Yā se-tā - re. yā che rāgh.

yā che rāgh. az an jo man.

na sa ku tā na ko nam.

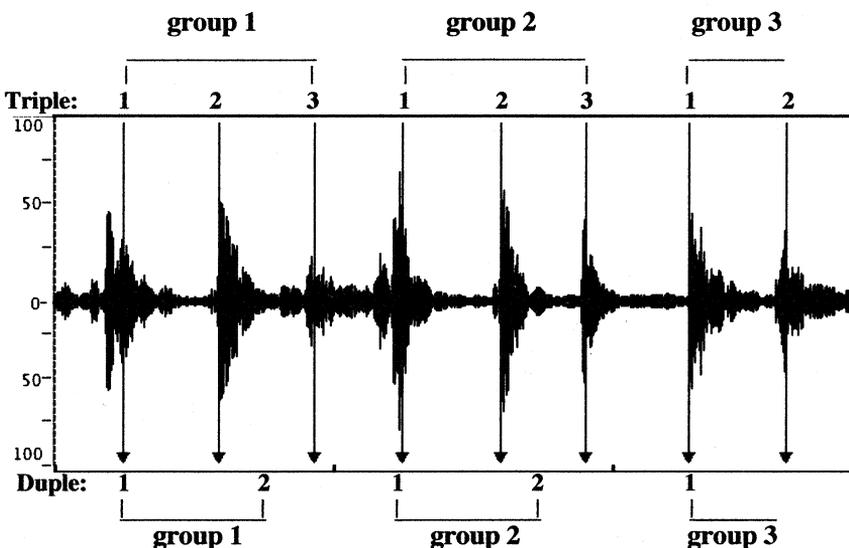
bottom left indicates a duple meter (e.g., 2/4). Thus, a flexible three-against-two meter is suggested. Note that before the first marker in the waveform, roughly between the numbers 50 indicated on the left vertical axis, an amplitude peak can be seen, which is not indicated as pulse 1. This is an upward strum/anticipation on the rubāb—the musically strong pulse begins where marker 1 is placed. A similar, but smaller anticipation can be seen before the second number 1 near the middle of the waveform. Vertical markers within

the waveform identify eight pulses, or amplitude peaks, which are created by the rubāb strums and dāyere strokes. The graph represents one cycle of the pattern that repeats throughout the setāyesh. The purpose of this analysis is not to prove that the setāyesh is constructed in a strict three-against-two polymeter. Rather, it is to show that a special rhythmic relationship exists between what I have called flexible triple and duple meters, which, I suggest, encourages the process of cognitive flexibility.

A flexible triple meter is suggested above the graphic with three groups indicated. Groups 1 and 2 each contain three pulses, rendering two complete repetitions of a triple-metered structure (or two measures in  $3/4$  meter, each group representing a measure). Group 3 comprises only pulses 1 and 2 (not a complete measure in other words). Each of these pulses corresponds to an amplitude peak within the waveform. Below the graphic, the same organization exists, but in a flexible, duple meter. Groups 1 and 2 each contain two pulses, rendering two complete repetitions in a duple-metered structure (or two measures in  $2/4$  meter). Group 3 contains only one pulse (again, not a complete measure)—together making a total of five evenly spaced pulses. These can be considered more evenly spaced since two of the pulses fall between the markers within the waveform. These two pulses are most often musically implied, rather than accented.

Within each repetitive, regular cycle, there is an internal fluidity that

Figure 1. One cycle (or measure in  $5/4$  meter) from Example 1.



is consistent throughout the performance. In addition, there is a sense of forward motion created by the final two pulses in the triple meter, and the final pulse in the duple meter. As mentioned above, there are two complete repetitions of each meter—triple: 1, 2, 3; 1, 2, 3; and duple: 1, 2; 1, 2. Then, rather than another repetition, a shortened structure is presented. In the case of triple meter, only Pulses 1 and 2 are presented, and in duple meter, only Pulse 1. Instead of completing the established metric structure, the cycle begins anew, further facilitating cognitive flexibility. When the *setāyesh* is performed in a faster tempo, Pulse 2 of Groups 1 and 2 in the triple meter becomes shorter in duration, perhaps encouraging even a greater feeling of forward motion inherent in the structure.

Commenting on my analysis, *maddāh* performers, while they could certainly follow the quintuple organization, made it clear that meter had nothing to do with how they conceive of or perform the *setāyesh*. In one sense, this makes the phenomenon more interesting since the culturally meaningful symbol of five is found in the sound structure without the conscious intent of the performers. *Maddāh* musicians agreed and many were even quite delighted, saying that five being part of the music of *maddāh* was *besyār aĵab*, *besyār jāleb-ast*—“very wonderful/remarkable, it is very interesting.”

For some participants, the feeling of a cyclic, non-stop, forward motion of the *setāyesh*, in tandem with the spiraling, mystical verses of prayer/poetry, encourages a kind of movement or further unfolding of consciousness that does not allow one’s thoughts to stay in the dimension of the *nafs*. The *baraka* of the music and poetry are increased and further intertwined during the *setāyesh*. Each rhythmic cycle pushes the voice of the *maddāhkhān* to the next poetic verse, at times with a sense of energy/abandon that might be compared to the feeling one experiences at the borderline between maintaining/losing control while walking down a steep hill. Participants engage in a cognitive-meditative process that seeks to traverse such a borderline—letting go of self control, allowing the hill to carry them—only in the case of *maddāh*, the metaphoric hill would carry the thoughts of participants upward, rather than downward.

## Conclusion

In viewing *maddāh* as a medical intervention, cognitive flexibility can be a frame to describe and conceptualize the processes, goals, and outcomes of music-prayer performance. Central to the present study is the conceptualization of music and prayer functioning as a unified whole, rather than separate phenomena that are oft times joined together. The overlapping components of a *maddāh* ceremony create a unique confluence of symbols and sounds

laden with cultural meaning and baraka. Together, the meaning ascribed to maddāh, as well as the baraka associated with it, are central to the Pamiri view of potential healing through maddāh. In addition, the musical structure of maddāh, particularly the setāyesh, encourages cognitive flexibility that might underlie processes of musical healing.

Participants who seek health or healing through maddāh direct their attention toward a dimension where only health exists—a state of consciousness that is characterized by a spiritual aesthetic and is defined, in part, by the nonexistence of disease. The ceremonial performance of maddāh facilitates a flexibility of consciousness, allowing a “conceptual landscape” that is associated with illness to cross over to a “conceptual landscape” that is inherently healthy and beyond illness. Through the ritual performance of maddāh, participants aim to immerse themselves in a new state of consciousness, internalize that consciousness, transfer it into the self—aql-tan-ruh/jān, and thereby bring about health and healing. Metaphorically, maddāh functions as a bridge between cognitive domains, linking conceptualizations of the self (aql, tan), which is subject to illness and disease, to conceptualizations of the spiritual self (ruh/jān), the spiritual realm, and God, which lie beyond illness and disease.

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## Notes

1. A history of the roots of medical ethnomusicology is beyond the scope of this article, building upon the work of numerous scholars from multiple disciplines in the humanities and sciences. The term “medical ethnomusicology” was introduced twice in October of 2002: in Gregory Barz’s article “No One Will Listen To Us Unless We Bring Our Drums!: AIDS and Women’s Music Performance in Uganda” (published October 28); and in a paper given by the present author on October 24 at the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology titled “Devotional, Musical Healing in the Pamir Mountains: Toward a Holistic Approach for Medical Ethnomusicology.”

2. A unique aspect of the methodology for the overall project from which the present study arises was the employment of physiological experiments in the context of field research to measure certain indices of bodily response in the context of ceremonial healing. These data, while important to the project as a whole, and thus important to note here, are beyond the present article and will be published in an edited volume of proceedings from the first conference on

medical ethnomusicology held at Florida State University, 9–10 October 2004. The conference was funded by the FSU Council on Research and Creativity as a joint project between the School of Music and the College of Medicine (see further <http://www.music.fsu.edu/ethno-conference.htm>).

3. See Catlin-Jairazbhoy (2004) for a discussion of the devotional music of the Isma'ilis of South Asia.

4. In English, the language of Tajikistan is known as Tajiki, Persian, or Tajik-Persian, which is essentially the same language as that of Iran. Note that "Persian," not "Farsi," is the correct name for the national language of Iran when speaking English. "Farsi" is the Persian word for the language.

5. Also known as the *dotar* (lit. "two-strings"), a long-necked lute, an instrument associated with the nomads, shamans and bards of Central Asia.

6. The preferable pronunciation of the first "a" in "shashmaqām" is like the "a" in "ash" or even like the "e" in "bed," resulting in "sheshmaqām." Producing a long "a" as in "father" in the word for "six" (i.e. *shash*) produces a different, negative meaning.

7. This is part of a model I call music-prayer dynamics, which will also be presented in detail the above-mentioned edited volume.

8. There are categories beyond these examples, which relate to other, specific genres of music and/or poetry.

9. *Khān* is from *khavāndan*=to sing/chant/recite/intone (the "av" after the "kh" remains silent in pronunciation). Another word, also "khān," with a different spelling, but the same pronunciation as the above, is an honorific that is used to refer to community leaders and other respected individuals. Although the use of "khān" in the term *maddāhkhān* literally refers to singing, since the *maddāhkhān* is one of the most highly respected individuals in Pamiri culture, there is often a double or deeper meaning, which draws on the honorific meaning of *khān*. This conflation of meaning became evident through several informal discussions with musicians, community members, and *maddāhkhāns*, where the play on words would be emphasized to attribute respect to the *maddāhkhān* or other individuals.

10. This period is usually dated from after the seventh-century Arab-Islamic conquest of Iran and the subsequent "two centuries of silence," until the death of *Jāmi* in 1492.

11. See van den Berg 1997 for an in-depth examination of the poetry of the region.

12. See Levin (1996:146, 212–15) for a brief discussion of some common, traditional approaches to healing in Central Asia.

13. The subject of *tumār* is beyond the scope of this article, existing as a separate medical intervention. They occur in the context of *maddāh* since patients might already be wearing a *tumār* before entering the *maddāh* ceremony.

14. In the aforementioned article (Koen 2003), I explore this issue as it relates to the construction and maintenance of a spiritual aesthetic in *maddāh*. Here I build upon these ideas to further investigate how the symbols and metaphors work together to facilitate healing.

15. This builds on Keshavjee's subtitle "A House of Faith: The Architectural Embodiment of Religious Belief" (Keshavjee 1998:250).

16. *Sunna* refers to the "path," life, utterances and actions of Muhammad. The *haydari* section of *maddāh* draws heavily from historical and legendary examples from the life of 'Ali, *Haydar* being one of his epithets.

17. While this is often the case, the time for each section is totally dependent upon the *maddāhkhān*'s inspiration and the purpose of performance. Moreover, when interludes or sub-sections are added, the overall performance time can be substantially increased.

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