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The Materiality of Sound, Mediation, and Practices of Listening

Observations from Historic and Contemporary Muslim Practices

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ABSTRACT In his book on the etiquette of listening, the eleventh-century scholar Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī develops a scenario which includes the context, the performer, and the listener who all contribute to turn listening into a transformative experience by which the soul of the listener is moved, his or her inner qualities are revealed, and his or her transactions with the Divine are set in motion. This paper explores in what way these elaborations are relevant for contemporary performers of religious chanting in Arab Sunni communities in the Eastern Levant. It understands chanting in Muslim religious practice as "sensational forms" (Birgit Meyer) that serve religious mediation. These sensational forms are both authorised and contested, and al-Ghazālī's ideas constitute an eminent reference for many practitioners. The paper captures al-Ghazālī's elaborations in two aspects: first, his conditioned licence of listening to music and singing as a way to engage with the Divine and earn religious merits. Second, an understanding of music's materiality that is not necessarily bound to sonic properties but becomes evident in the effect music has on listeners. Taking the concept of sorrow (*ḥuzn*) as an example, I show how al-Ghazālī's understanding of mediating sorrow, rooted in the appropriation of ancient Greek music philosophy, has given way to a broader understanding of how to convey and evoke sorrow among contemporary performers.

KEYWORDS sound, materiality, Islam, al-Ghazālī, inshād or chanting

Introduction

[1] The sonic dimension is an important element in Muslim religious practice. Many genres of recitation, preaching, and praying make use of the emotive power of music, whether terming it "music" or not necessarily so.[1] My research focuses on the voiced rendition of Arabic poetry

1 This is not the place to explore in detail the complex history of terminology connected to the term "music" in Arabic. It is sufficient to note that contemporary Muslim discourse tends to keep "music" and "singing"

and artistically composed prose. This domain of listening lies between Qurʾān recitation and Sufi ritual and comprises several vocal genres that are performed or broadcasted on occasions like the festive commemoration of the prophet's birthday, his ascension to heaven, or the sending down of the Qurʾān. These genres are generally referred to as *inshād* (chanting).[2] Besides, assemblies are held which are exclusively devoted to *inshād*.

In this paper, I would like to stress a sonic materiality, which becomes evident in its lasting impact on listeners. It describes a process of listening as a practice that rises above the mere sensory perception of the sound. This process comprises, on the one hand, responsive and active listening in the sense that listeners take part in the performance by actively responding to and shaping the process (Weinrich 2018). On the other hand, it comprises responsive and active listening through the listeners' self-preparation, as it has been analysed by Charles Hirschkind (2006) for audio-taped sermons in Egypt. Both forms postulate listening as an embodied practice and learned behaviour. [2]

The starting point for this paper is *inshād* as an event where mediation in the sense of Birgit Meyer (2009, 2020) takes place. Central to my fieldwork[3] is *inshād* as a live event, although media are used in conventional understanding, such as *inshād* broadcasts in radio and television or the use of audio files as a didactic device by performers. Chanting as a "sensational form" (Meyer 2009, 13, 2020) comprises the poetic and musical material and the sounds produced by the performance and, most notably, the interlinked process of performance and listening. The musical repertories are quite heterogeneous and comprise vocal genres rooted in the Arab art music tradition, local folk songs, or the incorporation of stylistic currents from commercial music. However, all performances feature the succession of solo and group singing and of slow, metrically free passages and rhythmic, often vivid singing, mostly accompanied by frame drums. The employment of musical sound beyond the categories of recitation and prayer is a contested practice in Muslim discourse, and thus different strategies of authorisation compete. [3]

During my fieldwork on *inshād* in urban Sunni communities in Syria and Lebanon (2009–2013), I frequently came across statements that explained the positive contribution of music in religious practice. Many of these statements I could trace back to the eminent scholar Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111). Sometimes my conversation partners directly referred to al-Ghazālī as a source. In other cases, they quoted or paraphrased his arguments without mentioning his name. In addition, al-Ghazālī is a preferred authority cited by Muslims worldwide to defend the employment of music in religious ritual and beyond, against accusations by individual religious scholars and Islamic organisations that "music" would not be allowed by [4]

terminologically separate from the vocal genres in religious practice. The hesitation or even refusal to use terms associated with secular singing (such as *ṭarab*, *taghannī*, or *alḥān*) for religious practice is partly owed to the modern discourse of defining Islam in terms of alterity. The preference for a clear-cut demarcation between "Islamic" and "non-Islamic" marks the loss of ambiguity typical of the developments since the nineteenth century (Bauer 2011).

2 Briefly on the term *inshād*, Weinrich (2018, 235–37).

3 My observations from fieldwork are embedded into a larger project on the poetic and musical genres of Muslim chant in Syria and Lebanon. Fieldwork was carried out largely in Damascus and Beirut and comprised the observation of religious festivities throughout the Islamic liturgical calendar, qualitative interviews and conversations with performers and occasionally with listeners. Since most festivities were attended by men and women alike, occupying different spaces in the venue (mostly mosques), the performing ensemble (*firqa*) was male. Only occasionally, when women were seated in a separate room, a female group performed. The ensemble usually comprised a soloist, four to eight chorus singers, and one or two frame drums.

religion. Hence, he is an important voice in the intra-religious dissent (*ikhtilāf*) on sensational forms.

[5] The main source cited in respect to music is al-Ghazālī's "Book on the Etiquette of Listening and Ecstasy" (*Kitāb Ādāb as-samāʿ wa-l-wajd*), which is part of his four-part *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm ad-dīn*).[4] The "Book on the Etiquette of Listening and Ecstasy" has been translated into English by Duncan MacDonald (1901a, 1901b, 1902). In Persian-speaking communities, the short passage on listening from the abridged version *The Alchemy of Happiness* (*Kimiyā-ye saʿādat*) is widespread. al-Ghazālī himself wrote this abridged version of his *Revival* in Persian. In a recent English translation, the passage on listening does not cover more than 25 pages (al-Ghazālī 2002), which is less than a fourth of the Arabic version's English translation. English translations of both the Arabic and its Persian abridgement enjoy great popularity and have been repeatedly reprinted (Becker 2012, 139; Jähnichen 2012).[5]

[6] I have argued that al-Ghazālī's arguments build on concepts that are rooted in the Greek philosophy of music (Weinrich 2019). In this paper, I further elaborate on listening from the angle of mediation and include contemporary practices. I will start with the question of music and materiality as it was conceived by al-Ghazālī and other authors. A summary of al-Ghazālī's elaboration on the functions of listening to music and singing follows. Two aspects will receive special attention: first, his authorisation of listening; and second, his concept of *ḥuzn* (sorrow), or, more precisely, the evocation of *ḥuzn* as a main means to bring about change in listeners towards recognition and repentance. Finally, I ask how contemporary performers and listeners deal with these two aspects and where possible changes can be identified.

Sonic Materiality

[7] Speaking of sonic materiality appears, at first, to be a contradiction in terms. Sound is not a tangible object, nor is it made of a matter that stays, but is ephemeral. How can we analyse mediation through sound, then, let alone in historic practices? Sound can become quite tangible, namely in the responses by listeners. Muslim thinkers were very aware of the fact that 'music' was different from other art forms. This becomes evident, for instance, in the writings by the so-called "Brethren of Purity." "Brethren of Purity" is the abbreviated name for a group of tenth-century authors who called themselves "The Brethren of Purity and the Friends of Loyalty" (*Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ wa-Khullān al-Wafāʾ*) and who left behind a large work of about fifty treatises on different branches of knowledge written in the form of epistles.[6] In their epistle on music, they write:

> [8] You should know, dear brother, (…), that in every craft the matter [*hayūlā*] dealt with consists of naturally occurring material, and that all its products are physical forms. The exception is music, for the 'matter' it deals with consists entirely of

4 Page numbering according to al-Ghazālī (n.d.). This print is based on the edition by Lajnat nashr ath-thaqāfa al-islāmīya in 1356-57/1937-38. Important passages have been checked against the commentary by Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī, which is considered to contain the most reliable version of al-Ghazālī's text (Griffel 2009, 15–16).

5 Besides the editions and translations that I used, see, among others, al-Ghazali. 2009. *Music and Singing*. Trans. Duncan Black MacDonald. Petaling Jaya: Islamic Book Trust; al-Ghazali. 1910. *The Alchemy of Happiness*. Trans. Claud Field. London: John Murray; Ghazzali, A.H.M. 1991. *The Alchemy of Happiness*. Trans. Claud Field and rev. E. Daniel. London: M.E. Sharpe.

6 On the Brethren of Purity, see DeCallataÿ (2013), El-Bizri (2008), especially on their writing on music, Wright (2008), Wright (2010). I use the recent Arabic edition and English translation of the epistle on music made by Owen Wright; on earlier editions and translations, Wright (2010, 1–15).

> spiritual substances [*jawāhir*], namely, the souls of those who listen to it. The effects it has on them are also entirely spiritual, for melodies, consisting of rhythms [*aṣwāt*] and tones [*naghamāt*], have effects on the souls analogous to the effects of the art of those who work with the particular material associated with their crafts. (Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 6–7 Arab., 76–77 Engl.)

The quote draws an analogy to other, material crafts: the potential effects of music are the same, only its material matter is different. It is non-physical and becomes tangible only in the recipient's response. Here, we find a remarkable confluence with modern performance theories and their emphasis on presence, aura, and materiality. According to Erika Fischer-Lichte, the materiality of performance is created by corporeality, spatiality, and tonality; and focussing on the human voice, Doris Kolesch and Sybille Krämer claim that only reception makes it stay for longer than the physical duration of its sound (Fischer-Lichte 2004, 127–227, 2008, 75–130; Kolesch and Krämer 2006, 11). [9]

The quote captures another important idea, which governed Arab music history and music-making until the late nineteenth century. The understanding of music is focussed on the performance, i.e. a process, and not on the ready-made fixed sound as such, i.e. the product. Music is not simply 'there,' embodied in an *opus perfectum*; rather, music is *happening*. The Brethren of Purity speak of music as a "craft" (*ṣināʿa*), although the English translation sometimes refers to "arts." What is meant here is "artistic production" in the Aristotelian sense (see also Kazemi 1999, 58).[7] [10]

According to the Brethren of Purity, playing an instrument and singing—in short, making music—is to work with the souls of the listeners. This idea was widely spread among Arabic-writing scholars in their time. It is expressed as the soul of the listener being moved (*taḥrīk*) correspondingly by different rhythms and melodies in a specific manner. These movements produce different impacts (*taʾthīr*) which show in different states of soul and body. These states become tangible in outwardly physical responses, affects, emotions, and behaviour. Much of these ideas are rooted in Greek musical philosophy, which was, among other Greek writings, widely received in the Islamic empire since the late eighth century (Blum 2013; Gutas 2012; Haas 2006; Kazemi 1999). [11]

al-Ghazālī remarks on this matter, too: [12]

> they [measured tones] do have on the souls a remarkable effect: some make to rejoice and some to grieve, some put to sleep and some cause laughter and delight, and some bring forth movements of the limbs according to their measures, … (*innahā [an-naghamāt al-mawzūna] la-tuʾaththiru fīhā taʾthīran ʿajīban fa-mina l-aṣwāti mā yufriḥu, wa-minhā mā yuḥzinu wa-minhā mā yunawwimu wa-minhā mā yuḍḥiku wa-yuṭribu wa-minhā mā yastakhriju mina l-aḍāʾi ḥarakātin ʿalā waznihā* …). (al-Ghazālī n.d., 1131)[8] [13]

Like the Brethren of Purity and the influential polymath Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī (d. 861-66)[9], he uses *taḥrīk* ("moving," e.g. al-Ghazālī n.d., 1120, 1162) and *taʾthīr* ("impact," e.g. n.d., 1131, 1132, 1139, 1174) to describe these processes; the results are occasionally termed as [14]

7 *Fann,* in the sense of "fine arts" including music, is used only since the ninteenth century (see Mestyan 2011, esp. 81-82). *Mūsīqā* (music), in the sense of defining a repertory, is used since the mid-nineteenth century, *al-mūsīqā l-ʿarabīya* (Arab music) since the 1930s (El-Shawan 1982, 55).

8 Translations from Arabic are mine if not indicated otherwise.

9 al-Kindī (1962, 22, 102, 103); on al-Kindī, see Endress and Adamson (2012).

aḥwāl ("states," e.g. n.d., 1162). The effects are nevertheless described in different ways by the authors; sometimes they name a single emotion (joy), sometimes only its symptom (laughter), and sometimes a physical and mental state (relaxation).

[15] Likewise, the contexts of writing differed. First, music was studied as a science next to mathematics and astronomy (*ʿilm al-mūsīqā*, music theory). Second, there are the numerous anecdotes about kings, ordinary people, and animals that were put to sleep or put to work by the sounds of music and the short sayings on music by the sages, which were collected and told for edifying and entertainment purposes. Finally, ethical and medical interests to achieve an equilibrium of the different humours for physical wellbeing and for pursuing moral psychology ('Seelenhygiene') by the deliberate use of music became a further motivation to deal with music.[10] Authors, although referring to a common stock of ideas, took quite different paths in dealing with the matter of "moving the soul" (*taḥrīk an-nafs*). For instance, the ratio of intervals in relation to those of the celestial spheres is very much emphasised in the writings of the Brethren of Purity and less by al-Kindī; this topic became marginalised in the eleventh century (Wright 2008, 244). al-Kindī's works are strongly devoted to the development of classificatory systems. He connects musical elements, such as tones and strings, to astronomic and humoral allocations, such as the zodiac, the planets, elements, humours, or scents (al-Kindī 1962). In contrast, the scholar and musician Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 950) shows a great interest in aspects that become relevant in the concrete processes of making music (Sawa 2015). The practical expansion of musical knowledge in musical therapy as an elaborated system emerged only after al-Ghazālī's lifetime (Neubauer 1990). al-Ghazālī's interest is to give guidance how to make use of the sonic materialities in religious practice.

[16] From these few remarks, it becomes clear that it not possible to speak of a standardised "Arab" or "Muslim" system at that time. The appropriation of Greek musical philosophy by Muslim authors is far from fully researched (Haas 2006; Sawa 2015).[11] In our context, it is relevant to note that the Brethren of Purity allocate specific types of melody to corresponding emotional states. They give an enumeration of six different types of melody (*alḥān min al-mūsīqī*), which are used for different purposes:

> [17] While praying, praising God, and reciting, they (the sages) would use a type of melody termed 'sorrowful' (*muḥazzin*: the one that evokes sorrow). These are the ones which, when heard, soften hearts (*turaqqiqu l-qulūb*), cause eyes to weep, and instil in souls remorse from past sins, inner sincerity, and a cleansing of conscience. This is one of the reasons why the sages created the art of music and used it in temples, at sacrifices, and for invocations and ritual prayers. (Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 17–18 Arab., 83 Engl., (…) my additions)

[18] This is seen as a universal effect, since they speak of temples (*hayākil*) and places of worship (*buyūt al-ʿibādāt*) and also directly refer to Christian recitation in the churches (Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 13–14 Arab., 81-82 Engl.).

> [19] They also created another type of melody called 'emboldening' (*mushajjiʿ*), used by army commanders on campaign and in the heat of battle, which instils courage and bravery.

> [20] They also created another type of melody that they used around dawn in hospitals.

10 For more on these three contexts, see Blum (2013), Gutas (2012), Neubauer (1990), Sawa (2015).

11 One problem lies in the development of academic disciplines: musicology focuses on what is perceived as the *abendländischer Kanon* (occidental canon) and Oriental Studies usually exclude music.

> It alleviated the pain patients suffer from illness and disease, reduces their severity, and [actually] cures many diseases and sicknesses.

> They also created another type of melody, used at times of affliction, sadness, suffering and care, and at funerals, which offers solace, alleviates the suffering caused by misfortune, consoles feelings of loss, and soothes away sadness. [21]

> They also created another type of melody that is used during heavy labour and tiring work, like that used by porters, builders, sailors, and boat-builders (…) to alleviate both exhaustion of body and weariness of soul. [22]

> They also created another type of melody used at times of rejoicing, delight, and pleasure, and at weddings at feasts. This is the type that is well known and widely used in our day. (Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 17–19 Arab., 83-84 Engl., (…) my additions, […] additions in Wright's translation) [23]

We can discern some of these allocations also in al-Ghazālī's text. Rather than speaking of "types of melodies," he uses the term *ṭuruq* (sg. *ṭarīqa*) for different musical modes (n.d., 1132–34).[12] Nonetheless, the states and the purposes he describes chiefly overlap, as do some of the modes' names. He uses the term *muḥazzin* (sorrowful) for the types of poems that preachers could chant to soften the hearts of the believers and make them repent (*al-muḥazzina al-muraqqiqa li-l-qalb*, n.d., 1135). He furthermore speaks of emboldening modes which should be used in the context of warfare (*ṭuruq mushajjiʿa*, n.d., 1134). He names a third mode with the same morphological form, one that evokes longing (*mushawwiq*, al-Ghazālī n.d., 1134). This mode does not have an exact equivalent in the musical modes described by the Brethren of Purity. al-Ghazālī advises using this mode in the context of pilgrimage songs. With regard to musical modes that have a calming effect and ease hardship, he mentions anxiety and relaxation as a potential impact (*taʾthīr*) of music (n.d., 1139) as well as music that puts to sleep (n.d., 1131). Likewise, joy is named several times as a context or as the result of music (n.d., 1131, 1135, 1162). Music's function to ease heavy labour is addressed by al-Ghazālī only in an indirect way ("regain strength", n.d., 1162). His thinking of classifying music into modes which evoke different emotions (anger, longing, joy, sorrow, etc.) shows in the fact that the choice of the correct mode becomes one condition in his authorisation, as we shall see. Before that, I will give a general introduction into al-Ghazālī's writing on the effect of music. [24]

al-Ghazālī on Listening to Music and Singing (*samāʿ*)

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī was born around 1056 in Khorasan near the modern Mashhad (Iran). He was educated as a jurist and theologian and taught at the Niẓāmīya Madrasa in Baghdad.[13] His works cover law, philosophy, logic, dogmatic theology, and mysticism. al-Ghazālī writes from a different perspective than that of music theory or of gnomologia and edifying literature. Instead, he seeks to integrate the described effects of music into Muslim devotion. The overall context of the "Book on the Etiquette of Listening and Ecstasy," the *Revival*, is conceived as a [25]

12 For more on al-Ghazālī's terminology, see Weinrich (2019). "Musical mode" in the eleventh century is not to be equated with what is today generally understood as *maqām* in Arab music (see also below).

13 On al-Ghazālī, see Griffel (2009), on his biography, esp. 19-59.

spiritual guide for Muslims to live a good life that will result in paradise (Griffel 2009, 215–16). It is this context that makes al-Ghazālī refrain from theoretical discussion of music as a science and the theoretical systems of extra-musical allocations. Instead, he discusses the place of listening to music and singing in human life, related to different sonic properties, contexts, places, and conditions of the listener.

Although much of the book is devoted to Sufi listeners, who are presented as 'expert listeners,' al-Ghazālī does not limit his elaborations on listening to the Sufi context. In fact, he treats three different contexts of listening to music, that of a non-religious context, a religious context, and a specialised Sufi context, where listening is turned into a distinct spiritual exercise and listeners, through their spiritual training and education, apply everything they hear to God (al-Ghazālī n.d., 1139). These contexts, however, are not conceived as separated domains, since every believer with the respective training can become a Sufi listener. Following his interest in action, al-Ghazālī writes on concrete cases of the application of music, both on religious and non-religious occasions. To make his position clear, he starts with a legal exposition, discussing different opinions in favour and against listening to music and singing.[14] In addition to the exchange of the common Qurʾānic verses and Prophetic traditions related to music, he classifies sounds and their effects according to the sound's material properties. [26]

Following al-Ghazālī's elaboration, we can discern two levels of sonic materiality. The first one refers to the material properties of sound, for instance sound with/without a rhythm. The second one becomes tangible in the process of mediation and refers to the effect of listening. [27]

Material Properties, Contexts, and Authorisation

al-Ghazālī takes a systematic approach to sound. He classifies sound according to the sources of sound: inanimate sources (e.g. musical instruments), animate sources (e.g. birds), and the human voice. He further differentiates between sounds with and without words. However, these classifications do not affect the question of licence. Finding pleasure in beautiful sounds is a natural disposition, the author states, and therefore beautiful sounds, which are part of God's creation, are generally allowed (al-Ghazālī n.d., 1124–31, 1153). His focus lies on poetry, since the sound of rhyme and a well-organised rhythm beautifies ordinary speech. The different means to increase the beauty of sound form a climax: rhyme, poetic metre, a beautiful voice, rhythmic melody, and membranophones and idiophones that produce a rhythm. The highest effect on listeners can thus be accomplished through rhymed, measured words (i.e. poetry) that are chanted by a beautiful voice and accompanied by instruments (n.d., 1133). [28]

Although he categorises musical instruments according to criteria in organology as idiophones, membranophones, chordophones, and aerophones, the quality and technique of sound production does not serve as a criterion for permissibility. Rather, he gives a contextual argument. Some wind instruments and chordophones are not forbidden because of the types of sound they produce and their effect on the human body, but because they are connected with unlawful activities like wine drinking or effeminate singers (*al-mukhannathūn*). Likewise, the drum (*ṭabl*) of the pilgrim songs is allowed, yet the drum of the effeminate singers (*ṭabl al-kūba*) he classifies as not allowed (n.d., 1133, 1144). [29]

14 al-Ghazālī chiefly uses the term *samāʿ* (listening), which I translate as "listening to music and singing" and occasionally only as "listening." The term stresses the process of music-making and the role of the recipient and his or her behaviour in the event. In differentiating between music and singing I follow al-Ghazālī, whose discussion includes "wordless sound," though he predominantly treats sung poetry.

[30] Concerning the practices of singing and listening, al-Ghazālī distinguishes between those that are allowed and those that are not allowed; in my summary, I will further differentiate between religious and non-religious contexts. The non-religious contexts in which singing and listening is allowed comprise inciting warfare, emboldening fighters during combat, longing for one's lover (but only if the relation is covered by law), and evoking and reinforcing joy on joyous occasions. Among these potential occasions he mentions both non-religious and religious ones: the return of a long-time absentee, a wedding, a banquet, a birth, the rituals performed after a birth (*ʿaqīqa*), the circumcision, the child's accomplished memorisation of the complete Qurʾān, or the canonical feasts (*ʿīd*). Further religious contexts in which singing and listening is justified are pilgrimage songs (*ghināʾ al-ḥajīj*), because their texts centring on Mecca and Medina evoke longing in the listeners to perform the pilgrimage themselves. One important occasion for listening he names under songs and melodies of lamentation, with reference to preachers who chant verses, and we will come back to this example later. He ends his enumeration with the listening of the ones who are governed by their love and longing for God. This last case, for him, constitutes the highest form of listening, which can be accomplished by Sufis with the respective training (n.d., 1133–42).

[31] Listening is not allowed under specific circumstances, for instance if it leads to unlawful erotic desires. To be clear, this is not a condemnation of erotic desires per se; the target is erotic desires in a sexual relationship that is not covered by law, for instance the relation with a free woman one is not married to. When mentioning instruments that are associated with unlawful behaviour, he again refers to drinking and effeminates. If the sung text openly condemns religion, listening is not allowed. Finally, it is not allowed if listeners are too young and cannot control themselves, or if listeners are not guided by their love of God, or, subsequently, in cases where weak persons (i.e. who cannot control themselves) attend (n.d., 1142–48, 1178). He gives a firm warning: "Listening is a slippery place for the foot; from it the weak should be kept." (n.d., 1178).

[32] To sum up, in his authorisation of listening, al-Ghazālī recognises the listeners' circumstances, age, and experience as decisive factors. He stresses responsibility and the individual's ability to rehearse and train. His licence is thus conditional and contextual. Sound is not itself imbued with a religious significance. Rather, performers and listeners can harness sound in religious devotion. So far, the material properties of sound did not serve as a criterion for authorisation. But there is one case in which the concrete musical material matters, and this pertains to the musical modes (*ṭuruq*). Here, the licence combines the sound's context and material properties.

[33] Howsoever the impact of listening is judged, al-Ghazālī writes, "one may not rule on this matter in an absolute manner as allowed or prohibited. Rather, the ruling differs according to the circumstances, the persons, and the musical modes (*bal yakhtalifu dhālika bi-l-aḥwāli wa-l-ashkhāṣi wa-khtilāfi ṭuruqi n-naghamāt*, n.d., 1132). To use the correct mode for the respective context is one condition for licence. Inciting longing for pilgrimage is allowed, he explains (n.d., 1133), but inciting this longing in someone who is not supposed to perform pilgrimage (e.g. because their parents forbade them to do so or because the route is too dangerous) is not allowed. Inciting longing for the beloved is only allowed if the object of love is lawful (e.g. one's wife, n.d., 1138). Hence, there is no absolute prohibition nor absolute licence, and equally no type of music (or musical mode) that is always allowed. Just as the act of listening depends on the conditions (*aḥwāl*) of the listener, the musical material depends on the context: it should be chosen accordingly. Moreover, his terminology hints at a system in which only

the correct mode is allowed to be used. Subverting the system through the employment of the wrong musical mode—for instance one that evokes longing or sorrow during warfare—he classifies as a serious fault (n.d., 1134).

[34] At the end of the book he wraps the essence of his arguments in legal terminology. He concludes with the statement that listening to music and singing is sometimes forbidden (*ḥarām*), sometimes allowed (*mubāḥ*), sometimes disliked (*makrūḥ*), and sometimes desirable (*mustaḥabb*) (n.d., 1183). It is

[35]
- *ḥarām*: if it leads to blameworthy effects; this is especially often the case for the youth
- *makrūh*: if it is used only for diversion and distraction (*lahw*)
- *mubāḥ*: for the one who takes delight in beautiful sounds
- *mustaḥabb*: for the one who controls the effects and is ruled by his love of God, therefore it only leads to praiseworthy effects.

[36] These categories overlap with those that in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) classify the believer's acts according to their degree of obligation.[15] *Mubāḥ* serves as a neutral category, since it entails no consequences: acts of this category will be neither rewarded nor punished. Acts in the category of *makrūḥ* are reprehensible, yet they do not entail punishment. Only acts of the category *ḥarām* will be punished. Listening which sets the heart in motion towards an engagement with the divine falls into the category of *mustaḥabb*. Listening in this category is a practice that may generate religious merits and therefore reward (*thawāb*).

[37] al-Ghazālī's judgement on listening represents a nuanced elaboration according to different situations and functions. Such differentiation is not necessarily the case when contemporary practitioners of chanting refer to his arguments. As we have seen in the quote on musical modes, besides the modes, al-Ghazālī names the circumstances (*aḥwāl*) and the respective listeners (*ashkhāṣ*): what listening evokes depends on what is inside the heart, he argues, and quotes the early mystic Abū Sulaymān ad-Dārānī (d. c. 830): "Listening does not produce in the heart what is not in it, but it stirs up what is in it" (n.d., 1133). This statement was repeatedly mentioned during my fieldwork. However, when cited during fieldwork, it was primarily used as a justification of religious chanting, whereas in al-Ghazālī's book, it works as both a licence and a warning and may ultimately result in an argument for prohibition under certain circumstances. It resonates in the already quoted warning, "Listening is a slippery place for the foot; from it the weak should be kept."

[38] Gisa Jähnichen (2012, 117) notes that in contemporary Malaysia, al-Ghazālī's text is almost exclusively read in the frame of permissibility. I also noted the emphasis on licence and justification during fieldwork, although not in the same strict manner, since other aspects were recorded as well. Nonetheless, al-Ghazālī's warnings and prohibitions were hardly mentioned, and the same applies to the musical modes as a condition. Such a non-dialectical reading is partly due to the political climate and the activities of different Islamic movements that compete for defining what "Islam" is and what it is not.[16] However, one aspect of al-Ghazālī's

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15 *al-Aḥkām al-khamsa*; since listening is not an obligatory act of devotion, the fifth category, that of obligatory acts (*wājib*), is missing.

16 Performers thus find themselves in the situation that they need to defend what they are doing. Yet, a focus on the unanimously positive attitude *versus* a growing Salafist pressure is only one symptom of deeper-rooted developments. The described process exhibits a shift from a nuanced, four-fold authorisation of sensational forms, bound to context and conditions, to a binary classification of a phenomenon called 'music' into a halal/haram-dichotomy. Such a dichotomy suggests that things are either allowed or forbidden "in Islam." The reasons are complex and cannot be addressed within the scope of this paper sufficiently.

elaborations deserves more attention, since it constitutes an important factor within the perspective of mediation that is still relevant for contemporary performers. This pertains to the musical evocation of sorrow.

Materiality and Mediation: Sorrow (*ḥuzn*) and Musical Modes

[39] The overarching aspect of listening is that it produces an effect, which becomes sensible (*maḥsūs*) in the heart (*qalb*) of the listener (al-Ghazālī n.d., 1132). The ear serves only for the physiological perception of the sound, which is taken up by an inner sense (n.d., 1140) and furnished with understanding, which depends on the pre-experience and pre-knowledge of the listener. Listening is a means to bring about what is inside the heart. The ultimate goal of listening is one that sets in motion an interaction (*muʿāmala*) towards God (n.d., 1153). Expert listeners, i.e. Sufi listeners, have perfected this form of listening. But there is one form of divine interaction available for the average listener, and this arises in the context of sorrow, a main aspect of religious mediation in the non-Sufi context.[17]

[40] al-Ghazālī distinguishes two kinds of sorrow (*ḥuzn*): praiseworthy and blameworthy sorrow. Blameworthy sorrow regards death and loss, he explains, and cites from Q 57:23: “In order that you (pl.) do not despair over what has eluded you.” In contrast, praiseworthy sorrow he defines as “the sorrow of the human being about his own shortcomings in religious matters, the weeping over his own faults; and weeping and induced weeping and sorrow and induced sorrow about this is praiseworthy” (n.d., 1134). He then refers to the preacher (*wāʿiẓ*) with a good voice. He may “chant from the pulpit poems that incite sorrow and soften the heart (*an yunshida ʿalā l-minbari bi-alḥānihi l-ashʿāra l-muḥazzinata l-muraqqiqata li-l-qalb*), and he may cry and induce crying in order to affect the others to cry and to bring about their sorrow” (n.d., 1135).[18]

[41] His idea of an effective preacher is in line with the ideal of a successful sermon that touches the heart of believers and elicits crying. One brief description of a preacher in Cairo by the traveller Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217) may suffice in our context: “He gave an eloquent exhortation and a touching admonition until the hardest heart became humble and the tearless eye started to flow (*wa-yulaṭṭifu l-waʿẓa wa-yuraqqiqu t-tadhkīra ḥattā takhashshaʿa l-qulūbu l-qāsīya wa-tatafajjara l-ʿuyūnu l-jāmida*)” (Ibn Jubayr 1959, 24; see also Weinrich 2019). Thus, the effect (*taʾthīr*), i.e. the material aspect of sound, shows in the heart und successively the behaviour of the listener, here in crying as an external marker of an internal state of humility (*khushūʿ*).

[42] For al-Ghazālī, sorrow is evoked by the skilful chanting of a preacher with a good voice and the respective musical mode (*al-muḥazzin [al-muraqqiq]*). For contemporary performers, the concept of softening the heart (*tarqīq*) and the evocation of sorrow is still relevant; however,

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In brief, such a shift marks a process of disambiguation that has been amply described by Bauer (2011). Dissent (*ikhtilāf*) has constituted an integral part of Muslim jurisprudence and Muslim culture in the wider sense; yet, in many contemporary Muslim self-representations, we notice the aspiration to give unambiguous answers. Here, dissent—or, positively put, inner-religious plurality—is regarded as a weakness. Bauer discusses illustrative examples from various fields, such as exegesis (2011, 117–29) or jurisprudence (2011, 184–91). In the case of music, such processes have given primacy to a general ‘permissibility question’ in place of context-bound authorisation of specific practices. For one strategy of adapting to the permissibility question by creating a sphere of ‘halal music’ within a broader domain of arts, see van Nieuwkerk (2013).

17 The situation of Sufi listening opens up a different form of mediation, yet this aspect deserves a study of its own. al-Ghazālī treats listening and ecstasy (*wajd*) separately; he deals with ecstasy as one form of listening.

18 I opt for reading *yabkiya* (he may cry), since az-Zabīdī, commenting on this phrase, refers to the crying by the preacher Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1256) ([1414] 1994, 6:489).

the musical modes work in a different way. To trace this difference, we need to expand on the development of what today is generally termed as the "theory of the *maqām*," which may include the association of certain *maqāmāt* with specific emotional states.[19]

The Changing Perception of Musical Modes: *Maqām* and Extra-Musical Associations

[43] "By the twelfth century, a melodic mode's proper name was apt to connote its emotional effect", Stephen Blum (2013, 117) remarks, pertaining to a scene in the Persian epic poem *Khosrow and Shirin* in which musicians play eight modes to express the emotions of the protagonists. Eckhard Neubauer (1990, 233) dates the emergence of fully developed musical therapy which makes use of musical modes to the thirteenth century. The *Kitāb al-Adwār* (Book of the Cycles) by Ṣafī d-Dīn al-Urmawī (d. 1294) contributed significantly to these developments. Here, twelve *shudūd* (sing. *shadd*, another term for musical mode) are divided into three groups according to their impact (*taʾthīr*) on the soul (Blum 2013, 117–18; Neubauer 1990, 235–39). The systems developed varied geographically and temporally and have not yet been researched exhaustively, let alone in a way that would allow an overview. In line with the general research on Arabic writing, the literature on music after the thirteenth century is barely studied (Weinrich 2017).

[44] Today, the *maqām* system is mainly understood as the organisation of pitch. Modern Arab music theory defines a single *maqām* by a characteristic sequence of intervals, grouped in tetrachords, and tone-relationships. In performance, characteristic movements of the melodic line—but no fixed melodic models—mark a *maqām*'s central tones, especially in the closing cadences (*qafla*). The dynamics of performance furthermore bring about a *maqām*'s relation to other *maqāmāt* by modulation. Well into the twentieth century, a *maqām* was described verbally. Today, under the impact of European music theory and the adaptation of staff notation, a *maqām* is represented as a seven-tone-scale.[20]

[45] The *maqām*-ethos complex tends to be marginalised in the modern period. Music books of the early twentieth century mention it sporadically but do not pay special attention to it. Typical examples are the book by the Egyptian poet and musician Kāmil al-Khulaʿī (al-Khulaʿī [1904] 1993) and the four-volume collection of articles by various authors published in 1936 (Rizq [1936] 1993). Both publications treat music as a universal phenomenon with universal general rules and thus juxtapose contributions on Arab singers, the phonograph, music in Pharaonic times, European musical theory, and other themes. In the long run, however, the general trend was that of an adaptation to European notions of music (Weinrich 2017). In contemporary music education, the ethos aspect of *maqām* does not play a major role. In the epochal 1932 Conference on Arab Music, whose documented material on *maqām* had a major impact on modern school curricula, the extra-musical allocations are hardly addressed.[21] During the academic year I spent as a guest student at the Music Conservatory (*al-Maʿhad al-ʿālī li-l-mūsīqā*) in Damascus in 1993/94, this aspect of *maqām* was occasionally mentioned in class but not systematically discussed. In contemporary Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, *maqām* is seen foremost in terms of musical creativity: *maqām* is understood as the tonal system which

19 *Maqām* (pl. *maqāmāt*) as a term for musical mode is used since c. 1400 (Neubauer 1990, 235).
20 For a detailed study on transformations in the understanding of *maqām* in modern Arab music theory, see Elsner (1973).
21 Kitāb Muʾtamar (1932); briefly on the conference, see Weinrich (Weinrich 2017, 80–83).

defines the relation between single tones and between the different *maqāmāt* and thus governs the creative process of melodic progression.

[46] Professional singers, reciters, and *munshids* today, in addition to the musical-technical aspects of *maqām* theory, are aware of the extra-musical allocations within the *maqām* system. Yet, many of them treat it as a phenomenon of the past that is not necessarily relevant in performances today. It is interesting to note, however, that they view each *maqām* as possessing a specific modal quality, which they seek to make sensible to the listener. One condition for this is that they are themselves 'ruled' by this specific mood of the *maqām*. This state is expressed in the term *salṭana* (Shannon 2006, 164–65; Racy 2003, 96–103, 120–38, on extra-musical allocations, 138-41, see also below). Although the relation between *maqāmāt* and specific emotional states is not taught systematically and musicians do not relate to an encompassing system of *maqām* and emotion, there is some agreement on single *maqāmāt* and their emotional substance: most often, *maqām rāst* is described as energising and emboldening and *maqām ṣabā* as conveying sadness, melancholy, and sorrow.[22]

[47] As Kristina Nelson shows, Qurʾān reciters in twentieth-century Egypt agree that the skilful use of *maqāmāt* makes the recitation more effective. However, they seem to relate foremost to aspects of the melodic line, modulation, and individual musical creativity that captures the attentiveness of the listener, and not to single *maqāmāt* as a tool to evoke a corresponding emotion (Nelson 2001, esp. 67, 127-28).[23] Summarising the statements of reciters as well as of members of the comity that evaluates recitation, Nelson writes: "Absence of melodic clarity is criticized – listeners need to know where they are and where they are being led. The reciter who has not mastered the *maqām* system cannot give a clear definition of his melodic position and direction" (Nelson [1985] 2001, 126). Such an evaluation is in line with statements of the jury in Qurʾān recitation competitions I documented in Lebanon. In the category *maqām*, the jury assessed the reciters' ability to convey a *maqām* and conduct modulations according to musical rules.[24] Especially modulation is appreciated as an effective tool to captivate listeners and exercise an emotional impact. Again, this resonates in the concept of *maqāmāt* as expressing and evoking emotional states, though, again, without the attribution of single emotions. Rather, it is the use of the different *maqāmāt* in relation to one another that makes a performance emotionally expressive by building up tension and relaxation. In Egypt the convention also developed to have Qurʾān recitation generally start and end in *maqām bayyātī*.

> [48] Inventive transposition and modulation contribute to the tension and emotion of a performance, especially as it is the convention to begin and end the recitation in the same *maqām*, *bayātī*. The general convention of framing a musical improvisation with a *maqām* is thus specified in the Egyptian tradition of Qurʾanic recitation. A skilful reciter will spin out his melody further and further from *maqām bayātī*, leaving the audience in suspense how he will be able to return to base. A phrase rendered in the low register of *bayātī* is as much a signal of the end of the performance as is the closing formula (*ṣadaqah*). (Nelson [1985] 2001, 126–27)

22 Conversations during fieldwork; see also Racy (2003, 109), Touma (1989, 70–74) and see Shannon (2006, 150) for a flexible handling of emotional ascriptions in musical practice.

23 The understanding and practice of *maqām* in South Asian Qurʾān recitation differs, where the notion of allocating emotion to forms of aesthetic expression coincides with indigenous music traditions and aesthetic theory (*rasa*) in general. See, for instance, Gade (2004, esp. 204, 209-10) for Indonesia.

24 Fieldnotes, August 25, 2009; August 31, 2010; August 2, 2011; August 18, 2011.

In addition, to always use the same *maqām* for a textual phrase would contradict the concept that the ideal recitation is created anew in performance each time and would bring the recitation close to pre-composition. [49]

Sorrow, Mediation, and *maqām* Today

In the occasions for *inshād* documented during fieldwork, sorrow is primarily mediated in the *qaṣīda* style. *Qaṣīda* style in this context denotes a solo performance without an underlying rhythmical pattern and without instrumental accompaniment. A chorus may support the soloist by occasionally humming the tonic. Commonly, the performance is slow in pace, and pauses between the single melodic phrases can be quite long. The performer takes melodic and rhythmic liberties, which allows for interaction with the listeners: he or she can elicit responses by experimenting with different ways to involve the audience and can shape the performance according to their responses.[25] [50]

Most performers of *inshād*, especially the soloists, are trained reciters of the Qurʾān and thus have a musical knowledge of the tonal system. The ways to become a *munshid*, however, differ, since there is no formalised institution to teach *inshād*. Many of the performers I talked to learned their art by listening to *inshād* ensembles since they were small children and gradually developed their own repertory and style. Others took lessons from more experienced *munshids*, who were often also their religious teachers. Another group used autodidactic means. They started as a muezzin to train their voice and listened to recordings of other *munshids*. Most of the *munshids* stated that they gravitated towards music, and it is not uncommon that they have some training in music theory or instrumental playing. [51]

B. is a Lebanese religious scholar from Beirut who founded his own performance ensemble (*firqa*) when he was young. He works for a religious institution and also performs with his group during celebrations organised by state institutions or mosque communities to mark a religious holiday as well as on private social occasions. He emphasises that *inshād* in general is not identical with the chanting in the mystical current of Islam (*at-taṣawwuf*) but sees them as two different schools (*madrasa*).[26] Asked if he considers *ḥuzn* as an important vocal quality, B. replies: [52]

> If we talk of the touching voice (*ṣawt shajī*), which makes the human being think about what is said, or of humility (*khushūʿ*). *Ḥuzn* does not mean that the human being is sad in a negative sense, no. A negative kind of *ḥuzn* is not the goal. The goal is the *ḥuzn* of the praying person (*al-mubtahil*: the one who praises God's glory in a state of lowliness), who is in intimate communication with God. More than of *ḥuzn* we might talk of *khushūʿ*. This means to be before the Exalted God, sincere in prayer and supplication. It means the human being acknowledges his weakness and his disintegration[27] before God's power and his blessings and grace. (…) You know the Arab *maqāmāt*. There are those that are sorrowful (*ḥazīn*), such as the *maqām ṣabā*. The human being can pray a sorrowful prayer, but what adds to the *ḥuzn* is the *maqām*—and the rendition.[28] [53]

25 For a detailed analysis of a *qaṣīda*-style performance, see Weinrich (2018).
26 Interview with B., July 6, 2013 in Beirut.
27 Arab. *taksīr*. The state of fragmentation and dissolution as a sign of self-effacement and despair is a frequent topos in the supplications (*duʿāʾ*, pl. *adʿiya*) I documented during fieldwork.
28 Interview with B., July 6, 2013 in Beirut.

There are three remarkable aspects in this quote which deserve further attention. First, he switches to a terminology he is more comfortable with by using *shajī* and *khushūʿ*. *Shajī* is a vocal quality that is closely connected to the concept of *ḥuzn*. In literal understanding, it denotes singing as if one has something distressing (like a foreign body) in the throat that inhibits breathing. It translates as "troubled, distressed" and, in relation with voice, as "touching, moving." Thus, it is conceived as a singing technique and an effectual vocal quality that conveys an emotion. *Shajī* bears a positive connotation and by no means refers to an imperfect or miscarried voice technique. al-Khulaʿī ([1904] 1993, 89) names it as a beautiful vocal quality (*ḥusn aṣ-ṣawt*) and places it next to crying. Likewise, Bruns (1995, 103–04) and Nelson ([1985] 2001, 92) place it within the concept of *ḥuzn*. This vocal technique hence is considered to reflect sorrow and to produce humility (*khushūʿ*). [54]

My question was inspired by Peter Bruns (1995), who researched a form of sung prayer (*ibtihāl*) in Egypt. Although B. switches in terminology, the explanation he gives does not differ much from Bruns' characterisation. My conversation partner might have been afraid that I would misunderstand *ḥuzn* and conceive *inshād* as generally governed by a sad mood and lamentation. Hence, he explains what is meant by *ḥuzn* and subsequently feels less constrained to speak of *ḥuzn*. Second, in his explanation he is very close to what al-Ghazālī wrote on *ḥuzn* and almost paraphrases him. B. describes two kinds of *ḥuzn* which match al-Ghazālī's definition of blameworthy and praiseworthy sorrow. Like al-Ghazālī, he sees a positive sense of sorrow expressed in the acknowledgment of the relation between human insufficiencies and divine greatness, which B. then captures in the believer's concrete state of humility (*khushūʿ*). Though al-Ghazālī does not use the term *khushūʿ* in his example, it becomes clear from the context that *khushūʿ* is linked to the musical mode that evokes sorrow (*al-muḥazzin*), since the Brethren of Purity relate *khushūʿ* to this mode, which they describe as used in religious services (Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ 2010, 13, 16, 17–18 Arab., 81, 82, 83 Engl.). Additionally, Ibn Jubayr, among others, repeatedly uses the term to describe successful preachers (Ibn Jubayr 1959, 132, 138–39, 178–79). This shows that al-Ghazālī's understanding of *ḥuzn* is still relevant today among religious performers like B., although it is not always termed in the same way. [55]

Third, B. describes the *maqām* as partly responsible for inducing emotions. The *maqām* is not the main means or sole producer of an emotional state but may support the process (*al-maqām yazīd*). This marks a difference. Whereas al-Ghazālī sees the musical modes (*ṭuruq*) as chiefly responsible for producing different emotional states, B. sees a three-fold combination as decisive factors [of *taʾthīr*]: the purport (*maʿnā*), the composition of the text (*naẓm*), and the rendition by the performer (*adāʾ*).[29] Rendition, briefly said, includes the musical means such as melody in terms of pitch and time organisation, the *maqām*, the voice, and the skills to build up a relation with the listeners. [56]

al-Ghazālī defines sorrow as a dialogic relation: sorrow is the result of the listener's interaction with God, more precisely, the realisation of human shortcomings and limitations vis-à-vis divine excellence and grace. Performers—as religious specialists—are aware of this and should transfer this awareness to their listeners. To accomplish this task, sorrow should be reflected in their performance. This does not simply mean a "sad intonation" or a "sad melody," as it is sometimes translated (Fierro 1992, 212; Farmer 1952, 63 cited in Nelson [1985] 2001, 90). Rather, it is conceived as the outer reflection of an inner state and attitude. [57]

29 Interview with B., July 6, 2013 and July 29, 2013 in Beirut.

During the performance, it is manifested prominently in the voice.[30] Culturally initiated listeners recognise the different voice qualities. The musical mode (*maqām*) as a direct expression of an emotional state is only a subsidiary means.

[58] *Shajī* as an effectual voice quality is only one example, albeit a good one, for listening as learned behaviour in the context of *inshād*.[31] Another example would be nasality (*ghunna*), which is nowadays almost exclusively associated with a religious repertory. Changing aesthetics, for instance manifested in the shift from Egyptian-style dominated Qurʾān recitation to the Saudi and Gulf style, are definitely an issue but cannot be addressed here sufficiently. Conversations and interviews during fieldwork show that performers are aware of changes and constantly adopt their repertory, since meaning emerges through the interaction of performer and listener. Not least, this aspect of meaning creation applies to the conveyed religious propositions. Not explicitly mentioned in every musical piece but nonetheless present in the *inshād* event are mercy (*raḥma*) and forgiveness (*ʿafū*) as God's qualities in his interaction with his creatures, which complement the dialogic relation. Sorrow, in the religious context, paired with repentance and fear of God, can (and normatively should) lead to a positive result.[32]

Conclusion

[59] al-Ghazālī's arguments are embedded in the culture of the musical theory of his time, which partly constituted a further development of late antique musical philosophy. On an intra-religious level, al-Ghazālī distinguishes between listening in a general religious context and a more specialised Sufi context. Nonetheless, there is no fixed demarcation line between both domains; rather, the Sufi domain is accessible for everyone with the relevant training. A second intra-religious distinction emerges between proponents and opponents of listening to music and singing. He addresses opponents in his book with a refutation of their arguments. This refutation is bound to his conditional authorisation of listening to music and singing, which includes the different contexts, the listener's individual abilities, and the correct application of musical modes. In our times, however, the book is mainly taken as a general argument for the permissibility of music and singing. The constraints are mentioned less frequently, and the issue of musical modes in this respect is hardly addressed.

[60] Listening is an active and responsive practice. With reference to al-Ghazālī, listening is meant to bring about what is good in the heart and to set the transaction with God into motion. Listening that considers the individual's experiences and abilities and the appropriate musical modes is eligible to generate religious reward. In contemporary *inshād*, individual conditions are likewise relevant, yet the musical mode is perceived differently. The *maqām*, or melodic mode, is not seen as a main tool to evoke an emotional state, but voice and poetic purport play a major role as well.

[61] The sound's material properties alone do not generate meaning. Authorisation is thus classified according to effect and context. Certainly, material properties of sound, such as rhythm, volume, or timbre, produce an immediate somatic response. Yet, meaning is ascribed and learned through social practices of listening. In our example, the voice quality prominently illustrates an acquired understanding of musical means of expression. The enduring materiality

30 Body language has an impact during live performances, but it is missed if *inshād* is broadcasted via loudspeaker from the minaret, which is customarily done on liturgically special occasions.

31 Listening as learned behaviour is also emphasised by Becker (2012) and Weiner (2015).

32 I need to add that sorrow is not the only state mediated in *inshād,* but is chosen here in correspondence to al-Ghazālī's focus on actions that lead to salvation (*munjiyāt*).

of sound is tangible in the effects it has on the listeners. This notion is still relevant in contemporary religious chanting, most notably in the concept of sorrow (*ḥuzn*). Listening should evoke sorrow and transport listeners into a state of humility, a pre-condition for repentance and forgiveness. Thus, sorrow is a central concept of mediation through sensational forms in historical and contemporary practice. It is perceived both as an emotional condition that seizes the human deficiencies in the face of the divine and as a (physical) reflection of this state in the performance of the religious specialist who should transfer this emotional state to listeners.

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