

# **Ibaadat: A Qawwali Festival**

**11<sup>th</sup> February, 2012**

**6:30 pm onwards**

**At Bahai Auditorium, Lotus Temple  
New Delhi**

## **Project Report**

**Prepared by**



**Sufi Kathak Foundation  
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# IBAADAT

A QAWWALI FESTIVAL

CONCEIVED AND CONCEPTUALIZED BY  
MANJARI CHATURVEDI  
(Founder of Sufi Kathak)

Featuring:  
Janab Wajahat Hussain Badayuni  
&  
Janab Zaki and Zakir Ali, Ajmer Sharif

A short film "The Qawwals" by Amit Mehra  
Duration: 14 minutes

Saturday 11th February, 2012  
6:30 PM at, Baha'i Auditorium  
Lotus Temple, New Delhi

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# Ibaadat: A Qawwali Festival

## **About the Festival:**

Conceptualized by Manjari Chaturvedi, Sufi Kathak Foundation presents “Ibaadat: A Qawwali Festival”, a concert of Qawwali featuring two Qawwal Groups from Dargah of Ajmer Sharif in Rajasthan and Dargah of Badayun in Uttar Pradesh, singing the divine Qawwali compositions that date over 700 years in praise of the Almighty. Ibaadat meaning devotion to the Lord was rightly named, as each Qawwal group sang soulful tunes of Sufi music. The listeners were captivated with the music of the Qawwali singers who surrender themselves in praise of the Almighty.

## **Introduction to Manjari Chaturvedi:**

MANJARI CHATURVEDI is a leading exponent of the Indian classical dance **and is acclaimed for being the creator and ONLY performing artist of Sufi Kathak. She has combined the mysticism of Sufi traditions with classical Indian dance to create a stunning new school of performance called Sufi Kathak,** thus, setting a historical step in the field of performing arts through the creation of a completely new art form which remains original and yet follows the precedents of mystical traditions. In the last decade, **Manjari has performed in more than 250 concerts all over the world in more than 20 countries** including Europe (France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, U.K. & Ireland), the Middle East (Dubai, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Kuwait), South East Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka) and Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan) along with Australia and America.

## **Sufi Kathak Foundation:**

The Sufi Kathak Foundation is a non-profit registered society (exempt from tax under sec 80g) founded by Manjari Chaturvedi, to create awareness about Sufi Kathak and other related ancient performing art traditions. Registered under the Indian Societies Act (XXI) of 1860 (Regd. 61883), the foundation has been into existence since April 2008. The aim of Sufi Kathak Foundation is to promote and preserve spiritual dance and music and a world of cultural unity, by initiating children and orienting the youth to become self-employed through arts - dance and music, and thereby, evolve a humanist outlook. The main objective of the foundation is to create centers for spiritual dance and music, folk & classical dance and organize training classes, workshops and musical concerts to promote ‘Sufi Kathak’ and *Qawwali* music in India as well as across the world.

Ms. Manjari Chaturvedi and Sufi Kathak Foundation have been constantly involved in preserving the original identity and content of *Qawwali* Music through several initiatives developed by Sufi Kathak foundation to preserve and at the same time revive the traditional dying arts and this has become one of the main objectives of Sufi Kathak Foundation. The foundation strives to promote and preserve *Qawwali* as form of traditional music and dance form, to provide a sense of culture and belongingness to the future generations of India and most importantly to provide employment and income opportunities to the Qawwali singers.

Apart from the above, it works towards providing assistance and support to needy artists, in order to enable them to pursue their craft, by providing scholarships to students pursuing classical music and dance and also providing pensions and medical insurance to retired needy artists. It is with the same idea, that festivals and concerts are organized by Sufi Kathak Foundation, to provide these traditional musicians with sources of livelihood apart from their usual performances at the local Sufi Shrines. These festivals and concerts also help bring these marginal artists to the forefront and interact with others who are interested in the traditional arts.

**“Through the Sufi Kathak Foundation I am committed to spread this message of communal harmony through music and dance to preserve art & culture of *Qawwali* for future generations.”- Manjari Chaturvedi, founder and president of Sufi Kathak Foundation**

For the past fourteen years, Ms. Manjari Chaturvedi has contributed single- handedly, to bring *Qawwali* music and dance to the forefront as a classical art form. This 700 year old, oral tradition of *Qawwali* music has been on a decline due to its intangible nature. Often ignored as a strong symbol of Indian culture and arts, special efforts need to be directed towards the promotion of *Qawwali* music and dance



# Ibaadat: A Qawwali Festival

## *Artists*

Janaab Zaki and Zakir Ali from Ajmer Sharif, Rajasthan;  
&  
Janaab Wajahat Hussain Badayuni from Badayun, Uttar Pradesh

## *Time Duration*

3 hours (Short Documentary film followed by performances of the Qawwal Groups)

## *Documentary Film*

The Qawwals, Directed by Mr. Amit Mehra

## *Attendance*

Over 450 guests attended, with invites only

## *Guest of Honor*

Shri A. K. Garg, CMD, MTNL  
Shri Deepankar Tiwari, Head NCR operations, Tata Motors

## *Lighting of the Lamp*

Shri A. K. Garg, along with Ms. Manjari Chaturvedi and Mr. Amit Mehra

## *Compere for the evening*

Ms. Shovna Jagdish

Ibaadat: A Qawwali Festival began with the lighting of the Shama, paying homage to those Sufi Saints, who have long left the vicinity of this world, but left behind their pure spirit of peace, love and knowledge, through their centuries old compositions of Sufi Music.

Shri A. K. Garg, CMD, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, along with Ms. Manjari Chaturvedi, founder and president of Sufi Kathak Foundation and Mr. Amit Mehra, Treasurer, Sufi Kathak Foundation lit the Shama, and as a symbol of their tribute to the Almighty. Ms. Shovna Jagdish, the compere for the evening introduced Mr. Amit Mehra, a vital member of the organization and also the Director, for the film, showcased at the festival titled, "The Qawwals."



## **The Qawwals:**

The film, "The Qawwals", is a short documentary, compiled by personal interviews and live audio and video recordings of Qawwali groups. It focused on the lives of traditionally Qawwali Musicians, who have been preserving, performing and carrying forward this seven hundred year old traditional art form of Sufi music, through the

familial heritage and lineage. Within these bonds of lineage and family, lies Qawwali across several homes based in smaller towns that house the divine Sufi traditions and the shrines of Sufi Saints. These families along with other local marginal artists, provide for themselves and their forthcoming generations by solely performing their Qawwali music in the sacred shrines of the saints and devoting their lives to the Almighty.



However, through the years the value and significance of these smaller artists have declined, leaving them with hardly any income. Very often, they have to cater to the demands of mass and popular culture and perform shallow filmi Qawwali deprived of spiritual meaning, to raise enough to sustain themselves. In other situations, their succeeding generations opt for other income generating avenues such as take up jobs as carpenters, peons, etc. Due to lack of formal education, they are unable to find themselves respectable and suitable jobs, leaving the art form neglected and unacknowledged.

The film raises these issues mentioned above in the voices of those, who face these troubles along with live performances, recorded in their rickety old houses, whose walls speak more than they represent.

### **The Music**

Qawwali is one of the most well known forms of Sufi music, common to both India and Pakistan. Popularized by the Chisti school of Sufism, it was traditionally performed at the *Dargah* Shrines. Qawwali can be understood as a medium through which the Sufi tradition of *mehfil-e-sama*, or "assembly for listening," is expressed, where believers create a link to religious ecstasy and to God for the performer and listener alike. *Samas* are spiritual concerts which have been into existence since the beginning of times, before Islam took its shape.

The evening of the festival was carried forward by performances by the two Qawwal groups from the Dargah of Ajmer Sharif in Rajasthan and Dargah of Badayun in Uttar Pradesh. The listeners were left possessed by the purity of the music and the lyrics of the Sufis. The devotion to the Divine lies in the simplicity of the words used in the Sufi Poetry. The 700 year old Sufi Tradition is revived and relived through the age old compositions in the divine praise of the Lord, sung in the soulful tunes of the Qawwali singers. The auditorium was enchanted with the powerful vocal melodies of the singers and this was further enhanced by the rhythmic clapping received from the audience in every number performed. The listeners relived the Sufi mystics' vision through the music that charmed them.

This effort by Sufi Kathak Foundation seeks to create a space for the travelers of this mystic path to take a common man along to the superior stage of existence irrespective of his cast, community, religion or any such worldly differences.

"A secret turning in us  
Makes the universe turn  
Head unaware of feet,  
And feet head. Neither cares.  
They keep turning" -Rumi



## **The Sponsors**

This festival has been possible without the kind contribution and support of our sponsors. Our sponsors are the backbone of any event organized by the Sufi Kathak Foundation. Their contribution goes directly to the artists involved, and provides them with a platform to showcase their talent and provide suitable income generating avenues. Our sponsors by contributing to Sufi Kathak Foundation, not only contribute to the organization of the festival, but also towards the preservation of centuries old traditional arts and culture, that we at Sufi Kathak Foundation, strive to preserve in their original form and ensure its continuity for the future generations of this country and the world.

Our sponsors for our current festival include:



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