

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,  
the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls  
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

## Spiritual Dancing

Spiritual Dancing is that which elevates the consciousness. Dancing may be said to be the movement of the body or any of its parts to rhythm and Spiritual is that which helps to make man realize that this body is really the Divine Temple. Therefore the use of sacred phrases and words, or the practice of deep meditation before starting, are necessary. For no dance is a Spiritual Dance because it is called that; it does not mean a certain form of technique, nor a ritual, nor something so esoteric that there is no understanding by performers and no communication to audience.

Spiritual Dancing should be in the Name of God so the first Spiritual Dance is based on **Bismillah**. This means "In the Name of God" but when used it is also interpreted as "I begin in the Name of God." To this are added **Er-Rahman** and **Er-Rahim**, and when the full phrase, **Bismillah Er-Rahman Er-Rahim** is used, it may be interpreted narrowly as "In the Name of God the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful." And broadly "We begin in the name of Allah, etc." We begin in the name of **Allah** rather than in the name of "God" because we use the Sound **Allah**.

There is a tradition, "**Say 'Allah' and Allah Thou Shalt Become**," so devotees say "**Allah**" the sound as well as the word. We read that the Hindu religion teaches a theory of "Sound-God" but in practice they do not always use a Sound which is divine. There are a number of Divine Sounds and we may use all of them but we begin with **Allah**. So the first phrase used is the Bismillah.

The participants should be divided according to number, counting off so all are odd or even numbered. If there is one person over, he can either be dismissed until another one comes or join with the Sheikh, the Leader, in the center, performing the same movements as far as possible. In this way no one is left out.

The devotees form a circle and all join. If they are members of the modern Sufi movements they repeat the "Toward the One, etc." as above, but all must then join in saying the **Bismillah Er-Rahman Er-Rahim**. They may repeat this one or more times according as the leader requests. Then there should be a silence. There also may be a silent meditation beforehand but if the participants are not veterans in this they may learn the meditation through dancing and also learn the dancing through meditation. Both institutions are found in some countries of the world.

Then all join hands and progress in a counter-clockwise direction repeating **Allah** either ten times or as directed by the Leader or Teacher.

Then all face the center holding palms down and repeat ten times **Er-Rahman**. This is the position of the bestowal of blessing or Baraka. It is the positive sign. One begins to feel the Compassion, one bestows the Compassion, one acts as the Divine Agent in producing the Compassion for the World. The Compassion is already there; man acts as a condenser to bring it to manifestation in the physical world.

Then ten more steps are taken in the same direction with palms turned up and all repeat **Er-Rahim**—that God is the All-Merciful. When He gives it is Compassion and when He receives it is

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Mercy, but always actually it is Allah giving and receiving. Nevertheless by this stance man increases his capacity for Mercy, his mercifulness and tenderness.

So out of the Divine **Rahm**, the Compassion is the positive and the Mercy is the negative, or, as they are called in Arabic, **Er-Rahman** and **Er-Rahim**. They are of the same root and of the same essence, only in the English they are made to appear as of different sources which they are not. The Arabic presents their emanation from Divinity and their relation each to the other.

After the first thirty steps are taken everybody walks forward reciting ten times, taking ten full steps, **Allah!**, and then the odd-numbered persons turn around and face the even-numbered persons. The even-numbered walk forward and being the positive say **Ya Rahman** (note the change); they do this five times, placing their hands above the even-numbered people hands, or they can clap slightly.

First the even-numbered say **Ya Rahman** and the odd-numbered say **Ya Rahim**, which means five repetitions alternating phrases. Note that the ones giving the positive Wazifa are walking forward and those with the negative Wazifa are walking backward.

Now all turn around and the odd-numbered walk forward and the even-numbered walk backward and now the odd-numbered say five times **Ya Rahman!** and the even-numbered **Ya Rahim!** either with palms together or clapping. But at first it may be well to have the palms together and then the clapping on repetition (leader's discretion).

Then all join hands and take ten more steps saying **Allah!**, and then the odd-numbered turn around and putting palms together with each other in the vertical direction, turning to the right saying together **Ya Rahman** ten times and then turning to the left ten times **Ya Rahim**. This forms one cycle.

This cycle may be repeated as many times as wished, ten steps forward with Ya Allah!, then the Ya Rahman-Ya Rahim with change, then the circle all together, and then partners, palms together.

It may be questioned whether this is not a folk dance. Of course it is a folk dance. There have been groups like Dervishes and even Shaking Quakers who used dance forms. The Bible has much to say on this and traditional religion very little. The development of ecstasy has always been regarded as beneficial to the young to help them rise above the denseness of earth. If not shown "right ways," youth will take to "other ways." This is the nature of youth.

It may be asked if this is a rigid form or can be used as the basis for variations and modulations. It can be answered that this is not a rigid form; it can be used as the base of variation and modulation and improvisation. What must remain is the sacred phrase, the sacred phrase and not the form is the foundation of development along this line.

## Introduction to Dervish Dancing

While the world has known mostly the Dancing of the Mevlevis, known as the “Whirling Dervishes,” as the form became more important than the purpose, we must bear in mind the purpose at all times and the very foundation of Spiritual Dancing, Dervish and otherwise, is the repetition of the Divine Name of itself, or attributes of Divinity. It is to impress Name and Attributes deeply upon human consciousness and human personality that this line has been devised.

A group should be lead into a line or circle by the Teacher reciting “**Allah! Allah! Allah!**,” indefinitely. After a circle is formed the Teacher should select, preferably but not necessarily an advanced or skilled disciple. They face each other both raising, their arms saying “**Ya Hayy!**” and then lowering their arms saying “**Ya Haqq.**” They keep on moving in a circle facing each other, raising and lowering arms saying “**Ya Hayy! Ya Haqq!**”

When the teacher feels the other is sufficiently impressed by his Baraka, he withdraws either into the circle itself, or inside the circle or outside watching and the selected pupil invites another person. And so in succession a number of persons, two at a time call out “**Ya Hayy! Ya Haqq!**” until the teacher feels that this item is properly programmed.

These phrases assist in the awakening of vitality in each and all. After that the Dervish dances move in two directions, the Dances of Zikr or the Zat of Allah based on the sacred phrase: **La Illaha El Il Allah** or its variants. Or on the Sifat-i-Allah, the movements being appropriate each to the particular attribute being emphasized.

When utilizing the attributes one always begins with **Er-Rahman** and then **Er-Rahim**, or **Ya Rahman**, followed by **Ya Rahim!** always holding the palms down in the first and the palms up in the second. This also involves the bestowal and receipt of Baraka, the Divine Blessing which comes in the form of magnetism, physical and trans-physical.

There is no particular order by which the Sifat must be selected. The phrases used need not follow the list from *Pearls of Faith* of Sir Edwin Arnold, nor the Wazifa lists of any Sufi Order. Whatever phrase is used should, if possible, be accompanied by proper movement.

The Teacher should memorize as many of the Divine Attributes as possible to substitute one needed because of some problem. One need not emphasize the problem but request that all join in. Also when people who are used to the English language come together they should repeat in unison three times: Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance. They should hands all around the circle and not start until the teacher feels that enough magnetism, power or Baraka has been instigated, something like the starting of an electrical dynamo.

The first lesson may involve the three Wazifas: Subhan Allah, Alhamdu Lillah and Allaho Akbar.

For **Subhan Allah** all should hold their hands clasped before them and walk in single file. For **Alhamdu Lillah** the arms are raised aloft and slightly opened with a movement while reciting a phrase. For **Allaho Akbar**, it is different for men only, than for woman or a mixed group. When there are men only, they should put their arms on each other’s shoulders (on, not around) and move

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up and down calling **Allaho Akbar**. Otherwise the arms should be held out, each right arm holding the left arm of the person next to them and the force should be in the horizontal, not vertical direction, so the whole group moves in the general direction.

The repetition of the **Bismillah** and these three basic Wazifas should constitute the first lesson along with “**Ya Hayy! Ya Haqq!**” When the class becomes adjusted to this, progress will become rapid in other lines.